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'We're all STRONG'

Thelma Sharlow of Brattleboro, 94, poses on her grandson's motorcycle.

Thelma Sharlow reflects on life, loss, and a 94-year journey, much of it in Brattleboro

By Fran Lynggaard Hansen
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Thelma Sharlow, who has lived in town for 77 of her 94 years, says that her life “has been complicated.” Her story started in the hills of West Virginia where her father cared for Sharlow and her two sisters, Kitty and Eva Ann, after their mother walked away from the family when Sharlow — then Thelma Colleen Facemire — was 5 years old. “My dad was a West Virginia hillbilly. Once, he took me into the mines on his shoulder when I was a little girl. It was dripping water, and he had on a hat with a light on it. It was so dark down

there. What a hard job that was,” she remembers. The little family lived with her grandmother for a few years during the Great Depression, while her father picked up some small change as a Stanley Brush door-to-door salesman. Amid beehives, cows, pigs, and chickens, her grandmother's property had a well, and Sharlow used to drop a bucket down into the water and pull it back up on a long rope. “We were more fortunate than many. It was a hillbilly farm. There were two stores in the town, a school, and a church, that was about it,” says Sharlow. How did a West Virginia girl end up in Brattleboro?

“I went to five different high schools in four different states as we moved around during my schooling, my father taking work where he could find it,” she says. “Eventually, we ended up with an uncle on a small farm in Warwick, Massachusetts,” Sharlow continues. “My father worked in the woods. He and my uncle cut lumber, and from there we moved to Hinsdale, New Hampshire.” When Sharlow was 17, she went to Brattleboro to the unemployment office to look for work. “The woman there asked if I had experience in anything, and of course, I didn't, but I did tell her that I had raised my younger sister, and that got me a job

■ SEE SHARLOW, A3

For Vermonters, a cascade of crises lead to food insecurity

Higher food costs, coupled with an end to pandemic aid programs, causes demand at food shelves to soar

By Ellen Pratt
The Commons

Two in five Vermonters are experiencing food insecurity, reported Hunger Free Vermont in a recent virtual briefing on the hunger in the state. The federal government defines food insecurity as households being, at times, unable to acquire adequate food for one or more household members

because they have insufficient money and other resources for food (see sidebar). Nationally, 12.8% of all U.S. households were food insecure in 2022, up from 10.2% in 2021, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA). Among households with children, more than 17% — one of every six — were food insecure at some point in 2022.

■ SEE FOOD INSECURITY, A2

No mediation in Putney housing challenge

WWHT files for summary judgment, saying 'it's purely a legal issue'

By Virginia Ray
The Commons

PUTNEY—Despite a suggestion by Environmental Court Superior Judge Thomas Durkin that mediation might resolve the issues in the dispute over the Windham & Windsor Housing Trust's (WWHT) proposed \$11.7 million Alice Holway Drive housing project, neither party in the

case agreed. “We offered to mediate, but the Trust wasn't interested and they filed a motion for summary judgment, so we'll be doing that,” said Attorney Harold B. Stevens III after an about-20-minute teleconference hearing that took place on Nov. 27 with representatives from the Trust and appellants Deborah Lazar and Laura Campbell, who

■ SEE WWHT DISPUTE, A3

MAKING *the* ROUNDS

With a new study underscoring the economic impact of the arts in the state, the new head of the Vermont Arts Council offers encouragement and ideas to arts venues in a tour of the region and a discussion in Brattleboro

By Annie Landenberger
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—On a tour of southern Vermont arts sites, Susan Evans McClure, newly appointed executive director of the Vermont Arts Council (VAC), addressed about 40 area artists and arts leaders at Brattleboro's Epsilon Spires on the evening of Nov. 27. Leading Vermont's primary provider of funding, advocacy, and information for the arts, Evans McClure intends to hit

each region in the state within the year to listen to its arts communities, to invite their success stories, and to hear their challenges and needs. “I really enjoyed seeing the vibrancy of the arts and culture work happening in Windham County,” Evans McClure said. “There is a rich and vibrant diversity of performance spaces, artist housing, artist studios, maker spaces, creative for-profit businesses, educational organizations, and so much more,” she observed. “The level of professionalism is also so high, and local and visiting audiences have access to world class art of all disciplines right in the region.” Evans McClure's background is deeply rooted in the arts and culture. With a master's degree in arts in education from the Harvard

Graduate School of Education and a bachelor's degree in theater from McGill University, she joined VAC after serving as executive director of the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum and of VSA Vermont, now Inclusive Arts Vermont. Previously, she worked in program administration and audience development at the Smithsonian National Museum of American History in Washington, D.C. “I've always been sort of secretly working in the arts, even in humanities organizations,” Evans McClure said in a VAC media release. “So [joining the VAC] really feels like I'm coming back to my arts roots.” That may be why she casts a wide net when considering the arts, embracing not only the creator of a work but also the others involved, from the designer of its

presentation to the staff who keep the presentation space clean. Her work, and that of the VAC, she says, is to keep the arts alive and thriving as a potent contributor to the state's economy and appeal. Moreover, VAC supports arts in education with in-school programs aimed at building arts assets, and the organization supports a range of arts organizations and artists, helping them to secure funding. “Our website has not only information on grant opportunities, but also resources for artists and organizations, including research materials, connections to partnering state and regional organizations, and a calendar of Vermont arts activities,” Evans McClure says. “Our staff [is happy to] directly connect people with

■ SEE ARTS, A6



Susan Evans McClure, the newly appointed executive director of the Vermont Arts Council, visited arts organizations in Brattleboro and Bellows Falls last week.

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

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

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SUBMITTING NEWS AND TIPS

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

VOICES

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Food insecurity

FROM SECTION FRONT

“People living with low incomes in our state have faced an incredible cascade of crises over these last three years,” said Anore Horton, executive director of Hunger Free Vermont (hungerfreevt.org), a nonprofit working on these issues.

“We have a housing crisis, we have the second highest rate of homelessness in the country, and substance use disorder is shattering so many people’s lives,” she said.

“We’ve experienced incredible inflation over the last year or so, and then, of course, the flooding this summer and climate change overall is dramatically affecting how we live and where we can live in our state,” Horton added.

“All of those cascading crises are leading to food insecurity and hunger, which is also dramatically on the rise,” she continued.

“When we aren’t making sure that all basic needs are being met for all of Vermont’s households, the result is always going to be food insecurity and hunger, because food is the flexible part of everyone’s basic-needs budget,” Horton said. “When they can’t meet their basic needs, people fill in gaps by pulling from their food budgets.”

Leaving federal dollars on the table

The USDA provides food assistance funding to states through the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP). In Vermont, SNAP funding is channeled to eligible Vermonters through the state’s 3SquaresVT program.

The average monthly benefit of \$317 is generally provided on a debit card (EBT) and is accepted at most grocery stores and many farmers’ markets.

More than 70,000 Vermonters receive these benefits, according to Hunger Free Vermont, including more than 21,000 children and 17,000 people over the age of 60.

Of Windham County residents, 13% used the 3SquaresVT benefit in May, the most recent data for SNAP benefit usage, according to data published by Tableau Public.

The data also show that half of eligible Vermonters are not receiving the 3SquaresVT benefit, leaving millions of federal dollars on the table rather than circulating in the local economy.

Reasons for this low participation rate include the stigma about receiving what used to be called “food stamps,” lack of knowledge of the program, and the need for assistance in navigating what can be a complicated application process.

During the pandemic, the federal government provided additional funding — emergency allotments (EAs) — to boost states’ SNAP benefits. In Vermont during this time, the average monthly 3SquaresVT benefit was \$400 per household.

“These EAs and other temporary policies helped to ensure that food insecurity rates did not meaningfully increase overall in 2020 or 2021 compared to 2019,” according to research by the Center on Budget and Policy Priorities (CBPP). “These relief

efforts also contributed to food insecurity reaching a two-decade low for families with children in 2021,” CBPP reports.

With the discontinuation of the EAs in March 2023, “folks are seeing food prices go up and their average monthly benefits go down,” said Teddy Waszazak, policy leader for Hunger Free Vermont. “Vermonters have fewer dollars to work with, and those dollars can’t be stretched as far as they used to be.”

Working for systemic change

In its effort “to end the injustice of hunger for everyone” in Vermont, Hunger Free Vermont advocates for permanent systemic change. It led the Universal School Meals Campaign to provide every public school student in Vermont with daily access to breakfast and lunch.

At the beginning of the pandemic, the federal government eliminated all eligibility requirements for the school meals program, thus ensuring that all Vermont children attending public schools could receive free meals. When that federal money ended last year, the state Legislature allocated state funds to continue the school meals.

The program became permanent in June when Gov. Phil Scott allowed the Universal School Meals bill to become law without his signature.

Dubbed “Give 3SquaresVT a Boost!,” Hunger Free Vermont’s 2024 policy agenda includes three priorities for advocacy:

1. Exempting community college students from the federal “work for food” rule, which requires students to work an average of 20 hours per week to receive the benefit.

2. Implementing a state program to allow 3SquaresVT benefits to be used in Vermont restaurants.

3. Raising the minimum 3SquaresVT monthly benefit by changing the formula upon which it is based.

“Ending hunger in Vermont will only happen when low-income Vermonters can meet all of their basic needs at the same time,” said Horton in the briefing.

“And this work has already begun,” she said, citing the universal school meals program, the expansion of the state earned income tax credit, the Legislature’s creation of the strongest state child tax credit in the country, historic investment in child care and housing, and what she characterized as unprecedented funding for the Vermont Foodbank in the last year’s state budget.

Food pantries are maxed out

“People are suffering from hunger right now, and policy fixes take time,” Horton said. “Right now we have to get up underneath our emergency and charitable food system. State funding for the Vermont Foodbank needs to be continued because our food pantry network in Vermont is beyond maxed out,” she said.

The Vermont Foodbank provides about 12 million pounds of food annually through a network of more than 300 community



ELLEN PRATT/THE COMMONS

Ann Buckingham, one of 50 volunteers at the Putney Foodshelf, packs food for delivery.

partners — food shelves, meal sites, senior centers, after-school programs, schools, and hospitals.

Last year, the state allocated \$3 million to the Vermont Foodbank. This year, the Foodbank is requesting \$5 million in response to a “huge increase in need for food,” said Carrie Stahler, its government and public affairs officer.

“The Foodbank and our network partners are the backstop for our neighbors who are making difficult decisions about how to use their limited dollars,” she said.

In Windham County, the Foodbank has close to 100 network partners of varying sizes, according to Zach Hebert, associate manager for community engagement for the Foodbank’s southern region.

“That number doesn’t paint a fully accurate picture of the activity happening in the area,” Hebert said, because many other organizations are doing charitable food work but are not network partners and, therefore, not tracked.

‘There’s no sign of slowing’

The Putney Foodshelf, a network partner of the Vermont Foodbank, has seen an increase in the need for food locally. People made 5,572 visits between July 2022 and June 2023.

“I thought our numbers would drop down after the pandemic, and they did briefly,” said Hannah Pick, executive director. “But they have been increasing for over a year now. We served 184 households two weeks ago. I’ve never seen our numbers as high as they are right now, and there’s no sign of slowing down.”

Acknowledging the stigma associated with food insecurity, Pick said the food shelf models itself on a grocery store, which gives shoppers autonomy in their shopping experience.

“We work so hard to create a sense of dignity,” said Pick. “We just want to normalize the

Measuring hunger

Some examples of questions used by U.S. Department of Agriculture’s Economic Research Service to assess the food security of households in the U.S., in 2022:

- “We worried whether our food would run out before we got money to buy more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
- “The food that we bought just didn’t last, and we didn’t have money to get more.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
- “We couldn’t afford to eat balanced meals.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?
- “The children were not eating enough because there

wasn’t enough money for food.” Was that often, sometimes, or never true for you in the last 12 months?

- In the last 12 months, did you ever cut the size of any of the children’s meals because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes or no.)
- In the last 12 months, did any of the children ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes or no.)
- In the last 12 months, did you or other adults in your household ever not eat for a whole day because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes or no.)
- In the last 12 months, did you ever eat less than you felt you should because there wasn’t enough money for food? (Yes or no.)

experience.”

Foodworks, a food shelf in Brattleboro run by Groundworks Collaborative, also reports an increased need locally. Between July 2022 and June 2023, Foodworks served 4,087 individuals, including 1,099 children. This is up from 3,552 individuals served the previous year.

“Every day we hear from shoppers about how high costs across the board force them to make difficult decisions,” said Foodworks Director Andrew Courtney.

“For many in our community, after paying rent or mortgage, transportation costs, and medical bills, there are insufficient resources to meet their household’s food needs,” he said. “This problem seems to acutely impact senior citizens in our community living on fixed incomes.”

The Windham Regional Hunger Council is a network of individuals and organizations working on hunger issues

regionally. Through monthly meetings, council members collaborate and share information to strengthen each others’ work.

“Our goal is to maximize services, not duplicate them,” said Trisha Paradis, the council’s co-chair and executive director of the Springfield Family Center (SFC).

SFC works to connect families to charitable food resources in Springfield, where one in three residents struggles with food insecurity.

Paradis has seen an increase in need since before the pandemic, when the agency distributed 18 meals a day.

“Now I’m serving 60–100 meals a day,” she said. “We are in more of a food crisis now than we ever were close to being before Covid,” she said.

Given the grim statistics, where does she find hope?

“I find hope in the people that we work with every day,” Paradis said. “In the network of organizations, in the people in the community who want to help.”

She finds hope “in the organizations and businesses that are willing to put themselves out and support the work that we do in that community.”

“Those are the things that put a shining light at the end of the tunnel,” Paradis said.

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

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

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AROUND THE TOWNS

Local lawmakers plan forums around the county

With the 2024 legislative session set to begin on Jan. 3 in Montpelier, lawmakers will be holding forums around Windham County to field questions about issues that will be addressed at the State House.

State and local lawmakers will host a forum in the top floor meeting room of the Rockingham Free Public Library in Bellows Falls on Thursday, Dec. 7, at 6:30 p.m.

Windham County Sens. Nader Hashim and Wendy Harrison will be joined by Reps. Michelle Bos-Lun and Leslie Goldman, who jointly represent the Windham-3 district (Brookline, Rockingham, and Westminster).

Subsequent community conversations are planned at the RFPL for the third Saturday of each month at 10:30 a.m. during the legislative session from January through May.

In Brattleboro at Brooks Memorial Library, Harrison and Hashim will join the three Brattleboro representatives — Mollie Burke, Emilie Kornheiser, and Tristan Toleno — for a public forum on Saturday, Dec. 9, at 10 a.m., in the library's third-floor meeting room to discuss their priorities for the upcoming 2024 legislative session. Coffee and tea will be provided.

Rep. Sara Coffey, who represents Guilford and Vernon, continues her "Coffee with Coffey" meetups. The next one will take place on Saturday, Dec. 9,

from 10 to 11 a.m., at Broad Brook Community Center, at 3940 Guilford Center Road. Constituents can ask questions, hear legislative updates, raise concerns, and discuss the issues. Coffee, tea, and treats will be provided.

Coffee with Coffey happens on the second Saturday of every month, from 10 to 11 a.m., alternating between Broad Brook Community Center in Guilford and the Vernon Free Library. The 2024 schedule calls for meetings in Guilford on Jan. 13, March 9, and May 11, and in Vernon on Feb. 10, April 13, and June 8.

Rep. Emily Long, who represents Newfane, Townshend, and Marlboro, holds constituent meetings on third Saturday of the month at 10:30 a.m. at Moore Free Library in Newfane. Upcoming meetings are set for Dec. 16, Jan. 20, Feb. 17, March 16, April 20, May 18, and June 15.

Nordic Harmoni hosts holiday concert

LONDONDERRY — Nordic Harmoni invites all to join them in bringing in the holiday season with some of the traditional Swedish and American songs on Friday, Dec. 8, at 7 p.m., in the Second Congregational Church, 2051 Main St. (Route 11). The evening will include traditional holiday songs, a Lucia pageant, and refreshments. Nordic Harmoni is proud to be part of the American Union of Swedish Singers and is under the direction of Lorri Bond.

Each year on Dec. 13, the

people of Sweden and Swedish communities all over the world begin the festival of Sankta Lucia before dawn. Sankta Lucia celebrations light up mid-winter darkness. Representing Lucia this year will be Kamron Yuengling.

For more information: visit auss.org/nordic or their Facebook page, or contact Carl-Erik Westberg at 802-824-6578, varmland@comcast.net.

Bookmaking workshop offered

BELLOWS FALLS — On Saturday, Dec. 9 at 10 a.m., the Little Art Supply Store, 3 Westminster St., will host a bookmaking workshop for teens and adults. "Making and Decorating Unique Folded Books" is a chance to create delightful small items for gifts, and to learn how to make simple but elegant small books.

Participants will work with various tools and papers to make two or three small books suitable for pocket jotters and notebooks. Basic bookmaking techniques will include working with a variety of papers folded in many ways. There will be a selection of art materials with which to decorate pages and covers.

All participants will go home with several books they have created and knowledge of how to continue making books on their own.

No prior bookmaking experience is needed for this workshop. Both beginners to bookmaking and more advanced participants are welcome and will benefit! Teens and adults are welcome. Visit littleartsupplystore.com for

more information or to register.

St. Michael's Choir presents Service of Lessons and Carols

BRATTLEBORO — A Service of Lessons and Carols will be offered Sunday, Dec. 10, at 4 p.m., at St. Michael's Episcopal Church, at the corner of Bradley Avenue and Putney Road.

In addition to readings for the season and congregational singing of Advent carols, St. Michael's Choir will offer a diverse set of old and new Advent anthems by Victoria, Rutter, Skempton, Vaughan Williams, and Lauridsen.

This will be the first Lessons and Carols to be directed by St. Michael's newly appointed music director, Keane Southard, who urges, "come join in this yearly tradition of scripture and music as we look forward to celebrating the birth of Christ." The event is free; the church is ADA compliant. For more information, call 802-254-6048.

Luskin hosts Writing to the Light Writing Circle

NEWFANE — On Sunday, Dec. 10, from 1 to 3:30 p.m., at Moore Free Library, writer and educator Deborah Lee Luskin will lead the seventh annual Writing to the Light Writing Circle.

At this annual end-of-year fundraiser for Moore Free Library, writers of all kinds and all levels of experience are invited to reflect on the light in their life

FROM SECTION FRONT

Sharlow

babysitting for the Dunham family."

That year, at a dance at the Armory (now the Gibson-Aiken Center), she met a friend who introduced her to her future husband, a handsome man in an Army uniform. A year later, after graduating from high school in Hinsdale, she married him.

"Arthur 'Bud' Jacobs served in the Army during World War II, where he participated in the Battle of the Bulge. He was a shotgung runner," she says.

"He was so handsome in that uniform," says Sharlow with the smile of a young girl in love.

After the war ended, Jacobs was assigned to spend a year in Germany.

"It was a dangerous place to be because some Germans refused to believe the war was over and they would shoot at the American servicemen," she says.

Jacobs was six years older than Sharlow, making him 23 when they met.

"My sister Kitty said, 'Are you really going to marry that old man?' remembers Sharlow with a hearty laugh.

'Welcome, Thelma'

The newlyweds set up house-keeping on the corner of Northern Avenue (a road that would be discontinued by the construction of Interstate 91) and

Western Avenue. They lived with Jacobs' mother, while he went to work at the Book Press and Sharlow began working at what then was the Holstein-Friesen Association of America.

"My name is Thelma Colleen, and everyone up until that time called me Colleen," says Sharlow, whose new boss had other ideas.

"I had filled out the application with my full name," she says. "On my first day, my new boss said, 'Welcome, Thelma.'"

"And I told him, 'Thank you. I actually go by my middle name, Colleen.'"

"He didn't miss a beat — he acted like he didn't hear me and said, 'OK, Thelma.'"

"Everyone has called me Thelma since that day," says Sharlow with a laugh. "That's the way things worked back in the day."

Sharlow continued working at the Holstein for the next 18 years, along the way becoming a working mother. The couple's four children — Betty, Arthur, Randy, and Colleen — came along between 1949 and 1958.

"I lost a child between my two boys," Sharlow says with a sense of resignation in her voice.

In fact, Sharlow has seen a tremendous amount of loss in her life. When questioned, she says with stoicism and determination, "I'm a survivor. I'm going to be

95 on June 20 this next year."

Sharlow's mother-in-law, Minnie (Carpenter) Jacobs, who continued living with the couple until her death, developed Alzheimer's disease.

"It ran in my husband's family," Sharlow says. "His aunt also had it, and his brother had it, too."

She recently lost two of her children to Alzheimer's as well.

Her son Arthur died of the disease in 2020 at the age of 67. Sharlow cared for her youngest daughter Colleen for many years at home until she had to go to a nursing home. Colleen died this past August. She was 65.

"Children aren't supposed to go before their parents," says Sharlow.

There was another huge loss even before that.

"Bud and I bought a camp on Lake Eden in northern Vermont," she says. "We loved to go up and enjoy the water in the summertime, but really, it was a hunting camp."

In 1975, while hunting in that area with their two sons, Jacobs suffered a heart attack and died in the woods. His elder son found him.

Bud Jacobs was 52. "Everybody says I'm strong," Sharlow says with acceptance, "but really, we're all strong. Some of us have just been put to the test more than others. I have my bad days just like anybody else. There have been a lot of things I wish I could change, but I couldn't."

'I've been lucky'

Sharlow would rather put a positive emphasis on all that she has experienced in her 94 years.

She would eventually leave the Holstein-Friesien Association for a career in the insurance industry, where she eventually was supervisor of the commercial lines department at Richards, Gates, Hoffman, and Clay Insurance, now The Richards Group.

In 1985, she married Lionel Sharlow. They retired in 1993 and moved to Florida for 14 winters, according to a letter to the editor of the *Brattleboro Reformer* which she wrote in 2008. ("To all those not happy with the *Reformer's* editorials, please move to Florida, and you will be very happy," she wrote.)

Lionel died in 2010. They were together for 25 years.

Special Christmas Breakfast to honor memory of fire victim

Funds to benefit Lucas Rawson, who lost his mother, home, and all his belongings in house fire

BRATTLEBORO — Organizers are accepting reservations for a Special Christmas Breakfast fundraiser to honor the memory of Deirdre Baker, a local cancer survivor and community volunteer who recently died in a fire.

The Dec. 25 event at the Marina Restaurant will feature 100-person seatings at 8 a.m. and 9:30 a.m. for those who call 802-257-7563 no later than Wednesday, Dec. 20.

Baker's friends are set to offer a by-donation buffet of scrambled eggs, pancakes, sausage, biscuits, gravy, fruit, coffee, tea, and juice.

All proceeds will benefit Baker's son, Lucas Rawson, who is also the beneficiary of a crowdfunding drive to help him in the aftermath of his losing his mother, his home, and all his belongings.

The fundraiser, hosted on gofundme.com, calls on the public to help "Lucas recover from the loss of his mother and home."

"Lucas has been left with nothing but the clothes he had on," writes the description of the campaign, organized by Zach Zumburski. "Lucas has the same kind and generous spirit that his mother had. Even though money can never replace everything he has lost, he now needs to find a place to live, be able to furnish it, start a new wardrobe and any other items we take for granted just having in our homes."

Baker, 61, was known from 2007 to 2013 for organizing the former Charlie Slate Christmas Breakfast, which held its 40th and final event last year.

Organizers hope this month's special gathering will allow friends to remember Baker and raise funds for her surviving family.

"We're doing this because we love Deirdre," volunteer Craig Bengtson said.

To view the GoFundMe campaign, visit bit.ly/743-lucas.

in a supportive writing circle. Participants will write to illuminate their inner light, honor their inner voice, and tell whatever stories arise to be told. Prompts and guidance for automatic writing will be provided, with a safe space for those who wish to read their new words.

The workshop is free. Donations to the Moore Free Library will be gratefully accepted; they can be sent electronically at moorefreelibrary.org or by mail to 23 West St., Newfane, VT 05345.

Christmas lunch served

DUMMERSTON — Evening Star Grange and Senior Solutions present their second Wednesday Lunch on Wednesday, Dec. 13 with take-outs available from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and in-house seating at noon. This will be their Christmas luncheon and the only meal served this month at the Grange.

The menu will be roast loin of

pork, cabbage casserole, mashed potatoes with gravy, and beets, with gingerbread for dessert. The vegetarian main course option will be quiche.

Reservations are strongly suggested and can be made by calling the Grange at 802-254-1138. Leave name, phone number, number of meals, and whether eating in or taking out. This will help them prepare enough food for everyone. A donation of \$3 for those 60 and above and \$4 for those under 60 is suggested. The next senior meal will be on Wednesday, Jan. 10, with a menu to be decided.

PUBLIC NOTICES

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

Windham Solid Waste Management District will conduct a public hearing to review the FY 25 Budget.

The public hearing will take place on December 14, 2023, @ 6:30 PM in person at 327 Old Ferry Rd, Brattleboro, VT, and via Zoom.

The Zoom link is available at our website (windhamsolidwaste.org) or contact the office at 802-257-0272.

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WWHT dispute

FROM SECTION FRONT

live nearby and for whom Stevens is legal counsel.

"It's a purely legal issue," said Attorney Peter G. Raymond of Sheehy, Furlong, & Behm, P.C., legal counsel for the WWHT. "Because the appeal raises a pure legal question, that's how we intend to proceed."

The Trust has filed a motion for summary judgment in advance of a Dec. 22 deadline.

As explained by Vermont Rules of Procedure, Rule #56, "A party may move for summary judgment, identifying each claim or defense — or the part of each claim or defense — on which summary judgment is sought."

The court is required to grant summary judgment "if the movant shows that there is no genuine dispute as to any material fact and the movant is entitled to judgment as a matter of law. The court should state on the record the reasons for granting or denying the motion."

Bloomberglaw.com clarifies, saying, "in bringing a summary judgment motion, a party is arguing that there can be no real dispute about material facts and the moving party is entitled to win the case as a matter of law."

Further, a motion for summary judgment "does not allow the court to decide issues of fact, but to examine the pleadings and proof to determine if a trial is necessary," the legal research service continues.

This is the third appeal by neighbors to the site where the Trust has been planning since 2019 to build two buildings

with 25 units to serve mixed-income families and individuals on 0.91 acres next to the Putney Community Gardens.

The Trust has won two previous appeals, including one in Vermont Supreme Court.

In the current appeal, Lazar and Campbell contend the Trust's lots are not contiguous and therefore do not qualify for exemptions from aspects of Act 250, the state's land use and development law.

They are also contesting a previous District Commissioner's jurisdictional opinion that concluded the project is exempt from Act 250 land use review.

Stevens has 30 days from Raymond's filing of the summary judgment motion to respond.

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MILESTONES

Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

Obituaries



• **Deirdre Lucretia Baker, 61**, of Brattleboro. Died unexpectedly Nov. 25, 2023 in a fire at her home on Lexington Avenue. Deirdre was born

in Brattleboro on March 30, 1962, the daughter of Owen and Adrienne (Naeve) Baker. She attended local schools and graduated from Brattleboro Union High School with the Class of 1980. For a majority of her working career, Deirdre worked in the hospitality and restaurant business. For several years, she owned and operated her own catering business in the Stratton area, managed Tenderloins Restaurant at Stratton Country Club and, more recently, was employed at the Marina Restaurant in Brattleboro. While studying in France in her younger years, Deirdre worked for a fashion designer in Paris. Deirdre had a flair for fashion and loved a bouquet of happy colors, whether it was in her home or in her fashion style. If it was orange, pink or lime green, Deirdre loved it. The colors truly matched her personality. She carried on the family tradition of golf and was a member of the Brattleboro Country Club. Even though she was surrounded by a family of accomplished golfers, she became serious about the sport while working in Stratton. Deirdre was a people person and enjoyed spending time with her family and her large host of friends. She was known for her spirit of friendship and generosity and her credo "Who can I help next?" Years ago, she faced a serious battle with cancer that included numerous surgeries and treatments. Deirdre is remembered for her courage, faith, and positive outlook when faced with her illness. Her concern though was always still focused on others in need and never herself. Born and raised Catholic, she was a communicant of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church. Deirdre was married to Dennis Rawson in a beautiful mountainside ceremony in August 1998 at the Chapel of the Snows in Stratton. She leaves one son, Lucas Rawson of Brattleboro; a brother, Shawn Baker (Kate) of Carmel, New York; and her companion of 15 years, David Follensbee of Brattleboro, who was by her side through the happy and the sad times. Deirdre would call Dot McKillop her "sister" as well as many lifelong best friends like Jacquelyn "Jackie" Kenny (Terry) of Brookline, New Hampshire. Deirdre had a dear special friend, Gay Pfennig of Vernon, who never missed a daily visit with Dee, never, even up until her last evening. Deirdre had many "sisters" and there are many, many more. Additionally, she is survived by Aunt Serena, Uncle Brandon and Uncle Gavin. Deirdre also leaves behind her loving and fun cousins Jasmine, Jesse, and Hunter. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial gathering and celebration of her life will be held on Monday, Dec. 11 at the Elk's Home on Putney Road from noon until 4 p.m. Donations may be made to a GoFundMe account, [gofundme.com/f/37gmim2za0](https://www.gofundme.com/f/37gmim2za0), established for the benefit of her son Lucas, who lost his home and all of the family's possessions in the Nov. 25 fire. To share a memory or offer condolences to the Baker family, visit [atamaniuk.com](https://www.atamaniuk.com).



• **Christopher James "Chris" Barnard, 50**, of West Brattleboro. Died unexpectedly at home on Nov. 15, 2023, following a courageous battle with cancer. Chris was born in Brattleboro on April 17, 1973, the son of Paul H. and Rebecca (Ellingwood) Barnard. He was raised and educated in Hinsdale, New Hampshire, attending Hinsdale High School. He was employed as a foreman for Lewis Tree Company for the past 15 years and previously had worked for Wayside Fence Company, C&S

Wholesale Grocers in Brattleboro, and for Roto Rooter. Chris loved the outdoors and spending time at the beach, especially in Key West, Florida. He loved taking long walks with his wife and three dogs, Louie, Martin, and Maci. Chris also enjoyed fishing and keeping a large vegetable garden. Additionally, he was a pool shark and enjoyed playing billiards. On July 30, 2022, at a beach wedding in Key West, he was married to Erica McCarthy. Tragically, his wife and soulmate died on Nov. 18, three days following his death. Chris leaves his parents of Hinsdale; son Brandon and daughter Jordan Barnard, both of Brattleboro; a sister, Stacy Barnard LaPointe of Winchester, New Hampshire; stepsons Jakob and Devin Dupuis of Westfield, Massachusetts and Matthew Shippee of Chesterfield, New Hampshire; and stepdaughter Teila Dupuis of Westfield. Additionally, Chris is survived by three grandchildren and many nieces, nephews and several cousins. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A service in celebration of the lives of both Chris and Erica will be held on Saturday, Jan. 13, from 1 to 4 p.m., at American Legion Post 5 on Linden Street in Brattleboro. Donations to the Windham County Humane Society, P.O. Box 397, Brattleboro, VT 05302. To offer condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](https://www.atamaniuk.com).



• **Erica Teresa Barnard, 49**, of West Brattleboro. Died unexpectedly at her home on Nov. 18, 2023. Erica was born in Springfield, Massachusetts on Jan. 17, 1974, the daughter of Frederick and Alice (DeCarlo) McCarthy. She was raised and educated in Hinsdale, New Hampshire and was a graduate of Hinsdale High School, Class of 1992. She went on to attend Springfield Technical Community College, earning an associate's degree in health sciences. She worked as a respiratory therapist for LinCare in Brattleboro and at Western Massachusetts Hospital in Westfield. Previously, Erica had been employed at St. Vincent's Medical Center in Worcester, Massachusetts. Erica enjoyed spending time at the beach, especially Key West, taking nature walks with her husband and their three dogs, gardening her flower beds, and sharing time with her family. On July 30, 2022, at a special beach wedding in Key West, she married Christopher James Barnard. Her loving husband died on Nov. 15, three days prior to her death. Survivors include two sons, Jakob and Devin Dupuis, both of Westfield; a daughter, Teila Dupuis and her husband Harris Miller, also of Westfield; stepson Brandon Barnard and stepdaughter Jordan Barnard of Brattleboro; her mother of Myrtle Beach, South Carolina; a sister, Shannon Flaugh of Springfield; half-brother Carl McCarthy of Boston; stepsister Kim MacDonnell of Longmeadow, Massachusetts; and three grandchildren, Leo, Charlotte, and Brooklyn. Additionally, she leaves two nephews, Cory and Dylan, and a niece, Haley. Erica was predeceased by her father. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A service in celebration of the lives of both Erica and Chris will be held on Saturday, Jan. 13, from 1 to 4 p.m., at American Legion Post 5 on Linden Street in Brattleboro. Donations to the Florida Keys Wildlife Society, PO Box 431840, Big Pine Key, FL 33043. To offer condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](https://www.atamaniuk.com).

• **Grace Alice (Carruth) Betit, 87**, formerly of Whitingham. Died peacefully on Nov. 17, 2023 at Vernon Green Nursing Home, surrounded by family and loved ones. A loving mother, sister, grandmother, aunt, and friend, Grace was born in Wilmington in 1936 to the late Perley and Leone (Forrest) Carruth. On Nov. 7, 1952, Grace married John Anthony Betit at St. Joachim Catholic Church in Readsboro, and made their home in Whitingham where they raised their 14 children. She was predeceased by her husband, John; sons

Joel, Brian, Harley, and Marc Betit; grandson Bradley Slowinski, sons-in-law William Felton and Douglas Crowningshield; and siblings Earl Forrest, Henry Carruth, Florence (Carruth) Veber, and Mary (Carruth) Tower. She is survived by her children: Judith (Matthew) Slowinski, Steven (Darlene) Betit, Jeanette Felton, Charlayne (Andrew) Shepherd, Diane (David) Rogers, Almira (Craig) Aekus, Nicole (James) Slowinski, John Paul Betit, Jennifer (Norman) Herzig, and Lorne (Kristie) Betit, 36 grandchildren, and 66 great-grandchildren. She is also survived by sisters Jane (Carruth) Price and Edith (Carruth) Cote; and a sister-in-law, Ann Betit. Grace was a communicant of Our Lady of Fatima Church in Wilmington, and St. John the Baptist in Colrain, Massachusetts. Everyone who knew Grace will remember her love of knitting that she passed on to many, her amazing banana bread, her green thumb, and how she created and organized crafts to make with her grandchildren, their friends, and classes at school. Many hours were spent around her table playing cards, board games, and putting puzzles together. Her puzzles on the coffee table were enticing to many, making it nearly impossible to stop by for a quick visit. Many children, now adults, remember her generosity and giving heart. Grace spent a lot of time volunteering at local organizations. She was a member and president of the American Legion Auxiliary for several years and was proud to sell poppies for the Auxiliary before and during the Whitingham and Jacksonville Memorial Day parades. She was a member of the Whitingham Ladies' Benevolent Society. She cherished her time as a trustee of the Whitingham Historical Society, where she donated and preserved many artifacts. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A celebratory Mass was held on Dec. 2 at Our Lady of Fatima Church, followed by burial at Sadawga Cemetery. Donations may be made to Our Lady of Fatima Church's Window Restoration Project, Whitingham Ladies' Benevolent Society, Whitingham Historical Society, or the Whitingham Fire Department.



• **Donna Davison Borofsky, 88**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully on Nov. 26, 2023, at Pine Heights in Brattleboro. Donna was born in Rutland in 1935, and adopted as an infant by her loving parents, Orpha and Lawrence "Cub" Davison. When she was very young, her family departed Vermont for a short time to live in a gold mining camp in California. When she was 7, they returned, first to Wilmington, and then to Brattleboro, where she spent the rest of her life. Donna attended and graduated from Brattleboro High School in 1953. While in high school, she met her lifelong partner, Stanley "Pal" Borofsky. They started dating at age 15 and recently celebrated their 66th wedding anniversary. An avid musician, she played the organ from time to time in various local churches. Donna attended the University of Vermont where she was a member of Alpha Epsilon Phi sorority and earned a B.S. in education in 1957. Donna spent over 20 years teaching piano in Brattleboro to local students and adults. Many of her early piano students participated in recitals at Oak Grove School. She spent most of her life volunteering for numerous local schools and nonprofit organizations, including Oak Grove School, the Capital Campaign at Marlboro College, the Brattleboro Drop-In Center, Brattleboro Memorial Hospital, Holton Home, the Estey Organ Museum, the BUHS Alumni Association, Meeting House Hill Cemetery, and the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (where she served on the board for 12 years, as president for four, and then on the special events committee) among others. She was a founding member of the Friends of Brooks Memorial Library, and she served on

the board of trustees at Thompson House. Donna served as a Brattleboro Representative Town Meeting member from its inception until just a few years ago. She was selected for an Arts Merit Award, presented annually by the Vermont Arts Council, in 1996 and received a Community People Award from Brattleboro Savings & Loan in 2005. She was a member of the Brattleboro Area Jewish Community. In the 1970s, Donna was very active in support of the BUHS marching band and hosted many post-performance parties, along with BUHS theater musical cast parties, at home. Donna was an avid reader and her hobbies included playing the piano and organ, gardening and taking regular walks around the neighborhood. She enjoyed traveling the world and vacationing in numerous Caribbean Islands for many years together with "Pal" and various friends and neighbors. Over the years she also enjoyed caring for various pets including dogs, cats, birds, various rodents, fish, turtles, and anything else her two boys brought home. She had a very strong influence on both visual and performing arts with her children. She is survived by her husband Stanley "Pal" Borofsky; sons Scot Borofsky and Brad Borofsky; grandchildren Meagan Faulkner (Tyler), Joaquin Borofsky, and Ansel Borofsky; and great-granddaughter Layla Marilyn Faulkner. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Friends and relatives are invited to join in a celebration of Donna's life at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center on Saturday, Dec. 9, from 2 to 4 p.m. Donations to the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 10 Vernon St., Brattleboro, VT 05301. To offer condolences, visit [atamaniuk.com](https://www.atamaniuk.com).

• **Don G. Elliott, 81**, of Athens. Died on Nov. 18, 2023 in Springfield, Vermont. Don was born on April 7, 1942 in Bridgeport, Connecticut to the late Robert and Hilda (Brown) Elliott. After graduating high school in Monroe, Connecticut, Don entered the Army in 1968 at Fort Benning, Georgia. He married Jayne (Harrington) Elliott and enjoyed 55 years of unconditional love. Don worked as a truck driver and also a master woodworker, he loved animals, and was a friend of Bill Wilson for 48 years. Don is survived by his wife and his sister Judy Komar of Fiskdale, Massachusetts. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service was held on Dec. 2 at Fenton & Hennessey Funeral Home in Bellows Falls.

• **Marlene Agnes (Schaarschmidt) Kramer, 89**, of Putney. Died Nov. 1, 2023 in Putney. She was born on Dec. 2, 1933 in New York City, the daughter of Bernhard and Albertina. She was the wife of Raymond Kramer, whom she married on June 25, 1955 in New York City. They celebrated their 68th wedding anniversary this year. Marlene graduated from Adelphi University with a B.A. in mathematics. While raising her family, she also worked for the New York State Board of Cooperative Educational Services (BOCES) providing long-term tutoring for high school mathematics students. Marlene also became an adjunct professor of mathematics at the State University of New York at Old Westbury. After moving to Vermont, Marlene obtained her realtor license and worked for various local offices including Randy Major and Berkley & Veller. Above all, Marlene was a beloved mother, wife, and daughter. She was well known throughout Putney, Westminster and the surrounding areas. She participated in various community activities including Meals on Wheels, sang in local choirs and provided housing and meals for actors and musicians as they toured the local venues. Marlene was a juried water color artist and a member of the Vermont Watercolor Society. She displayed locally and in prestigious locations such as Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Her watercolor paintings reflected her passion for flowers and outdoor landscapes, which was also shown by the time and energy she spent on her own gardens and tours open to the public for sharing their peace, beauty, and tranquility. Marlene's deep appreciation of nature was also shown by her long-time membership in and monthly contribution to the Sierra Club. She enjoyed all the seasons of Vermont and could be seen snowshoeing, cross-country skiing or lounging and swimming at Spofford Lake in New Hampshire or Jones Beach in New York. Marlene also pioneered a path of healthy living for herself and her family well before it was the "in" thing. Marlene is survived by her husband; children Raymond Jr., Linda Van Yahres, and Thomas; and grandchildren Alyssa, Lauren, Julie, Adam, Christopher, Audrey and Leslie. Marlene is also survived by a number of cousins, nieces and nephews. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Services will be held privately at the convenience of the family.

• **Wayne M. Peters, 54**, of Vernon. Died Oct. 22, 2023 at the Jack Byrne Palliative & Hospice Care Center in Lebanon, New Hampshire after a brief battle with liver cancer. Wayne was born on April 13, 1969 to Victor and Marie (Mitchell) Peters. He grew up in a large family in Provincetown, Massachusetts.

From a young age, Wayne had a personality that was larger than life. He was known for his jokes, quick-witted comebacks, and for the funny nicknames he came up with for just about everyone he met. He moved to Vermont in the 1990s, where he became an accomplished roofer and handyman. Known by all as a hard worker, he worked for several companies in the area over the years, including GPI, Walker Roofing, and Barrows Roofing & Set Specialists. In his off-time, Wayne enjoyed fishing, hunting, boating, dirt bike/ATV riding, traveling and, most of all, spending time with his family and friends. Wayne was predeceased by his parents, brother-in-law Scott; siblings Robert, Richard, Daniel, and June; his wife Brenda; and his beloved dog Bandit. Wayne leaves behind his daughter Lauren, son Milo, sister Candice; brothers Joe, John, and Victor; several cousins, nieces, and nephews—including his nephew Victor, with whom he was extremely close. He also leaves his stepsons Tony and Wayne, their families, and several friends including longtime friends Alex, Jeremy, Dean, and Gail. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: He will be buried in his hometown with his parents. A celebration of his life will be held this summer. The date and location will be announced in the spring.



• **Thomas Bramble "Tom" Ragle, 96**, of Guilford. Died peacefully, surrounded by family, on Nov. 28, 2023. He was a poet, educator, philosopher, and perennial seeker of answers to life's most thorny questions. He will be remembered by many as president of Marlboro College for 23 years and by countless others as the patriarch of a family that knew no boundaries. Joining was simply a matter of wanting to be a member. Born on Nov. 25, 1927, Tom was the son of the late Dr. Benjamin Harrison Ragle and Marguerite Williams Ragle of Boston. His siblings include his late brothers, Richard H. Ragle and John W. Ragle, and his late sister Jane R. Robbins. He was married to his beloved wife, Nancy Koch Ragle for 58 years. Together, they raised their children Kathy Wilde Clark (Richard), Bill Koch (Kate), Melendy Koch Fabian (Kevin), Robin Ragle-Davis (Carter), Fritz Koch (Hiroko), Tim Ragle (Susan), and the late, much loved, Elizabeth Koch Graham (Scott). He had 12 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren and was able to keep close track of every single one. In the "no boundaries" family, countless others merit special mention but doing so might accidentally leave someone off the list. All were much beloved, and he kept close watch and proffered fatherly advice to each. Tom graduated from Shady Hill, Phillips Exeter Academy, and Harvard College with an A.B. in ancient Greek history and literature, as well as Oxford University with a B.A. and M.A. in English language and literature. These experiences sparked a love of education that would inform the rest of his life as well as many decades championing the value of a liberal arts education. He believed liberal arts provided the solid foundation upon which a thoughtful and ethical life depended. Tom began his professional career teaching English at Exeter Academy. After serving in the Army, he went on to serve as president of Marlboro College for 23 years (1958-1981). From 1981-83, he served as visiting professor and special assistant to the president at the University of Vermont, from 1983-89 as director of the Salzburg Seminar in Austria, from 1989-91 as special consultant to the United Nations Development Program in Beijing, China and, finally, as a visiting professor and special assistant to the president of Trinity College in Burlington before retiring to the family's 1780 farm in Guilford in 1993. He was an active member and leader of many charitable, community, educational and ecclesiastical organizations including Write Action, Guilford Community Church, Vermont Higher Education Council, Vermont Council on the Humanities, Vermont Board of Bar Examiners, Governor's Commission on Education, Vermont Higher Education Planning Commission, New England Association of Schools and Colleges, Commission on Institutions of Higher Education, Vermont Foundation of Independent Colleges, The Crosby Foundation, The Stowe School, and Brattleboro Music Center, among others. His strongest desire was always to write poetry, releasing *For Family and Friends* and then the positively-reviewed *Take This Song* under the pen name Lee Bramble. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service celebrating Tom's life will be held at Guilford Community Church on Monday, Dec. 18, at 1:30 p.m. Donations to the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center.

• **Doris E. Rice, 101**, of Saxtons River. Died on Nov. 29, 2023 at Cheshire Medical Center in Keene, New Hampshire. Doris was born March 20, 1922 in Athens to Raymond and Pearle (Torrey) Haley. Doris attended schools in Lrafton and Cambridgeport, and later worked at the Mary Meyer Toy Company in Townshend. She retired from Readex in Chester. Doris loved cats, sending

cards to people, and had an outstanding memory of dates. Doris was also known for keeping up with current events and news and was a fan of Bernie Sanders. Doris is survived by her daughter, Iris Haley of Somerville, Massachusetts; a brother, Bernard "Pete" Haley of Grafton; and several nephews and nieces. Doris was predeceased by her parents and siblings Charlotte, Gertrude, Merton, Lewis, Cecil, Gordon, Ruby and Lawrence. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A graveside service was held on Dec. 4 at Saxtons River Village Cemetery. Donations to the Saxtons River Volunteer Fire Department or to the Bellows Falls Senior Center.



• **Violet Celia (Wojchick) Seppala, 100**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully on Nov. 19, 2023 at Vernon Green Nursing Home. Daughter of the late Stanley and Edna (Cormier) Wojchick, she was born in Adams, Massachusetts on Oct. 3, 1923. Violet lived in Brattleboro, residing in the same house on South Main Street with her spouse, William, their whole married life. Together, she and William raised four children and were very involved in their lives. All her children graduated from St. Michael's School and eventually got married. Violet was very proud that all four of her children have been married to their same spouses for more than 50 years each, a level of commitment you don't always find in society today. Violet also loved the opportunity to hit the casino with William, Judy, and Barb and play the slots. When William could no longer drive, her daughters Barb and Judy would still take them to the casino once a month. She also loved Shiner's Bingo every Monday night. In November 2022, Violet's health began to deteriorate. Knowing she needed more help, the family moved her to Vernon Green Nursing Home. She was predeceased by her husband William E. Seppala in 2016. She is survived by her children, Judy (Stuart) Monroe, Tom (Linda) Seppala, Barb (Tom) Simeon, and JoAnn (Philip) Bailey; 12 grandchildren, 30 great-grandchildren and seven great-great-grandchildren. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Private burial services will be held with immediate family in the spring at St. Michael's Cemetery in Brattleboro. To send condolences, visit [phaneuf.net](https://www.phaneuf.net).

• **Gertrude Elizabeth "Betty" (Yorke) Sprague, 91**, of Readsboro. Died Nov. 28, 2023 at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington. She was born in Millinocket, Maine on July 21, 1932, a daughter of Milton Stillman Yorke and Hattie Naomi (Ayers) Yorke. She graduated from Drury High School in North Adams, Massachusetts. Betty worked at the Mount Snow Ski Area for more than 20 years until her retirement. She was a member of the Readsboro Baptist Church. Betty was devoted to her family and especially enjoyed spending time with her grandchildren. She was an avid reader. She was the widow of Gilbert Dean Sprague, who died in 2002. They were married on Nov. 25, 1950. Survivors include a daughter, Kelly Sprague Wheeler of Troy, Maine; two sons, Keith Sprague of Searsburg and Kris Sprague of Townshend. She also leaves nine grandchildren; 13 great-grandchildren; a sister, Sue Ellen Brown of Readsboro; and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her son, Kevin Sprague, on April 25, 2023, as well as her brothers David and Milton Yorke. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral was held on Dec. 6 at Readsboro Baptist Church. Burial will be in the spring in North Hill Cemetery in Readsboro. Donations may be made to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital ([stjude.org/givehope](https://www.stjude.org/givehope)).



• **Michael Clayton Wood, 77**, of Brattleboro. Died peacefully on Nov. 25, 2023, with his loving wife, Jill, and a dear family friend at his side.

Born on Oct. 16, 1946 in Brockton, Massachusetts, the son of Edward Wood, Mike left a lasting mark on the hearts of those who knew him. Michael is survived by his devoted wife, Jill; his sisters Cindy and Judy; his daughter, Sarah; son-in-law, Aaron; and grandchildren Morgan and Bennett. Mike had a passion for Vermont where he forged lasting friendships that enriched his life, making Vermont his cherished sanctuary. One of Mike's great passions was racing and working on classic cars. His craftsmanship was a testament to his meticulous nature and pride in his work. May his spirit endure in the memories of those he touched. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A graveside service will be held at Meeting House Hill Cemetery on Dec. 9 at 11 a.m., immediately followed by a celebration of life at the Brattleboro Eagle's Club No. 2445. All are welcome to attend. Donations to the Shriners Children's Hospitals ([shrinerschildrens.org](https://www.shrinerschildrens.org)).

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

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Wednesday, December 6, 2023

page A5

New owners of Mocha Joe's see themselves part of a 'transition to new generation'

Entrepreneurs purchase iconic coffee shop amid a swirl of change for Brattleboro's downtown

By Randolph T. Holhut
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—As business owners, husband-and-wife team Kate Barry and Bruce Hunt know all about the challenges facing the downtown area.

Barry co-owns the Collective Lounge & Bar on Elliot Street, and together, she and Hunt operate a property management company. Barry also runs the local office of a real estate brokerage, eXp Realty, from the Hooker-Dunham Building on Main Street.

But Barry and Hunt also know all about what makes Brattleboro a place where people want to live and work and play. So when the opportunity arose to buy an iconic and well-loved Main Street business, they jumped at the chance.

Ellen and Pierre Capy opened Mocha Joe's Coffee House in 1991, in the space formerly occupied by Joe's Shoe Repair, and they brought gourmet and organically grown coffee to town. The café spawned a successful whole-bean roasting business that now supplies more than 100 stores and restaurants around New England.

In recent years, the Capys have wanted to focus on their roasting operation on Frost Street rather than the coffee shop on Main Street, but they also wanted to make sure that the coffee shop would end up in the hands of someone local who would continue it in its present form.

While the Capys had multiple offers for the café, they went with Barry and Hunt, who officially took over the operation on

Nov. 29.

The Capys are not retiring, though. They will continue to run their Frost Street roasting operation, confident that the coffee shop they started more than three decades ago is in good hands.

While it sounds like Barry and Hunt already have their hands full raising a family and running multiple businesses, Barry said she was unfazed by the challenge of adding Mocha Joe's to their portfolio.

"When you create enough good systems, you can do anything when you have a good team around you and a vision, a plan, and a method of execution," she said. "The reason we really liked this business is that it is a turnkey operation. All the hard work has been done [by Ellen and Pierre Capy] — they built the brand, they built the customer base, they have the beans and the quality of their products."

Barry and Hunt also inherit a staff that she describes as "incredible."

"There's really not that much for us to do, except put our money into it," she said of the business.

"They are such an established brand and such a part of Brattleboro for such a long time," said Hunt. "It's a lot of value."

Those factors are why they're adopting an if-it-ain't-broke-don't-fix-it approach. Aside from adding a few new locally produced baked goods to the menu and expanding the café's social media presence, Barry and Hunt promised that all the things that made Mocha Joe's successful on



Kate Barry and Bruce Hunt are the new owners of Mocha Joe's Coffee House in Brattleboro.

RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT, THE COMMONS

Main Street won't change.

"A lot of the other offers were coming from out of state," said Barry, who added that in the process of purchasing the business, they learned that other prospective buyers "wanted to change the name or redo the space."

"It was too tragic, almost," she said. "Mocha Joe's is really special to us. We've lived, worked, breathed downtown Brattleboro. It's the first place I ever came to in Brattleboro. It made me feel like, 'Wow, this is a place I could live and feel comfortable.' There was just a vibe."

Not wanting to lose that vibe, she said, is the reason why they

are so bullish about Brattleboro.

Falling in love with Brattleboro

Barry grew up in Rindge, New Hampshire and came to Brattleboro in 2010 to work on a master's degree in sustainable community development at SIT Graduate Institute.

Hunt came to Brattleboro from Hoosick Falls, New York to work at Echo Point Books, an online book dealer in the former Book Press complex on Putney Road.

They met at the former Mole's Eye Cafe, not long before the bar was destroyed in the Brooks House fire in 2011.

"It was very cliché," Hunt said.

"I taught her how to shoot pool."

"And then I left, and said, 'See you later,' but there was something about Brattleboro that I just couldn't get out of my head," Barry said. "I felt I needed to go back there and be with him and start a family and put my roots down."

It was, she said, "one of those moments where it was not my trajectory and not the plan."

"I was coming back to a place where I can't necessarily use my degree and make any money," she said. "I had a lot of student loans to pay off."

So the new trajectory was bar

management and catering, along with being a real estate agent.

"All customer service things," said Hunt, noting that it has taken "a lot of years, a lot of change, a lot of planning and re-planning and pivoting to adjust to change" to get to where they are now.

And they said they are taking what they've earned in the real estate field and reinvesting in the town they fell in love with.

"Brattleboro, and the people here, are quite resilient," Hunt said. "There is a 'can-do' attitude."

"There are so many people moving to southern Vermont because they want to live here, raise their families here, and bring their businesses here," Barry said. "We do, of course, have an extreme housing affordability crisis on our hands, and I know that's the top topic in the Legislature right now. People want to live here, and we need to create the supply to meet the demand."

A downtown transition

Barry and Hunt admitted they've had "some sleepless nights" since quietly closing the Mocha Joe's deal. Not long after the deal was done, Sam's Outdoor Outfitters announced it would be closing its flagship store at the corner of Main and Flat streets.

She said it was "a holy-crap-what-are-we-getting-ourselves-into moment," but she also noted that it is just part of an ongoing transition of longtime Brattleboro businesses changing hands.

In just the last couple of months, Robert "Woody" Woodworth sold Burrows Specialized Sports to Peter "Fish" Case, and Nancy Braus sold Everyone's Books to Red Durkin.

"We know there will be challenges," Barry said. "It feels more like a changing of the guard, a transition to a new generation downtown, rather than something being lost."

While the headlines of late are dominated by the ongoing grid problem, Barry said she and Hunt "are extremely aware" of the bad things happening downtown.

"It's a challenge, but it's not the whole picture," she said. "There still are a lot of people here who want the best for our town and are putting their skills and creativity into businesses downtown."

And both say they been encouraged by the positive response to the transition at Mocha Joe's.

"It's people saying, 'Wow, people are investing in downtown,'"

SEE MOCHA JOE'S, A6

Bellows Falls bookstore turns page to the next chapter

Pat and Alan Fowler took a worldwide journey, ending up as booksellers in Bellows Falls. Now, they're preparing for their next challenges.

By Robert F. Smith
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—A cornerstone of downtown for more than three decades, Village Square Booksellers (VSB) at 32 The Square will enter the new year with a new owner.

Longtime employee Myles Mickle will take over ownership of VSB from current owners Patricia and Alan Fowler.

VSB was originally run by the Fowlers in a smaller space next to its current location when they purchased it 20 years ago from previous owners Michael and Ellen Tenney, who had founded it in 1992. Mickle has worked at the store for seven years this Christmas.

The actual transfer of ownership will happen around the turn of the year, Mickle said, and he has no plans for any big changes at this point. The name will remain.

The Fowlers will stay on to help through the busy holiday season, then move on to their next projects.

Alan, 78, will be volunteering with Main Street Arts, a community arts and theater group headquartered in Saxtons River. He also is on the board of the local access station FACT-TV. Pat, 74, will become an archivist for the Bellows Falls Historical Society.

A history of adventure

The Fowlers met and married while they were living in Virginia.

Alan, from California, served in the Army, having been stationed in Iran and Italy during the 1960s. When they met, he was working on assignment doing communication work at the White House in Washington, D.C.

Pat, from Forest Hills in Queens, New York, was working



Myles Mickle, left, will become the co-owner and manager of Village Square Booksellers in 2024. Longtime owners Pat and Alan Fowler will be turning their attention to other civic projects.

ROBERT F. SMITH, THE COMMONS

at the Smithsonian Institution in Washington as an archivist.

They met while living in the same building, and married in 1973.

The following year, Alan left the military and they moved to California. Alan worked for a time in his family's irrigation engineering firm, and Pat became an archives consultant, working most notably on the John Steinbeck archives at the National Steinbeck Center in Salinas, among other projects.

She would eventually open the Sea Otter Bookstore in Salinas from 1977 to 1980. By that

time, Alan was working for Ford Aerospace in quality engineering and production management at its Space Systems Division in Palo Alto.

Pat's career would take a similar turn, working in databases and systems, when she started working in electronic material planning, eventually getting a position with the technology giant Apple Inc., where she worked from 1983 to 1986.

Alan had been working with computers since the 1960s, and both were familiar with Apple computers from the early 1980s.

In 1987, Alan took a job as a

production manager for a marine electronics firm on Cape Cod, and they moved to North Falmouth, Massachusetts. Pat worked as a project manager for a computer implementation firm. This lasted until the early 1990s.

These management positions, while well-paying, were also stressful to the Fowlers, whose respective parents had died. So, without any children and being reasonably situated financially, they decided to make a major life change.

The loss of their parents

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Arts

opportunities,” she says. Committed to the human connection and collaboration the arts afford, she wants to “make it easier to be an artist in the state.”

Those connections even extend to her “out of office” auto-responder message.

“There are so many incredible events and performances in Vermont this season, and our arts and culture organizations need your support,” her email replies. “Check out the Vermont Arts Calendar to see what is happening near you: vermontartscouncil.org/arts-calendar.”

Where's the funding?

Being an artist anywhere in the United States can be challenging, given the low level of support this country offers in that sector.

A National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) report in 2000 on arts spending in Australia, Canada, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Netherlands, Sweden, the United Kingdom, and the U.S. shows that, in the research period, the U.S. spent \$6 per capita in support of the arts.

In contrast, Finland spent \$91 per capita and Germany spent \$85 per capita.

The entire budget for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), McClure notes, equals that of the Defense Department's budget for military bands. (“Nothing against military bands,” she adds, “but...”)

Thus, state arts councils must scramble to do their work.

About the VAC budget, Evans McClure explains that “in most non-Covid years, our funding is around 45% state, 45% federal, and 10% private philanthropic funding.”

The yield of hardscrabble resourcefulness is reflected in data from the sixth U.S. Arts & Economic Prosperity study (AEP6), an economic and social impact survey that analyzed data from 120 arts organizations across the state.

According to the survey, administered by Americans for the Arts, a nonprofit arts advocacy organization, the Vermont creative sector generated \$158.6 million in economic activity during 2022 — \$103.2 million in spending by arts and culture organizations and an additional \$55.4 million in event-related expenditures by their audiences.

That economic activity supported 2,712 jobs, provided \$112.8 million in personal income to residents, and generated \$34.8 million in tax revenue to local, state, and federal governments.

“People come to our attractions and are spending money in other ways,” the VAC said in a news release. “There were 1.4 million attendees to arts and cultural events put on by nonprofits in Vermont. Of those attendees, 75% were local; 25% were nonlocal.”

The VAC describes what arts advocates call the multiplier effect.

“When people attend a cultural event, they often make an outing of it, with dining, parking and

other related expenses spending an average of \$34.53 per person per event, beyond the cost of admission,” the organization continued. “Additionally, arts and culture strengthen the visitor economy with 79.4% of nonlocal visitors stating their primary purpose of their visit was specifically to attend an arts event or venue, spending \$51.69 per person per outing.”

The study also notes that both Covid and extreme weather had taken a toll.

With the recent flooding and continued economic recovery from the pandemic's economic upheaval, as well as changes in the job market, the AEP6 study also finds that creative industry expenditures are up around 30% and there are 36% fewer jobs. Attendance at cultural events is down 10% by locals — though up 50% by non-locals — and spending is up 27% per attendee.

“Vermont arts organizations continue to face uncertainty as we work to recover from the devastating impacts of Covid on the arts and culture sector,” Evans McClure said.

And just as the Vermont arts scene was coming up for air this summer, flooding that rivaled that of Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 left many arts sites bereft.

It wasn't how Evans McClure expected to begin her tenure at the VAC.

“While audience participation and attendance is on the rise, artists, arts organizations, and creative businesses continue to face [uncertainties],” she said. “And continued national economic challenges are having an impact on the philanthropic giving that so many organizations rely on.”

At the same time, “these organizations and artists have a tremendous opportunity and are doing incredible work to meet the ever-changing needs of our communities,” Evans McClure said.

Making the rounds

Evans McClure's southern Vermont tour took her first to the Bellows Falls Opera House and the Rockingham Free Public Library. In Brattleboro, she visited the New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA), Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, maker spaces at High Street & Green, Mitchell-Giddings Fine Arts, In-Sight Photography Project, and the Vermont Jazz Center.

She and her colleagues also stopped at Next Stage Arts and Sandglass Theater in Putney, and Potash Hill, the former Marlboro College campus and enduring home of the Marlboro Music Festival that's currently incubating an arts and culture hub.

Brian Mooney of Potash Hill reported that he had a “productive, positive visit” with Evans McClure and with Zon Eastes, Southern Vermont Creative Zone agent for the Vermont Creative Network (bit.ly/743-creative-zones) (VCN), a VAC initiative that encourages arts and artists in six designated zones throughout the state to collaborate, cooperate,

cross-pollinate, and advocate.

The Southern Vermont Creative Zone helped orchestrate the tour and meeting, along with Latchis Hotel, Downtown Brattleboro Alliance, Epsilon Spire, and NECCA.

“I was happy to share some of the history of this beautiful campus and to talk about Potash Hill's exceptional facilities, and our past and future place in the creative economy,” Mooney said. “I will let someone else speak to the challenges. Right now, I'm focused on the encouragement, synergy, and opportunities before us.”

He also observed that Evans McClure “has only been with the Arts Council for a few months, and already her leadership is bringing people together.”

Others echoed those sentiments at the Epsilon Spire event. There are, indeed, challenges, said NECCA Executive Director Jenna Struble. “Performing and visual artists struggle to make a living wage. Arts nonprofits struggle to pay a living wage.”

“Other challenges in our region might be promotion,” Struble added. “We have so many amazing things happening, but sometimes we struggle filling seats and are not sure why that is.”

Many in the local creative sector believe the region has as much to offer as the Berkshires, home of Tanglewood Music Festival, Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival, and Williamstown Theatre Festival, to name just a few stars on that circuit. But the difference in this area is that “there seems to be a lack of good lodging options,” she said.

“We are also challenged in a rural area with people getting to and from [a performance],” Struble continued. “And there is consensus that we would all like our area to be a robust year-round artists in residency destination, but lodging and transportation pose a challenge.”

Evans McClure addressed promotion, urging artists to publicize their organizations' offerings via the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing's website (accd.vermont.gov/tourism) and the VAC calendar (vermontartscouncil.org/arts-calendar).

Of the 340 grants given last year by the VAC individuals, organizations, and businesses statewide, 80 — a full 24% of them — were awarded to artists and organizations in Windham and Bennington counties.

“We continue to have a strong commitment to ensure that Vermont Arts Council grants are distributed equitably across the state and continue to examine geographic distribution of funds,” Evans McClure said.

For a list of FY23 funded projects and a map with a data visualization of the allocation of the grant funding, visit bit.ly/743-arts-grants.

More collaboration needed

Evans McClure's address was peppered with references to the Vermont Creative Network, and she urged participation for artists and organizations that hope to further themselves and their work.

A broad collective of organizations, businesses, and individuals, VCN participants work to advance Vermont's creative sectors along myriad avenues.

The VCN is a resource for networking and advocacy, she said, with the nonprofit committed to getting people together to engage around problems and challenges, solutions, and opportunities.

In a state the size of Vermont, where such interacting seems to be more doable, Evans McClure urged artists and leaders — those who're successful and those struggling — to “come together in the room.”

“It can be isolating to be an artist,” she acknowledged.

Moreover, Evans McClure says, numbers and data are needed to show the undeniably positive impact the arts have on our communities and local economies.

She urged the creative sector to “get bragg,” get involved, and get a seat at the table where advocates, decision-makers, and bean counters convene.



RANDOLPH T. HOLBUT (CASE) AND MACLEAN GANDER (WOODWORTH); COMMONS FILE PHOTOS

Robert “Woody” Woodworth has sold Burrows Specialized Sports to Peter “Fish” Case, inset, one of a number of established downtown Brattleboro businesses on the threshold of change.

Mocha Joe's

FROM SECTION FRONT

Barry said. “People believe [in downtown Brattleboro] and they want to keep that spirit alive and keep the momentum going.”

She said it's “easy to nag on downtown and focus solely on the problems. You have to

acknowledge them, and they have been acknowledged. But you also have to acknowledge the other half of the picture.”

Saying that most people downtown “don't have time to complain because they're too busy working,” Barry feels that

if people want to make downtown Brattleboro better, they need to “shop locally, support local businesses, and see what happens from there.”

“This is the time to do something, when everyone seems afraid,” she said.

Bookstore

FROM SECTION FRONT

confirmed their resolve to enjoy their passions while they were young and in good health. They had become expert sailors while living in California, and they had a love of travel.

They decided to act on that, and they bought a 32-foot Pacific Seacraft 31, a live-aboard deep-water-capable cruiser with auxiliary diesel power. Leaving their high-stress jobs behind, they would make the sailboat their home for the next several years.

They sailed down into the Caribbean Sea, spending anywhere from days to months at various islands along the way, eventually ending up in Trinidad, just off the coast of Venezuela, where they also sailed and spent time.

They next decided to sail to Europe in 1994. Leaving St. Martin in the Caribbean, they sailed for 28 days to the Azores, an archipelago of nine islands in the Atlantic, part of Portugal.

From there it took them 17 days to reach England.

They lived on board their boat in Falmouth, England for about a year. They knew that for their next step they really wanted to see the European mainland. They realized doing so by sailboat was not going to work, limiting them to staying just a few miles from the coast.

“With sailing,” Alan said, “you're kind of stuck on the coast.” You have to anchor offshore, and most of your times is spent watching the boat.

“We lived in England for a year like that,” he continued. “Then we agreed that we didn't want to do that anymore.”

They sold the Seacraft and bought a cargo barge. Europe is filled with an extensive network of canals and is uniquely suited to travel in the interior by barge.

They would spend the next year in England refitting and rebuilding the barge, inside and out, including raising the deck by a foot for more interior headroom.

The 72-foot-long barge was so large, the Seacrest “could have fit in the barge's storage area,” Pat said. Rebuilding it themselves also

gave them an important expertise. “You really have to know everything about the barge if you're going to live and travel on it,” Alan said.

They kept the top deck clean and attractive, which had the added advantage of drawing admiring locals to the boat wherever they traveled through Europe.

“That ended up with us meeting a lot of the local, regular people,” Pat said. “Having our large cat on board also helped.” Locals quickly learned to love the cat.

That was the Fowlers' barge-traveling life from 1992 to 1999, when they decided they would sell the craft and return to the US, find a small town they liked, and start anew there.

“Seven years was enough,” Alan said, noting that after having to care for barge maintenance every day, “I was just tired.”

Back to dry land

Bellows Falls proved to be the town that most appealed to them, offering a full four-season climate. “We don't like hot weather,” Pat explained.

Here, they found a vibrant and growing arts and music scene, a great library, a bookstore, coffeehouses, grocery stores, a meat market, and affordable, decent housing.

“Bellows Falls is like a New York neighborhood,” Pat said. “Everything you need is within a half-mile walk.”

They soon jumped on a chance to take over the local bookstore.

“We saw that we had several people who had had successful careers now living here around Bellows Falls and doing other things,” Pat said. These writers, artists, illustrators and musicians became a core of the community that helped make Village Square Booksellers successful.

They also decided that creating a place that focused on books, toys, games, and more for the children of the community could also become a vital aspect of the bookstore's success.

VSb's future in good hands

While independent bookstores have had “some rough times” over the last few decades with the advent of the Internet and online shopping, Mickle said that “some independent bookstores are coming back stronger than ever, especially on the East Coast.”

The hard work of adapting to restrictions during the Covid pandemic — including delivering books to people parked in their cars — brought VSb through the shutdown with minimal damage.

“We were OK through Covid,” he said. “A lot of people were supportive during that time.”

Operating a small bookstore “is rewarding,” Mickle said. “It's fun to talk with people and help them find what they need.”

Mickle grew up in Westminster, graduated from Bellows Falls Union High School in 2005, and attended Castleton State College.

He owns a house in the village with his husband, Jon Midura, who will co-own the bookstore.

He noted that they are seeing an increase in tourism, and people are drawn to the town because they “see how lovely downtown Bellows Falls is.”

Mickle hopes to restart VSb's author readings in the spring as people become more comfortable gathering in groups again. He said that in the meantime, he is most focused on creating a smooth ownership transition.

Over the coming months, Mickle said they will be developing the downstairs as retail space, especially for toys.

“The community has always been so supportive,” Mickle said. “I love being here. The Bellows Falls downtown is doing so well, which is why we're succeeding. We've invested in the community, and the community is responding.”

Village Square Booksellers will remain open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Sunday to Thursday and from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. on Friday and Saturday. To reach the store, call 802-463-9404 or visit villagesquarebooks.com.

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“Just go sit at the table; don't wait to be invited,” Evans McClure advised.

She further urged participants to get to know legislators, town officers, and other government and civic leaders and keep them informed. Let them hear your success stories and challenges, she said.

And she advised: Run for office — any office — local, state, or federal.

“Things happening at the local level can have a huge impact on arts organizations,” she said.

Where the arts meet public policy

Among the tasks set out for the VAC this year, Evans McClure notes specific policy areas that the organization is working on.

With state programs aimed at downtown redevelopment, for instance, VAC wants to see arts, culture, and historic preservation included in the mix.

In addition, VAC is work on a film incentive program in an effort to encourage more filmmakers to produce their work in Vermont.

After several success stories

were heard and a number of area arts collaborations praised, state Rep. Sara Coffey, D-Guilford, a former arts nonprofit founder and administrator herself, echoed Evans McClure, urging all artists and arts entities to make noise about what they do.

“It hasn't always been an easy road to advocate for the arts,” Coffey said.

“When we put on our legislators' hats, we have tough decisions to make; when it comes to investing your dollars, we need your help to make the case,” she continued. “There's some great momentum, though.”

She added that, due to VAC leadership and because “Windham Country has really been pulling down the grants, whether from the arts council or [from other sources], what's happening here is really exciting.”

Acknowledging the area's new generation of arts leaders coming together, Coffey reminded those assembled “that your state reps are available to you.”

“It's a beautiful thing in Vermont that you have such access to us and that we can have your stories and data that give us a case

to take to Montpelier,” Coffey said. “We need to have the back of the VAC. They'll go in front of the House Appropriations Committee with 15 minutes to make their case. So what's needed is for you to write to your state rep. to tell them how much the arts matter to you and to share a really positive story.”

Indeed, event co-chair Struble made the point: Where else in rural America can one see a world-class circus performance, take a woodworking class with radio personality Tom Bodett, and listen to musicians with a national or global reach, in a range of genres, all in the same week?

“Other states grapple with whether to fund the arts at all,” reported Evans McClure. “That's not the argument here.”

If she has her way, it never will be.



CARRRRIVING OUT space to BELONG

Grrrls 2 the Front tackles gender equity in the music industry, working to solve a 'massive underrepresentation' of women and nonbinary people

By Victoria Chertok
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The arts industry is no different from any other industry when it comes to gender equity. In the traditionally male-dominated fields of music production, engineering, lights and sound, tour management, and stage management, still only a small percentage of women end up in these roles.

In 2022, 30% of artists on the Billboard Hot 100 Year-End chart were women, an increase over 2021's 23.3%.

That's according to a 2023 study by Stacy L. Smith, an associate professor of communication at the University of Southern California Annenberg School for Communication and Journalism who founded the Annenberg Inclusion Initiative, which examined the gender of artists, songwriters, and producers across 1,100 songs from 2012 to 2022.

The study, which analyzed 1,100 songs released over those 11 years, found the overall percentage of female artists was 22.3%. This is a ratio of 3.5 male artists to every 1 female artist.

So, in 2022, Stone Church rolled out Grrrls 2 the Front, a new and expanded program in honor of International Women's Day and International Women's History Month.

"Stone Church believes that the music industry is the best industry in the world, and we know

that women and nonbinary folks are massively underrepresented in it," explains Erin Scaggs, director of outreach and programming at the venue.

"We're committed to working towards creating greater representation of marginalized folks in all its facets — on stage, in production, management, and leadership, so last March, we featured 34 musicians and bands not led by men, booking an entire month of shows," she says.

The name is a nod to an important decade in this effort to create a sea change: the Riot Grrl movement, which, Scaggs explains, "exploded in the 1990s punk music scene with bands like Heavens to Betsy and Bikini Kill."

She explains that Kathleen Hanna of Bikini Kill popularized the phrase "grrrls 2 the front," which invited women in the crowd to move forward — so they could see the musicians and feel safe, and so the band wouldn't feel overwhelmed by a sea of men crowding in front.

Those words, which started as a simple instruction, would become a slogan of feminism in music and an iconic call to action for closing the gender gap.

Last year's programming was a big success, Scaggs says. Stone Church held free weekly production workshops for 65 women and nonbinary community members, and they talked about sound and stage management.

Scaggs says the organizers found that the enrollees left



COURTESY PHOTO

"The music industry has forever been a male-dominated space, and as a female musician myself I know how it can feel to be the only woman in the room," says Rei Kimura, of Brattleboro, program organizer of Grrrls 2 the Front at the Stone Church.

feeling more empowered, that they felt more comfortable advocating for themselves in the live music arena, and that they possessed more knowledge than when they began.

"Grrrls 2 the Front is all about creating access and opportunity for women and nonbinary people in the music industry. Celebrating their accomplishments, amplifying their voices and connecting them with resources and each other," says Scaggs.

Their goal this year is twofold: greater systematic change with lasting impact, and better outreach and inclusion of folks who are not cisgender women.

The venue's March 2024 lineup will again feature all-women and nonbinary bands, but that's only part of creating access and opportunity.

"Training women and

non-binary people how to run sound, how to operate lights. Creating year round opportunity to connect and share resources and knowledge. Creating a space that feels accessible and carving out a sense of belonging for women and non-binary people in music is at the core of the program," continues Scaggs.

Many of the workshops are free and don't require registration, creating a very low barrier to access.

A major piece of the programming includes 10-week courses on light and sound production.

"Sound Tech and Light Design are the classes which run January through March, meeting every week for three hours of classroom and hands-on instruction," Scaggs says.

"This program is meant to serve any individual who has

experienced gender inequality in the music industry and meant to increase access, opportunity, connection and solidarity to amplify the voices of women and non-binary folks in music," according to Scaggs.

The courses, limited to 10 participants each, will cost \$1,200. Guilford Sound has provided two scholarships for the courses, and payment plans are available.

Planning the program

Women and nonbinary musicians have been at the forefront of organizing Grrrls 2 the Front.

Rei Kimura, 20, of Brattleboro, a local musician and program organizer, has been playing in bands since she was 9 years old and is currently lead singer, guitarist, and songwriter for the band Moxie.

"The music industry has forever been a male-dominated space, and as a female musician myself I know how it can feel to be the only woman in the room," Kimura says.

She has helped with planning the program, bookings, workshop design, speaker outreach, promotions, and student recruitment.

"The program, which is necessarily inclusive, aims to build coalitions and communities for those who have been historically underrepresented or faced gender-based disadvantages in the industry," says Alouette Batteau, 22, of Shelburne Falls, Massachusetts.

They help coordinate the workshops, do audience outreach, and book artists and bands for the March concert series, and they also ensure that

■ SEE GRRRLS 2 THE FRONT, B4

COLUMN | Arts Notebook



COURTESY PHOTO

Dan DeWalt is busier than ever making music.

'Just three musicians together, playing for each other'

Dan DeWalt keeps the music flowing with his new recording — one of four projects in the works

KOWN LOCALLY in several circles from restorative justice trainings to fine cabinetmaking, Dan DeWalt is, at the core, a musician: a solo and ensemble player on piano and trombone, an accompanist, and a composer.

Heard on other artists' albums and having produced a couple of his own in recent years, DeWalt is in a prolific season, now working on four new recordings simultaneously, the recently released *Time to Face the Music* among them.

"I'm excited about it," says



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

DeWalt. "It was all pretty homegrown. I invited Wim Auer, a wonderful bassist, and Tim Gilmore, a fantastic drummer, to come to my house on a Monday morning."

DeWalt and Auer have been working together since 1980, most memorably in the late band, Simba. He and Gilmore

have "played on and off for a decade or two."

At the South Newfane home that DeWalt built himself, the trio recorded seven songs, with no rehearsal.

"The music we've played together in the last couple of decades serves us well," he says.

■ SEE DEWALT, B3

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DeWalt

"Most tunes only needed one take. No dubbing or angst — just three musicians together, playing for each other."

DeWalt, whose grandfather was a professional trombonist ("and my grandmother was a flapper," he adds), started piano in second grade. By his senior year in high school he was tackling Rachmaninoff's *Prelude in C minor*. He earned a bachelor's degree from Marlboro College, where he studied voice with Blanche Moyse and piano with Joe Schaeffer and Nigel Coxe.

He'd picked up trombone in high school, played in different bands, and later took up a few other instruments — accordion, among them.

"I spend most of my time with trombone and piano, though," he said.

DeWalt taught himself to improvise. "From the get-go, I improvised. I was always more interested in making it up than to stay alive, and music is part of that. I've been upset about my world and interested in changing it."

He calls himself "a big fan of dissonance and rhythmic experimentation," he adds, and that's evident on a few tracks, but in "Marley Je Ju," with its sustained tension, there's also lovely lyricism, and "Kick Ass Grammy" just feels like good swing.

DeWalt continues, "you have an idea of what I'm like inside. With its tension and release and the energy felt therein — that's indicative of my psyche."

He says he's always used his compositions to "register what's important" to him.

"I'm interested in pushing edges," DeWalt says. "I like jagged edges."

DeWalt's stepson, musician Joel Eisenranger, recorded, mixed, and mastered *Time to Face the Music*, which is available on streaming and download at dewaltbandcamp.com.

DeWalt is also working on a CD with his brother and Julian Gerstin as Trio Mambo and on a recording of 11 improvisations on piano. "That's a stream of consciousness," he says.

The last recording on *Time to Face the Music* is a piano concert of spirituals that DeWalt

will perform at the Beloved Community church — the merged Methodist and Baptist churches — on Town Crier Drive in Brattleboro on Friday, Dec. 8, at 7:30 p.m. Admission will be by donation, and the concert will be recorded live and CDs produced to benefit the BCC.

Among his regular gigs, DeWalt plays piano for Beloved Community.

"Virtually all of the pre-1940s and post-1940s I play at the services come from the African American spiritual tradition," he writes. "I am well aware that I am a White person, and I have lived a privileged life without significant adversity."

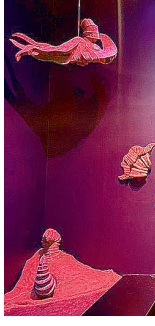
"We live in a world that is still full of oppression, inequality, prejudice, and violence. This music remains a powerful response to these evils and is a force for inspiration and a call to action," DeWalt says.

"Every note that I play at this concert will be a silent prayer of determination and inspiration to make us all work to change this endless, ever-deadening cycle that is slowly but surely destroying us and our planet."

Sculptor Art Costa discusses his BMAC exhibit 'Sounds Deep' on Dec. 14

BRATTLEBORO—When Vermont sculptor Art Costa first read *The Soul of an Octopus*, he says, he was fascinated by author Sy Montgomery's description of her friendship with an eight-legged "extraterrestrial." Curious about other organisms living far below the surface of the ocean, Costa dove into research that became his most recent body of work, "Sounds Deep," currently on view at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC).

On Thursday, Dec. 14, at 7 p.m., Costa joins BMAC's Director of Exhibitions Sarah Freeman for a discussion of his art practice and the mystical animal sculptures in "Sounds Deep."



An installation view of Art Costa's "Sounds Deep" at Brattleboro Museum & Art Center.

Freeman describes the exhibit as "the curating of a beautiful world we seldom see, a world of strange, sightless creatures that inhabit the darkest depths of the ocean." Constructed from reclaimed cardboard, paper-mâché, and other natural materials, Costa's "deep-sea denizens are richly textured and colorful, and their fearless forms are full of personality and humor," Freeman says.

Costa's use of repurposed materials in his artwork stems from his experience growing up on a dairy farm in California, where he made his own toys from whatever objects he could find, such as plastic bottles and old shoeboxes. He says that as an emerging artist, he "sought out materials that construction sites with treasures from thrift stores and yard sales."

Costa's current work is on a slightly smaller scale, but is no less arresting. Corrugated cardboard plays a major role, becoming the curved outer shell that flows tentacles, and ridge-like scales of creatures that are inspired by what Costa calls "fantastic animal forms" that live under extreme conditions. "Their existence has given me the

freedom to push my cardboard sculptures to the limit," he says.

"Sounds Deep" may feel ethereal, but Costa's message is rooted in scientific facts and projections.

According to the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA), he says, 91% of marine species have yet to be classified and more than 80% of the planet's oceans is "unmapped, unobserved, and unexplored," but a continued decline in the health of ocean ecosystems means that many species

may not be able to tolerate conditions associated with climate change.

Costa encourages viewers to respect the lives teeming below the surface of the sea. "I hope my work helps inspire a collective effort to protect Earth's fragile environments," he says.

Admission to the event is free. Register in advance if optional and walk-ins are welcome. To register, visit brattleboromuseum.org or call 802-257-0124, ext. 101.

Arnowitz and ImproVisions jazz performs in Guilford

GUILFORD—Pianist Michael Arnowitz and ImproVisions Jazz perform in Wendy's Jazz Source series in Guilford on Saturday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m.

Arnowitz is joined by Clyde Stans on upright bass and Keith Gibson on drums in a program of jazz past and present. They will perform jazz classics by Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny, and Bill Evans, along with Michael Arnowitz's versions of jazz standards such as "There Will Never Be Another You" and "Autumn Leaves."

Their program also features selections from Arnowitz's "Jazz Suite from West Side Story," his arrangements of Gershwin's "My Man's Gone Now" from *Porgy and Bess* and the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby," and some of Arnowitz's original music from his jazz album *Swave Spontaneous*. The trio will also play two of the pianist's jazz arrangements

of classical music, one based on Bartok's Romanian Dance No. 1, and "Burna Boy," based on musical material from Carl Orff's exciting and dramatic *Carmina Burana*.

Arnowitz grew up in Lexington, Massachusetts, where he was a child prodigy. During his childhood, he performed at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and was guest soloist twice with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, playing piano concertos of Bach and Beethoven.

He has given seven concert tours of Europe, has toured Russia and Korea, and when international touring to China fully resumes, he will be performing an eight-concert tour of China with the jazz guitarist Steve Blat.

Tickets are \$20 per person at the door. For reservations and directions, call Wendy Redinger at 802-254-6189.



Michael Arnowitz

Latchis Theatre unveils new sound system

BRATTLEBORO—On Saturday, Dec. 9, Latchis Arts will host Loud & Clear, a celebration of the Latchis brand new, state-of-the-art cinema sound system and other improvements to the projection in the main theater.

Admission is free, but donations are always welcome at the door. The event starts at 5 p.m., with a reception including free popcorn, beer and wine for sale, a "before and after" presentation by Latchis Arts Board member Tony Bacon about the new technology, and a preview of other theater upgrade and re-design projects Latchis Arts has in the works.

There will also be tours and talks highlighting the history of the Latchis. Following that, they will host a special film screening at 7 p.m. of *The Boy and the Heron*, the newest animated feature from beloved Japanese director Hayao Miyazaki, to showcase their new sound system.

The film is rated PG-13.

"The name of the event, 'Loud & Clear,' acknowledges that we've heard what Latchis patrons have been telling us — that the sound system and visual projection quality in the main theater needed improvement. We've heard you, loud and clear," Latchis Executive Director Jon Potter said in a news

release. "Loud & Clear also celebrates the experience the new sound system delivers. The difference is remarkable."

The \$400,000 project, funded in large part by Latchis Arts donors, was a saga all to itself. It took 18 months to take the project from drawing board to completion. Supply chain delays caused much of the delay, and preparing the theater for the installation work was a herculean task, says Potter.

Latchis staff had to complete more than 40 runs of cable from the projection booth in the back of the main theater balcony to points all around the theater, including backstage, up on ladders

or squeezing through crawlspaces under the balcony. In all, it took more than 1.5 miles of cable, enough for a continuous run of cable from the Latchis Theatre to The Marina.

The new system went live in mid-October — in time to wow fans who came for the Taylor Swift movie. Final adjustments were completed in mid-November. In addition to the new sound system, the projector in the main theater has been outfitted with a powerful new bulb that greatly enhances the viewing experience.

For more information, visit latchis.com.

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Grrls 2 the Front

program messaging is inclusive and accessible. Batteau, who has worked as a musician in western Massachusetts and New York City for many years, plays drums for the band Kalliope Jones — a nonbinary and women trio — founded in 2011. They have recently performed as a solo artist. “I believe the programming functions as a tool to disrupt the hetero-patriarchal strategy that excludes women/girls (cisgender or transgender) and genderqueer people from the music industry,” they say. Batteau believes the program will give attendees real-world skills and empower them in those fields. “To build confidence and authentic branding methods is to



“We know that women and nonbinary folks are massively underrepresented in [the music industry],” explains Erin Scaggs, director of outreach and programming at The Stone Church.

shatter the exclusive glass compartments of the larger music business,” they add. “We have always been confronted by the realities of being non-male musicians,” Batteau says. “We hear the same messages again and again: ‘You’re good for a girl band,’ ‘Use the sultry,’ etc.” “For girls, women, and genderqueer musicians, the industry is not only a daunting and exclusive network, but participating in it often requires exploitation of the self,” says Batteau. Ruth Garbus of Brattleboro presented a workshop in November, “Big Enough: Get Comfortable Taking up Space,” as part of Grrls 2 the Front. The professional musician reports that she took the 15 attendees “through a sort of smorgasbord of practices that have been helpful for me over the last few years. Things that have aided me in my growth as a person and as a musician.” “We meditated, visualized, wrote, and vocalized together,” Garbus continues. “My hope is that people came away with some insight into their own desires, allowed their dreams and spirits to get bigger, and, at the very least, had a nice, relaxing evening,” she says. Search for the website of Carsie Blanton (carsieblanton.com), a singer/songwriter based outside of Philadelphia, and you’ll find this description on Google: “Hi, I’m Carsie. I make songs, records, videos, blog posts, and mischief.” Blanton, 37, will present a Grrls 2 the Front workshop

FROM SECTION FRONT

on Wednesday, Dec. 13, “The Politics and Economics of Making Art,” at Stone Church. A full-time working songwriter for 15 years, Blanton intends the workshop to give participants a “more realistic understanding of the contemporary music business and the ability to make better decisions about how to participate in it.” According to her website, she and her band have played about 150 shows throughout the U.S., the U.K., and Ireland since the late-pandemic return of live music. She has 90,000 monthly listeners on Spotify and 150,000 followers across various social media platforms. “If making a fortune is your goal, a career in music will take you a long way — in the wrong direction,” Blanton says frankly. “I’m 37, and I’ve been working as a musician since I was a teenager,” she says. “I’m an independent artist, meaning there is no record label funding my work.” And, she says, “I’m an American, meaning there is no public funding, either.” “All of that work, content, and fandom does generate money,” Blanton says. “But the amount I get to keep is less than you might think, and my business is operating from beneath an ever-growing mountain of debt.”

Going bigger, getting louder

“Our partnerships this year are truly giving the program the ability to go bigger and get louder,” Scaggs says, noting partnerships



COURTESY PHOTO
Brattleboro musician Ruth Garbus — shown here with her new album, *Alive People* — spoke at “Big Enough: Get Comfortable Taking up Space,” a Grrls 2 the Front workshop, in November.

with other live-music venues: Higher Ground Music in South Burlington; Foam Brewers, in Burlington, and Epsilon Spires, in Brattleboro. “Each of them is putting together their own Grrls programming, and our students will be spending time at Higher Ground in a mentorship program,” notes Scaggs. “This is the ripple we believe Grrls 2 the Front can create,” she says. “We want those ripples to get bigger year after year.”

And, she adds, “we feel like these partnerships play an absolutely critical role in our ability to keep doing the work. Finding people that hear your vision, see the value in your work, and decide to support it one way or another.” “I can’t overstate how energizing that is,” Scaggs says. “It’s a dream.”

For more information on Grrls 2 the Front, visit stonechurchvt.com/grrls-to-the-front.

Lohman to speak online on ‘endangered eating’

BRATTLEBORO — “Endangered eating” is the theme for the December edition of Literary Cocktail Hour, which takes place online with author Sarah Lohman on Friday, Dec. 8, at 5 p.m. Register at bit.ly/LitCocktail34. Lohman says American food traditions are in danger of being lost. How do we save them? Apples, a common New England crop, have been called the United States’ “most endangered food.” The iconic Texas Longhorn cattle is categorized as “critical risk” for extinction. Unique date palms, found nowhere else on the planet, grow in California’s Coachella Valley — but the family farms that caretaker them are shutting down. Apples, cattle, dates — these are foods that carry significant cultural weight. But they’re disappearing. In our corner of the world, we have hundreds of varieties of apples; Gilfeather turnips; popular foraged items like mushrooms, fiddleheads, and ramps; amazing cheeses; honey; and our beloved maple syrup. Animated by stories, yet grounded in historical research, Lohman’s book, *Endangered Eating: America’s Vanishing Foods*, gives readers the tools to support

community food organizations and producers that work to preserve local culinary traditions and rare, cherished foods — before it’s too late. Lohman is originally from Hinckley, Ohio, where she began working in a museum at the age of 16, cooking historical food on a wood-burning stove. She graduated with a bachelor of fine arts degree from the Cleveland Institute of Art in 2005. For her undergraduate thesis, she opened a temporary restaurant/ installation that reinterpreted food of the Colonial era for a modern audience. She moved to New York City in 2006 and worked as video producer for *New York* magazine’s food blog, Grub Street. She chronicled her personal explorations in culinary history on her blog, Four Pounds Flour, from 2008 to 2018. Lohman’s first book, *Eight Flavors: The Untold Story of American Cuisine*, was an Amazon bestseller; *The Atlantic* called

it “richly researched, intriguing, and cleverly written.” *Eight Flavors* is currently taught in undergraduate classes at Purdue and Pennsylvania State University. *Endangered Eating*, her second book, was released in late October. This event is free, but donations are welcome to help the Brattleboro Literary Festival to continue these monthly virtual programs as well as support their annual festival. Find out more at brattleborolifefest.org/donate-now.

The Soubrettes present a pair of concerts this month

The Soubrettes, a vocal ensemble led by Anna Patton under the umbrella of the Vermont Jazz Center, has two upcoming concerts featuring Patton’s arrangements of original Patton family songs. This 20-member ensemble sings contemporary songs in Swing Era style on Dec. 9, at 7 p.m., at West Village Meetinghouse in West Brattleboro, and on Dec. 10, at 6 p.m., at the Guiding Star Grange in Greenfield, Massachusetts. Songs by Anna Patton’s brother Ben have long been a mainstay of The Soubrettes’ repertoire because of his knack for Coleporter-esque wordplay, plus melodies organizers say are worthy of Irving Berlin. By far the most

prolific songwriter in the family, he has released fourteen albums of original songs, ranging from retro pop and folk to swing and jazz. Ben’s songs in this Soubrettes program include “Put It in a Pan and Fry It,” “There Aren’t Enough Love Songs” and, from his latest album, “Put on a Tie.” Along with composing, Ben is a dedicated armchair scholar of the American Songbook, releasing a cover of an old American song each week on his Ben Sings Old Songs YouTube channel. Anna Patton’s original songs to be performed include “Pinwheel,” a rumination on the joys of excess, and “Long Beard Wise,” a romp through

the modern-day muddle of trying to recognize wisdom amid its trappings. Deb Patton’s “Disappointed Blues” is also on the program, and several trios and quartets will take center stage. The entire Patton family is joining The Soubrettes for these concerts. Deb will add her voice on a song or two, and Will and Ben will accompany the group on bass and guitar respectively. In addition, Anna will play clarinet, and Sarah Hadley-Yakir will step out of the soprano section to appear as a guest fiddler. Admission donations of \$10 to \$20 will help cover costs and support the scholarship fund at the Vermont Jazz Center.

Lewis celebrates season in Grafton concert

GRAFTON — Spencer Lewis will help welcome Christmas in Grafton with a free concert at the Grafton Brick Meeting House on Saturday, Dec. 9, from 1 to 4 p.m. Lewis will play solo guitar and violin, reprising songs from his *Calling in the Winter* album, which includes traditional Christmas songs and originals like “Weaving World Peace.” Lewis currently has 21 instrumental albums in the digital pipeline of iTunes and Spotify. He started out as a folk singer-songwriter in the early ’70s in Wilmington, playing The Old Red Mill and Fat City. His career

has blossomed over the years, gracing many a farmers’ market, town green, wedding reception, or summer festival with his signature sound that organizers say reflect his love of Vermont and its rural traditions. “His music is uplifting, soulful, and might be described as a soundtrack to his own life, living and growing up in Vermont,” note organizers. When he’s not playing music or recording albums in his home studio, he works as a stonewaller based in Bethel. Lewis’s open house is just one of the many activities in Grafton

on Dec. 9, as the whole town celebrates Christmas in Grafton. Find out more at visitgraffontvt.com. The Grafton Brick Meeting House is, and has been, a vital element in the history of the town. The building was constructed in 1833 and, over the years, it fell into major disrepair. It is on the National Register of Historic Places. Three years ago, concerned citizens came together, pooled their passion, resources, and knowledge, and completed a total transformation. Today, the building now serves the public as a venue for meetings, lectures, concerts, and other events.

Brattleboro Camerata presents ‘Treasure Hidden Within’ on Dec. 10

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro Camerata presents “Treasure Hidden Within,” a program exploring how composers hide pre-existing music within the structure of a new piece, infusing the latter with the essence of the older work. The concert is scheduled for Sunday, Dec. 10, at 4 p.m. at the Brattleboro Music Center. The “hidden treasures” in the Dec. 10 concert include a popular secular Medieval tune embedded in Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina’s “Missa L’homme armé a 4,” sacred Gregorian chant melodies hidden in Maurice Duruflé’s “Quatre Motets sur des Thèmes Grégoriens,” a musical puzzle or cryptogram embedded in Josquin Desprez’s *Missa La sol fa re mi*, and a challenge

melody from a composition contest Giuseppe Verdi’s “Ave Maria.” “The practice of weaving a pre-existing melody into new music has its origins in the Medieval era, and really blossomed into a widespread practice during the Renaissance,” Camerata Music Director Jonathan Harvey said in a news release. “Our December program is an attempt to demonstrate the different ways composers can create hidden meanings with this technique, from the Renaissance all the way up to the 20th century.” The Brattleboro Camerata is preparing a Spring 2024 program titled “Make It a Place of Springs,” which will consist of pieces focused on nature and the natural world, including

Renaissance works by Clément Janequin, Maddalena Casulana, Thomas Tallis, Vicente Lusitano, Thomas Morley, and others, as well as more recent pieces by Charles Stanford, Benjamin Britten, and Pulitzer Prize-winner Caroline Shaw. Tickets are \$20 in advance or \$25 at the door; youth admission is \$10, with those under 12 admitted free. Tickets are available online at bmcvt.org, by calling the BMC at 802-257-4523, or emailing info@bmcvt.org.

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December Preview

- Sun 10 Brattleboro Camerata— Treasure Hidden Within
- Tues 12 Music School Adult Ensembles Concert
- Sun 31 New Year’s Eve Concerts

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VIEWPOINT

All for impure, brutal, savage, horrific, racist vengeance

U.S. military experts determined that a 500-pound bomb 'was far too large' to use in urban areas, yet Israel drops 2,000-pound ones on a hospital and other targets

ON Nov. 26, in *The New York Times*, the headline for the lead story on the front page reads, "Gaza Civilians, Under Israeli Barrage, Are Being Killed at Historic Pace."

The article goes on to state that "Israel's liberal use of very large weapons in dense urban areas, including U.S.-made 2,000-pound bombs that can flatten an apartment tower, is surprising, some experts say."

"It's beyond anything that I've seen in my career," said Marc Garlasco, a military adviser for the Dutch organization PAX and a former senior intelligence analyst at the Pentagon. To find a historical comparison for so many large bombs in such a small area, he said, we may "have to go back to Vietnam, or the Second World War."

The article continues: "In fighting during this century, by contrast, U.S. military officials often believed that the most common American aerial bomb — a 500-pound weapon — was far too large for most targets when battling the Islamic State in urban areas like Mosul, Iraq, and Raqqa, Syria."

Think about that: American military experts determined that a 500-pound bomb "was far too large" to use in urban areas, yet Israel apparently has no compunction about dropping 2,000-pound ones on a

RICHARD EVERS
describes himself as "of Jewish heritage but not of faith or belief."

hospital among scores (hundreds?) of other targets.

ISRAEL, AND ITS American friends (including our Congressional delegation, of course), has claimed ad infinitum that the justification for use of these huge, grotesque bombs (gifted by the U.S.) is to destroy the tunnels that Hamas uses.

Yet, as *Democracy Now!* reported (Nov. 28), "*The Intercept's* Jeremy Scahill deconstructs Israel's narrative around Gaza's Al-Shifa Hospital, including unsubstantiated allegations Hamas uses tunnels under the hospital as its command center — tunnels that Israel itself built."

"We were told that this was like a Hamas Pentagon," says Scahill, who describes how the Israeli military's own evidence disproves its allegations that the hospital was dangerous enough to justify its siege and bombardment."

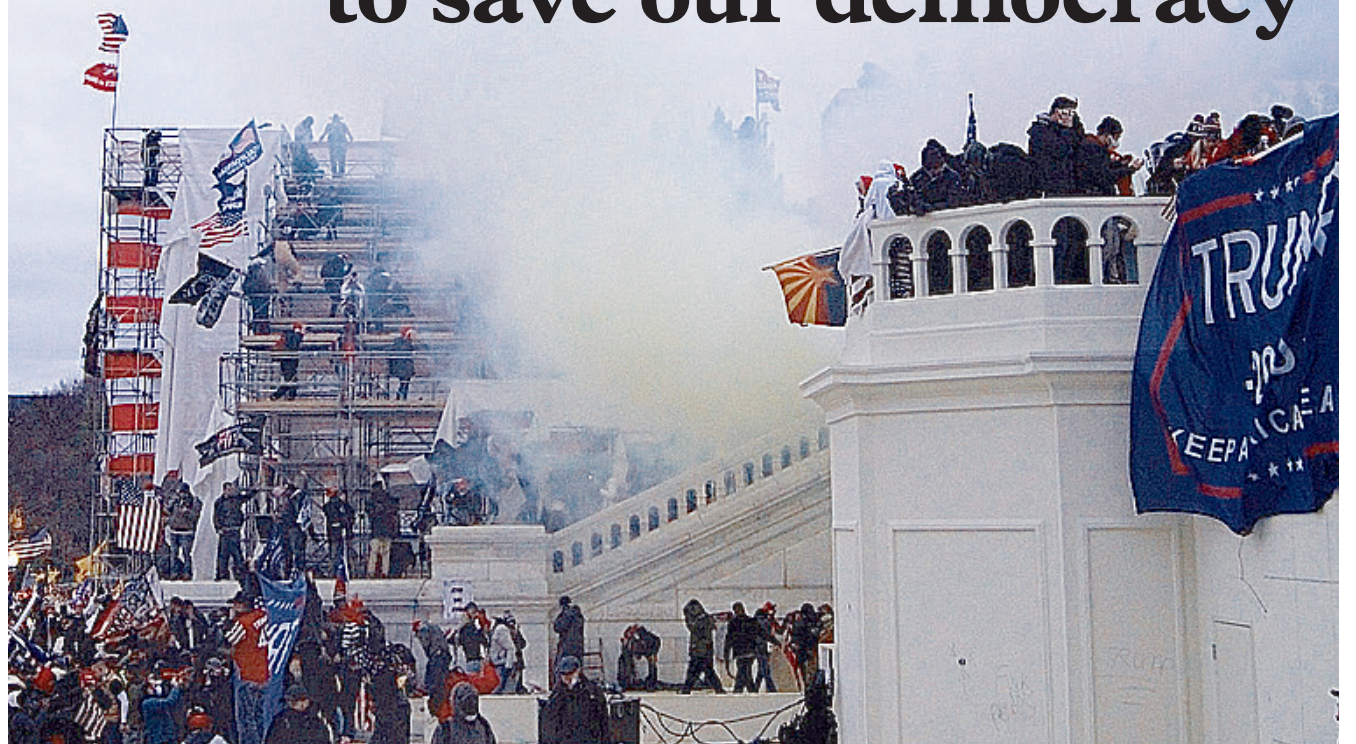
Doesn't this remind you of the phantom weapons of mass destruction that were deceptively used to justify our catastrophic invasion of Iraq in 2003?

Which leads further to the question: What the hell is up with Mossad, Israel's intelligence service, once so highly

■ SEE BOMB, C2

COLUMN

We must be prepared to save our democracy



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Insurrectionists loyal to then-President Donald Trump lay siege to the U.S. Capitol on Jan. 6.

In the 2024 election, we must focus on our country at stake as we head to local, state, and national polls

LET'S GET REAL about the most vital issue Americans face as we slowly march toward our dubious future as a nation.

It's not about President Biden's age, which is — annoyingly — center stage. After all, Donald Trump is only three years younger than the president, morbidly obese, and an obvious psychopath.

The 2024 race is about one issue and one issue only, and that is whether we survive as a democracy and what will happen if not.

So far in this threatening time, President Biden is the only viable candidate if we value our freedom in this contentious time. Given his commitment to the principles of democracy and the protection of the Constitution and his years of experience and achievement domestically and internationally, there is no other

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

choice. That story needs to be told often and powerfully.

The fact is, you don't have to like him or always agree with him, but you do need to realize that our future depends on his re-election, because once democracy disappears, you never get it back — at least not for decades and then, only if you're lucky.

Every other issue, from the economy, taxes, gun control, reproductive-health care, First Amendment rights, education, a free press, and our stature in the world depends on saving our

democracy. It's that simple — and that urgent.

AMERICANS ARE lucky. We haven't lived under an autocracy or a dictatorship. We have no idea what that's like in real terms, but it's never pretty.

There are many examples of how bad it is. To be clear, autocratic governments and dictatorships are similar, but there is a distinction between them, as the Carnegie Corporation of New York and others have noted.

As Sergei Guriev and Daniel Treisman point out in their article "How Do Dictatorships Survive in the 21st Century?," there are two important differences: An autocracy focuses power on a single person, while single-party dictatorships can share power through a small group of people who are appointed by the dictator.

Dictatorships always include

inherent abuse of power, while some autocrats relying on centralized power can sometimes effect positive change for their citizens. Both autocrats and dictators, however, exercise total control.

It's important to realize that dictators have absolute power (think Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler). Human rights are suppressed, and any sign of opposition is quickly shut down with intimidation, imprisonment, physical violence, or assassination.

Citizens have virtually no freedom or agency over their lives and democracy is no longer the governing system. People can lose their religion, and they can see sexual orientation and same-sex marriage outlawed while security police become ubiquitous and surveillance prevalent. Over time, no one dares to trust anyone.

According to the Carnegie

■ SEE DEMOCRACY, C2

LETTERS FROM READERS

What Friends of Putney oppose and propose — and the consequences

RE: "Foes of planned housing project return to court" [News, Nov. 15]:

Friends of Putney clearly believe that they have rightly appealed thrice to Vermont Environmental and Supreme Courts in opposition to Windham & Windsor Housing Trust's Alice Holway Drive affordable-housing project.

Let's consider what is already approved, what Friends of Putney oppose and propose, why they lost two appeals, how they are paying their attorney, and the financial and social impacts of their appeals.

Of 3.96 acres: 0.91 acre will be developed as affordable housing (23%); 1.03 acres will remain as Putney Community Garden and Farmers' Market (26%); 2.02 acres will remain undeveloped (51%); so a total of 3.05 acres (77%) will be unchanged: smart-growth, energy-efficient housing preserving community gardening, supporting local agriculture, sustaining surrounding nature. What do Friends of Putney oppose? Why?

Advocating a town park, why are Friends of Putney not

proposing that the undeveloped 2.02 acres be this park?

The Putney Development Review Board duly granted a land-use permit that Friends of Putney appealed to Vermont Environmental Court and Supreme Court, and each upheld de novo, granting and affirming summary judgment to Windham & Windsor Housing Trust.

"De novo" means that the courts newly considered and affirmed granting of the land-use permit, making any alleged errors and omissions by the Putney Development Review Board irrelevant.

"Summary judgment" means that there was no genuine dispute as to any material fact and that Windham & Windsor Housing Trust was entitled to judgment as a matter of law.

Having twice lost their appeals, Friends of Putney petitioned the Putney Selectboard to rescind the Alice Holway Drive project's land-use permit, but a Selectboard cannot overrule courts.

The IRS decides whether a 501(c)(3) public charity's purpose is authorized. Its trustees are not free to give this tax-exemption to another group having a different purpose that will not be tax-exempt unless and until the IRS approves the change by issuing a new Letter

of Determination. Otherwise, 501(c)(3) trustees could decide for themselves that a purpose of their choosing is tax-exempt.

Changing the name of the Inclusion Center — "a free drop in, activity center by and for all people with disabilities, medical concerns and interested community members," as described for BCTV (brattleborotv.org/inclusion-center) — to Friends of Putney — "our primary focus is to preserve and conserve the open space at the entrance to Putney," as described on its website (friendsofputney.com) — does not make this new purpose tax exempt.

The IRS has ruled that employing donations to pay a 501(c)(3) public charity's attorney requires that legal actions be filed in its name as party plaintiff, which Friends of Putney has never done.

An experienced Putney builder told me that Friends of Putney's ongoing opposition to the Alice Holway Drive affordable-housing project has cost Windham & Windsor Housing Trust and funders at least \$1 million in increased construction costs so far, while delaying construction of badly needed housing from 2022 to 2024 soonest.

Howard Fairman
Putney

Memories of the Dunklees and their machine shop

RE: "Talented, humble, and irreplaceable" [News, Nov. 22]:

I want to express my appreciation to Fran Lynggaard Hansen for such a great tribute to Lester Dunklee.

My earliest remembrance of the R.E. Dunklee and Sons Machine Shop was in the 1940s, when I needed a push lawn mower repaired. In the shop I was quite fascinated by the long shaft overhead that powered the machines. There were various size pulleys along the shaft that were belted to power the machines below. I had been used to seeing belt powered machines on the farm.

On that first visit, R.E. Dunklee, Lester's grandfather, was there, along with a couple of other men, one of them possibly Lester's father, David.

Later, at Skyline Restaurant, I had a problem with my dishwasher. Lester, now the proprietor, was able to keep my operation going.

In the 1970s, a large group of Dunklees came to the Skyline to honor Robert E. Dunklee on his 96th birthday.

I understand how difficult Lester's decision to retire must be. I wish him well.

Richard Hamilton
Marlboro

Happy retirement, Lester

I have known Lester Dunklee since high school. I was a senior, and he was a shy freshman whom I would meet occasionally in the hallway, walking along with his head down and a determined look on his face, headed for his next class.

Little did I know then that many years later I would meet him again, as an adult, when somehow we got him to come help us one night at Evening Star Grange in Dummerston.

I can attest to the fact that Lester not only makes the best homemade donuts in town, but also makes wonderful iced tea and pretty darn good coffee! When needed, he washes many a pot and pan as well, sometimes spending a couple of hours or more bent over our deep sink making sure that every pot, kettle, and pan we own is scrubbed clean after use.

When asked if he's almost done, he will look at you and smile: "I don't know, have you brought them all [to me] yet?"

On behalf of Evening Star Grange and all of its members, thank you, Lester, and we hope you won't decide to retire from helping us for many more years to come.

Fondly,
EVENING STAR GRANGE #154
Dummerston
Sallie May, secretary

Viewpoint was disconcerting and irresponsible

RE: "No more money for Israel" [Viewpoint, Nov. 29]:

This piece by Dan DeWalt and an unnamed collaborator is disconcerting to believers of common sense and historical facts.

To wit: *Peace* was offered to Yasser Arafat, and he rejected it outright, even though the Qur'an (8:61) demands that if the enemy sues for peace on just terms, the overture be accepted: "And if they incline to peace, then you should incline to it."

Having said that, if people in Gaza had utilized the billions — yes, with a *b* (as you say) — for peaceful purposes, the area could have been prosperous. Teaching hate toward another based merely on their differences of color, sex, or religion always leads to excess.

Billionaire \$ — yes, with a "B\$" — leaders of the terrorist entity called Hamas have called for the elimination (otherwise known as murder, rape, and torture of Jews) in the state of Israel. These evil men have said on international news they will attack "again and again."

If someone said they were intent on killing me, my wife, and/or my children, I would be obliged to kill them first.

This war has resulted in

■ SEE LETTERS, C3



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

The peaceful, pastoral views to meadows and hills will captivate you! The ever changing cloudscapes and the way sunlight dances with shadows add everyday delight! In West Guilford, nestled away on 18 acres, this 1868 square foot, contemporary six room home, surrounded by mature woodlands was built by the current owners in 1974. Planned with simple lines outside, designed inside with personality and large windows for the kitchen, living room and primary bedroom to enjoy the lovely views. There are vaulted ceilings, light filled rooms, front entry w/cedar closet, a spacious living room with a centerpiece fireplace, a loft library with a sleeping alcove, the cheeriest of eat in kitchens with plentiful storage, counter space, views and a 16' x 10' deck. The versatile layout offers a dining room if desired, or a office/den as it is used now. The primary bedroom has a three quarter bath with a shower. A stackable laundry was added to the craft room/bedroom closet. The 20 foot long covered deck off the living room and primary bedroom

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LEGISLATIVE UPDATE

Keeping spore

Are there more urgent issues? Of course. But a state mushroom bill will stimulate interest in Vermont's natural world and send a message that we value what kids think.

I RECENTLY SUBMITTED a bill after consultation with some important stakeholders: the elementary students of Windham Elementary School and the middle school students of the Compass School in Westminster.

Westminster

The issue at hand? Designating *Hericum americanum*, commonly known as bear's head tooth, as the Vermont State Mushroom. Both groups of students spent time learning about wonders of wild mushrooms and, after considering diverse contenders, students at both schools chose the mushroom genus (*Hericum*, which means "hedgehog"), by a majority vote.

As part of the process, I visited both schools and talked with students about diverse mushrooms. We discussed pros and cons and symbolism from names and mushroom qualities.

At Windham, the lion's mane — another member of the

MICHELLE BOS-LUN is a second-term member of the Vermont House of Representatives, co-representing the Windham-3 district, which includes her hometown of Westminster as well as Rockingham and Brookline. She is a secondary school teacher who also works with individuals experiencing homelessness. Last year, her photo in the "Happy Places" photography project that hung in the State House cafeteria showed her in the woods holding puffball mushrooms.

Hericum genus — won, and the Compass School students chose the bear's head tooth, which won the majority of the votes across both schools.

MANY EDUCATORS agree that getting students into nature is a desirable physical and intellectual activity. Compass Science teacher Ron Bos-Lun (my husband) brings mushroom experts into the woods with his students to discover and identify fungi at Bald Hill Reserve in Westminster annually.

He also brought jack o'lantern mushrooms to both schools to let students observe mushrooms that glow in the

dark. He said they found them "enchanting."

Students offered a range of reasons for why they thought bear's head tooth would be the best choice.

"A mushroom that grows in trees would be great, since Vermont has lots of trees," a younger student said.

The middle schoolers seemed more compelled by the mushroom's physical uniqueness as well as its medicinal qualities.

ALMOST ANYONE CAN learn about mushrooms, identify them, cultivate them, or harvest them in the wild. I began to explore the world of mushrooms during the rainy, isolating months of the pandemic.

First, I learned to identify lobsters, then chicken of the woods, then chanterelles. Suddenly a whole new world opened up! On almost every walk I took in the woods, I found new fungi — not all edible, but all interesting and beautiful in different ways.

I learned a new word — *mycography*, the photography of mushrooms — and delighted in capturing their images. My new hobby gave me a reason to go into the woods and linger and explore.

I want the same possibility for other Vermonters — especially children who study Vermont symbols in elementary and middle school.

ONLY FIVE STATES have a state mushroom, though four others have had state mushrooms proposed. No other state has selected *Hericum americanum* as its official mushroom.



COURTESY PHOTO

Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun with students at Windham Elementary School as they consider options for the Vermont State Mushroom.

If the legislative committee assigned to review such matters decides to take up this bill, it will take testimony, including from the students who were involved in making the selection, from me as the lead sponsor of the bill, and from Vermont mycologists.

We could have a state mushroom by the end of the legislative session in May — just in time for thousands of foragers young and old to head into the woods to see if they can find bear's head tooth mushrooms and other fungi that have emerged!

I hope that selecting a state mushroom will boost interest in foraging and mycography and will inspire other Vermonters to head to the woods and see what delights they can find — or be inspired to take the easier option and buy mushrooms at farmers markets.

DO WE HAVE issues to decide this term that are more important, more complicated, than the Vermont State Mushroom? Yes.

But it is important to remind Vermonters of the treasures we have in our woods. It's also important to let Vermont youth know that their voice matters and they can impact policy on the state level.

The process of adopting a state mushroom will stimulate interest and help Vermonters

develop knowledge about mushrooms in the state — and perhaps encourage new people to go out in the woods looking not only for bear's head tooth but also the state bird (hermit thrush), the state animal (Morgan horse), or the state tree (sugar maple)!

The state mushroom bill sends a message that we value what kids think. It can empower youth voice and encourage people to spend time in nature. It can bring together legislators who might disagree about more complex issues, inspiring them to pull together to support nature and students.

Designating a state mushroom shows that we value our woods and what grows in them. It can motivate people to learn

and explore the world of fungi in Vermont, which acknowledges thousands of foragers and home cultivators who already are aware of how fantastic fungi can be.

Mushrooms can be exciting, nutritious, beautiful, and medicinal and are not a partisan issue. Foraging and identifying mushrooms is a hobby thousands of Vermonters young and old enjoy.

It's time for *Hericum americanum* to take its place as state mushroom. I am hoping the General Assembly can come together to establish a new symbol of Vermont, heeding the choice of some young, budding mycologists from our district to have Vermont become the sixth state with a state mushroom.

Bomb

FROM SECTION FRONT

regarded? Reader, if you're thinking to yourself, "Well, *Democracy Now!* and *The Intercept* are left-wing news outlets, I can't really trust them to be unbiased," then ask yourself if you've read or heard from any credible news source any factual evidence that the supposed Hamas command center under the hospital was actually found.

No? That's because it wasn't. So, all those hundreds of terrified people sheltering at the hospital, including doctors, nurses and other health care workers — as well as thousands and thousands of civilians, mostly children, elsewhere in Gaza — were maimed or murdered for what? For Israel's "right to defend itself"?

No, it was for vengeance: impure, brutal, savage, horrific vengeance that dwarfs Hamas's Oct 7 attack.

Indeed, the massive bombing of Gaza, to me, bears an

all-too-eerie resemblance to the allies' infamous bombing of Dresden. And then there's the threat of disease and mass starvation in a population of over two million. Starvation!

Think about that, if you're able, in this time of holiday feasting and plenty here in the happy, merry U.S.A.

SO, WHEN OUR Congressional delegation eventually votes on the next, huge aid package to Israel, it's my fervent wish that they think long and hard about Israel's unspeakable war crimes that would not, of course, be remotely possible without massive military aid from the U.S.

And I would further like to pose a question to each of them: If you yourself were of Palestinian origin, instead of Jewish or Christian, would you still be so ready and willing to finance, and thus enable, this hideously destructive bombardment?

Democracy

FROM SECTION FRONT

Corporation, democracies flourished in the 20th century but, by 2019, dictatorships outnumbered democracies and shared features — including repressed opposition, control of communications, punishment of critics, imposed ideology, and frequent attacks on democratic ideals. Cross-border travel stopped, and fear prevailed as information becomes propaganda.

IN THE COURSE of my international work, I became aware of the reality of autocratic and dictatorial countries. Even knowing I could leave if I behaved myself, I sensed the oppression. A Kenyan woman advised me to be cautious about the kind of questions I asked.

In 1960s Greece, when the political future there was bleak, I naively remarked to a man sitting next to me on an airplane that I didn't think much of his government. He interrogated me for the rest of the journey about who I'd been speaking with.

In Romania — where the deceased dictator Ceausescu had mandated monthly pelvic exams for female students and workers to ensure pregnancies were carried to term — I saw scores of children in an orphanage as a result. The visit shook me to the core.

In Burma, someone whispered her oppression, and in China, at the 1995 United Nations women's conference, as a journalist I was barred from opening ceremonies, and I suspected I was surveilled and tapped in my hotel room. My relief on the plane as we departed was palpable.

We need to think about what life was like in the Franco, Marcos, or Pinochet regimes in Spain, the Philippines, or Chile, respectively. Today, we must think about what life is like in Hungary under the control of Viktor Orbán. In power for years, he has "chipped away at the foundations of Hungarian democracy," as *vox.com* put it.

There, journalism requires permits, propaganda prevails, and refugees and Muslims are seen as an existential threat.

Dissent is silenced or disappears if it occurs in public or on blogs. Books vanish from libraries and shops.

It didn't happen overnight. It was achieved gradually in subtle ways.

NATIONALISM, right-wing religion, militarism, anti-liberalism, and the silencing of citizens are deeply destructive forces that result in devastation and despair.

We cannot — we must not — ignore the signs of autocracy and fascism that already exist, or the dangerous pledges of Donald Trump. Nor can we think it can't happen here.

Our challenge is to ensure that autocracy or dictatorship not surprise us because we ignored its signals or couldn't envision such systems.

To protect ourselves and our country, we must exercise the strongest sign of resistance to oppression. That is our vote.

It is incumbent upon each of us to keep that focus as we hold to local, state, and national polling stations.

We must be prepared to save our democracy.

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Here We Are - Greg Worden, Vermont Artisan Designs: Mon 8p, Tues 3:15p, Wed 10:45a, Thurs 9:15p, Sat 12:15p, Sun 5:15p	Brattleboro Selectboard Mtg. 12/5/23: Tues 6:15p (LIVE), Thurs 1p, Fri 8:30p, Sat 5:30a, Sun 10:30a
The World Fusion Show - Ep# 166 - Kinan Azmeh: Mon 5:30p, Tues 1:30p, Wed 11:30a, Thurs 12:30p, Sat 6:30a, Sun 7p	Newfane Selectboard Mtg. 12/4/23: Wed 6p, Thurs 8:30a, Fri 12p
Sing Nowell - Songs & Carols for Midwinter and Christmastide 2023: Tues 7p (LIVE)	Brattleboro Planning Commission Mtg. 12/4/23: Wed 8:30p, Thurs 6a, Fri 2:30p
Brattleboro Gallery Walk - October 6, 2023: Tues 1:10p, Wed 9:30a, Thurs 1:55p, Fri 1:40p, Sat 9:30a, Sun 4:30p & 6:30p	River Valleys Unified School District Board Mtg. 12/4/23: Fri 6p, Sat 9:30a, Sun 2:30p
Stained Glass Windows of St. Michaels - Week 9: St. Paul, Mon 8:45p, Tues 6a, Wed 3:30p, Thurs 2:10p, Fri 6a, Sat 9:15p, Sun 2:15p	Windham Elementary School Board Mtg. 12/5/23: Thurs 8:30p, Fri 5:30a, Sat 2:30p
Couch Potato Productions - Orchard Aid - Pete Bernhard: Tues 12:35p, Wed 9a, Thurs 1:15p, Fri 12:30p, Sun 5:55p	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 12/5/23: Thurs 6p, Fri 8a, Sat 12p
Couch Potato Productions - Orchard Aid - Hazelnuts: Tues 3:45p, Thurs 9:45p, Fri 1p, Sat 9a, Sun 4p	Town of Brattleboro - Town Clerk Visit: Tues 6:55a, Wed 8:25a, Thurs 5:55p, Fri 11:25a & 5:55p, Sun 10:25a
Media Mentoring Project - Not Just the Bad News - Can Media Help Solve Societies Problems: Wed 9p, Thurs 4:15p, Fri 10a, Sat 5p, Sun 12:30p	Windham Southeast Supervisory Union Board Mtg. 11/29/23: Mon 6:15p, Tues 7a, Wed 12p
Around Town With Maria - Rally in Support of Palestinians and Gaza 11/16/23: Thurs 5p, Fri 6:45a, Sat 8p, Sun 9:30a	Town of Brattleboro - Website Tour: Tues 2:20p, Wed 4:35p, Thurs 12:50p, Fri 11:40a
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 11/27/23: Mon 6a, Sun 6p
Vermontitude - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 11/27/23: Mon 8:15p, Thurs 4:45p, Sun 9:15a
News Block: WTSN News: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12:05p & 6:05p BUHS-TV News: Mon-Fri 12:15p & 6:35p	Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 11/28/23: Tues 6a, Fri 5p, Sun 6a
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Windham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 11/28/23: Mon 8:55a, Tues 9:55a, Sat 6:45p
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 11/29/23: Wed 6:45a, Thurs 11:10a, Sat 5:10p, Sun 8p
Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service: Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Town Matters - Weekly Episode: Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p
St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass: Sat 4p (LIVE), Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p	The David Pakman Show: Mon 6a, 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.
Brattleboro Community Television - 257-0888

MORE LETTERS | The shooting of three Palestinian youths in Burlington

'We cannot let this tragedy and violence be a stopping point'

We were horrified, along with all Vermonters, to learn of the shooting of three Palestinian students in Burlington, Vermont.

As a refugee resettlement agency working to help those displaced by violence in their home countries start new lives here in the United States, this violence so close to home is jarring.

We condemn these horrific attacks and, as an agency, we commit to working with local, state, and national partners to continue our work to make Vermont a safe place for all.

"Often when we discuss our work, we talk about the immediate needs of clients when they first arrive in the United States," said Joe Wiah, our executive director. "However, our work goes far beyond that. Through our multicultural community centers in Bennington and Brattleboro, we are working with communities so that they can be places where people from many different cultures and backgrounds can feel at home."

In Bennington on Nov. 27, our office and Multicultural Community Center had a card available for staff, clients, volunteers, and community members to sign their names and messages of support to send to the three Palestinian students shot in Burlington. The Brattleboro Center will have a similar activity later this week.

"I got a call from a volunteer on Sunday night," said Jack Rossiter-Munley, community engagement manager with our Bennington office. "Like so many of us, he was searching for a way to take constructive action."

We just opened our permanent office here in Bennington, so I was thrilled that we could offer up our space and support his idea of sending a card with messages from Bennington.

However, ECDC in Southern Vermont is doing more than sending cards.

We cannot let this tragedy and violence be a stopping

point. It cannot be the whole story. We cannot throw up our hands in despair. It's time to get to work. Brattleboro has a long history of welcoming international students and refugees and we will continue that work.

Wiah has been in touch with his counterpart at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, the resettlement agency that works in Northern and Central Vermont as well as the Vermont State Refugee Coordinator's office. There has been outreach and contact with state legislators and Vermont's congressional delegation.

"We want the aftermath of this tragedy to be a time when people from throughout Vermont can come together and recommit to building a diverse state where everyone, regardless of their nationality, cultural background, sexual orientation, or gender identity, feels safe and supported," said Wiah. "ECDC here in Southern Vermont plans to take a leadership role in this important work."

ETHIOPIAN COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT COUNCIL Brattleboro

Ian Hefele, community engagement and communications manager

NAACP Vermont chapters deplore 'senseless act of violence' against Palestinian American students

In light of the recent tragic incident in Burlington, Vermont, the Vermont branches of the NAACP express our heartfelt condolences to the victims and their families.

The violent shooting of three Palestinian American students is deeply distressing, and we stand in solidarity with the affected community during this difficult time.

Our hearts go out to Hisham Awartani, Kinnan Abdalhamid, Tahseen Ahmed, and their loved ones. This senseless act of violence has not only caused them physical harm, but it has also shaken our collective sense of safety and well-being.

We echo the calls from the Arab American

Anti-Discrimination Committee for a thorough investigation into this incident as a hate crime. It is crucial that law enforcement, including the FBI and the U.S. Department of Justice, diligently pursue justice and bring the perpetrator to account.

We emphasize the need for empathy, understanding, and unity in the face of discrimination and violence.

The Vermont NAACP urges the community to come together, condemn anti-Arab and anti-Palestinian discrimination, and support one another during these challenging times.

As the violence continues to unfold in Israel and in Gaza, we understand the implications it has across the world, including in the United States. According to the Council on American-Islamic Relations, there has been a 216% increase in the past month and a half in requests for help and reports regarding biased anti-Arab and anti-Muslim incidents.

We stand against all forms of hate, including

racism, Islamophobia, and anti-Semitism.

We also want to underscore the importance of community members remaining vigilant against any manifestation of hate and discrimination. If anyone encounters acts of hatred or violence, especially because of their identity, we urge them to report these incidents to the authorities immediately.

Through collective action and reporting, we can address and prevent such acts, fostering an environment where everyone feels safe and protected. Your voice matters, and together we can build a community that stands against hate in all its forms.

In summation, here is our call to action:

- We call on law enforcement to perform a thorough investigation and ensure justice.
• We call on our fellow Vermonters to support our Palestinian families, friends, and neighbors.
• We call for an end to violence and suffering at the hands

of hate. NAACP WINDHAM COUNTY BRANCH Brattleboro

Lise Sparrow, chair of religious affairs

Horrified and appalled by shooting of Palestinian students

Jewish Voice For Peace Vermont/New Hampshire is horrified and appalled by the shooting of three Palestinian students that occurred on the evening of Nov. 25 in Burlington.

We are in solidarity with the students, their families, and all those affected by this clear act of hate.

We are in solidarity with all Palestinian people in occupied Palestine, around the world, and here in Vermont — and we are committed to creating a Vermont that is safe and welcoming for all.

Recent and past rhetoric

about the ongoing genocide in Gaza, from our local University of Vermont administrators to national elected officials, has been incredibly dehumanizing of Palestinians and fanned the flames of hatred that led to this violence.

We reject all forms of Islamophobia, anti-Arab racism, antisemitism, and other types of oppression. Our safety comes only when our communities move to address this hatred together.

We call on Burlington Mayor Miro Weinberger, Gov. Phil Scott, and our Congressional delegates — Sen. Bernie Sanders, Sen. Peter Welch, and Rep. Becca Balint — to move to address this act of hate against Palestinians and the horrifying violence that has occurred.

We are committed to continue to organize to create safety for our communities.

JEWISH VOICE FOR PEACE Brattleboro

Abby Mnookin

Letters

FROM SECTION FRONT

many deaths, per Hamas, of many "civilians." Photos posted online are not all accurate; some are from other wars. Numbers lie in that many "children killed" (those under 18 years old) are Hamas fighters whom have been taught hate. If you will note, Hamas does not break down how many killed were fighters.

I do not expect to see this response to your irresponsible viewpoints published, as this might be too much for your paper to actually hear the truth.

I, unlike your "Windham County citizen whose job status would be at risk were they to disclose their name," attach mine with pride of conviction.

Michel La Liberté Rockingham

A ceasefire requires both parties to participate

A ceasefire requires the participation of at least two parties. The demand for an immediate permanent ceasefire in the current Hamas war is a demand that Israel unilaterally surrender to Hamas.

Hamas broke the ceasefire in existence on Oct. 7, 2023. Hamas's stated mission is to destroy Israel and Jewish people.

Israel must stop indiscriminate bombing, allow safe passage of innocents from the war zone, oust Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu and his cronies, elect a democratic government that will respect human rights, engage in

negotiations for two states and permanent peace, and defend itself against Hamas and other genocidal movements.

Jean Anne Kiewel Brattleboro

In support of pro-life/pro-America Trump

RE: "On abortion, the numbers don't lie" [Viewpoint, Nov. 15]:

Nancy Braus writes, "In Ohio, the tremendous margin of passage for the amendment enshrining abortion, birth control, and other good things into the state constitution did not seem to percolate down to the state legislature."

So abortion is a "good thing"? Wow! How heartless can you get?

This will make Ms. Braus cringe (and probably cry), but I have voted for Donald Trump twice and will do so again next year.

Some of my relatives and many of my friends think I'm off my rocker, but I don't care. They're not embarrassed for sticking with Joe, so why should I be ashamed of the Donald?

The truth is, millions of other women with a heart and a conscience (who don't wear pussy hats) also support pro-life/pro-America Trump. He was an awesome president.

And I believe he won in 2020, but that's another letter for another day.

Danielle Miller Deerfield, Mass.

Across

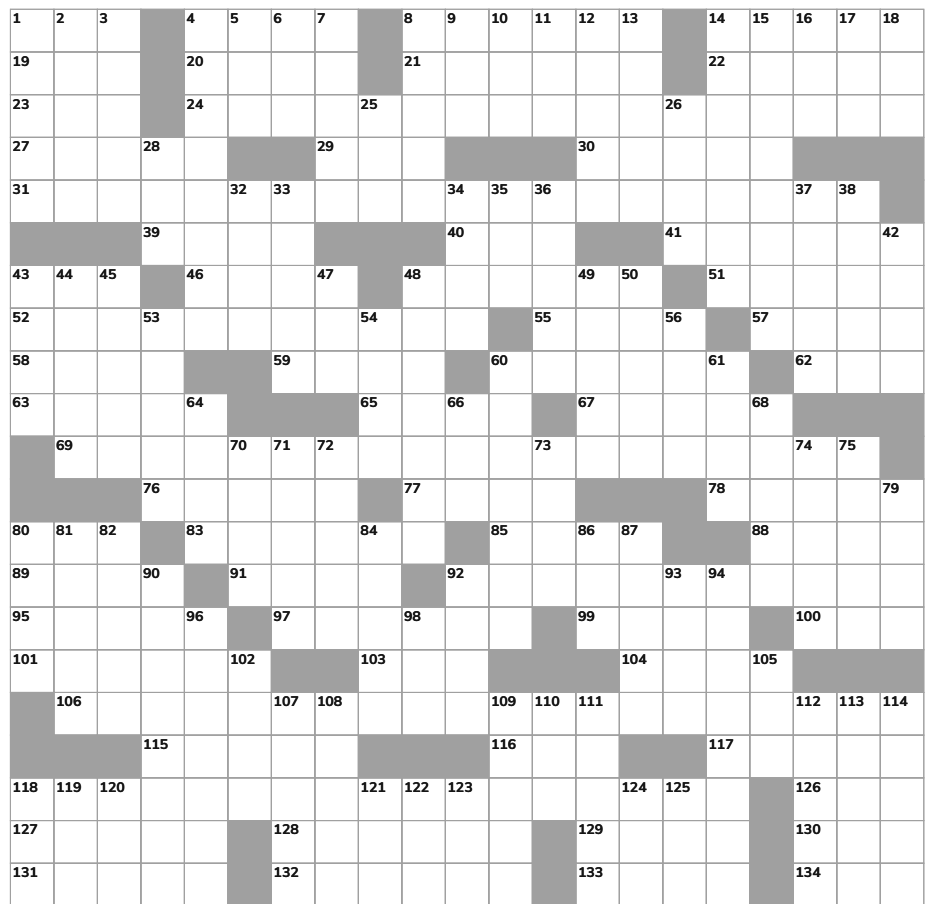
- 1. Similar type
4. Emollient
8. Show with an intermission
14. Subpar
19. Directing word
20. Reebok competitor
21. Continuing ill will
22. Relaxed
23. Annoying twerp
24. Zoom meeting cliché #1
27. Light entertainment?
29. Sammy with three ingredients
30. Western neckties
31. Zoom meeting cliché #2
39. Scrip amount
40. Stocking part
41. Bloodmobile visitors
43. Itinerary abbr.
46. Bubbly name
48. They're marked with bullets
51. Within the law
52. Zoom meeting cliché #3
55. Many a "Yellowjackets" character
57. From South Asia
58. Volcano seen from Catania
59. Filthy coat
60. Menacing looks
62. "Eponymous" band
63. Frequent flier in December
65. The Velvet Underground & ...
67. Mucks things up
69. Zoom meeting cliché #4
76. "I'm the BEST!"
77. One in a biergarten?
78. Northeast corridor train
80. Carrier to Tokyo
83. Some tourneys
85. Financial boon
88. Course finale
89. Scornful cries
91. King Charles's sister
92. Zoom meeting cliché #5
95. "Dees-gust-ing!"
97. ___ measles
99. Place name?
100. Fetterman, for one: Abbr.
101. Slowly
103. "That hurts!"
104. Alert to injustices
106. Zoom meeting cliché #6
115. Criminal's cover
116. Foofaraw
117. Frilly placemat
118. Zoom meeting cliché #7
126. Premium subscriber, e.g.
127. They're always tired
128. Cooking ingredient made with yolks
129. Pants, in slang
130. Squeeze (out)
131. Newspapers
132. Come to life
133. Actress Goldie
134. Mermaid's realm

Down

- 1. Like Dartmouth's walls
2. It's neither heaven nor hell
3. Clucking sound
4. Returned, as from vacation
5. Singer ___ Max
6. Author ___ Yutang
7. Noncommittal answer
8. "Adam Ruins Everything" channel
9. Lived in the past
10. Formula ___
11. Excellent serve
12. Value meal deal, often
13. Check for fit
14. The spirit world?
15. Went downhill
16. Enemy
17. Wear and tear
18. "Underworld" director Wiseman
25. Roar for a Toreador
26. Snow day toy
28. It added "dap" in 2023: Abbr.
32. Since
33. Turns suddenly
34. School near Windsor
35. Personne du palais
36. 1983 Barbra Streisand film
37. NFL commissioner Goodell
38. Kill off a few characters
42. Like long shot odds
43. Parts of potatoes
44. Last number
45. Gymnast/influencer Olivia
47. As well as
48. Dress sizes
49. Mexican cigar brand
50. Roman flourish?
53. Threadbare
54. Coverage area, e.g.
56. Kid's ball material
60. Starting the show
61. Ward of Mississippi
64. "Immediately!"
66. Fraternity letter
68. "Unleash the hounds!"
70. Banks at a photo shoot
71. Surrounded by
72. "The Family Circus" creator Bill
73. Junior who finished his career with the Patriots

BRENDAN EMMETT QUIGLEY THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

"Who's Zoomin' Who?"



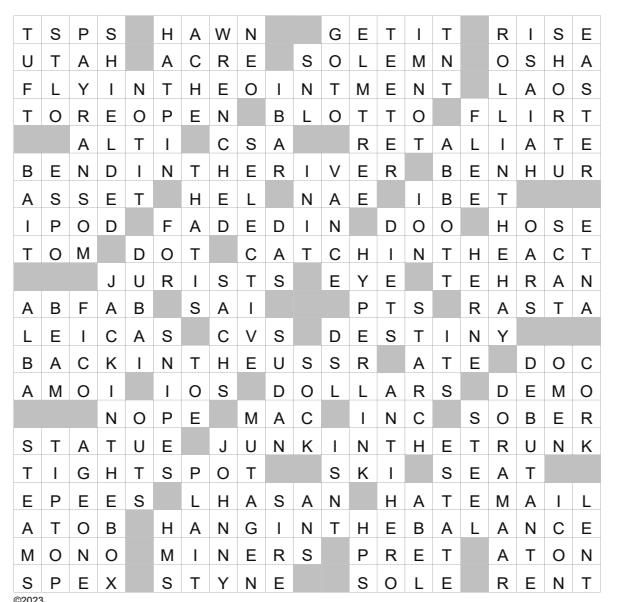
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- 74. Connected group
75. Make up?
79. Prayer's end
80. Statesman Eban
81. Silents star Nita
82. Scads
84. Acting icon Streep
86. Wrath
87. Food packaging abbr.
90. Desert plants
92. "Are you done yet ...?"
93. Alternatively, in texts
94. 1988 Leslie Nielsen farce, with "The"
96. In a slump, say
98. Parisienne's pronoun
102. Gospel singer Kemp

- 105. Thinking of the Earth
107. Detests
108. Endorse on a digital PDF
109. Frida with a unibrow
110. Neighbor of Wyo.
111. Straight up?
112. Rash
113. In the same fashion
114. Aggressive, as a personality
118. Big, fat mouth
119. "Peace in ___ time"
120. Western Indian
121. JFK or EWR alternative
122. Cut, as limbs
123. Plop on the couch
124. Pension fund, briefly
125. "Go! Move it!"

Last issue's solution

"Whatcha Doin'?"



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Advertisement for HELP WANTED, offering top pay and benefits, and Get your car ready for BAD WEATHER!

arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY	THURSDAY CONT.	FRIDAY CONT.	SATURDAY CONT.	SUNDAY CONT.		
7	<p>► Through Saturday, December 30.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Crowell Gallery at the Moore Free Library, 23 West St. Information: 802-365-7948; moorefreeslibrary.org.</p>	<p>► Free.</p> <p>► First United Methodist Church, 18 Town Crier Dr. Information: 802-254-4218; fumcob@gmail.com.</p> <p>WEST TOWNSHEND Bard Owl: Breeze Verdant and Annie Landenberger: Sweet harmonies, driving rhythms, old tunes, new tunes, originals with Verdant on guitar, vocals, stomp box; Landenberger on vocals and percussion.</p> <p>► 5-7 p.m.</p> <p>► No cover.</p> <p>► West Townshend Country Store and Cafe, Rte. 30. Information: bardowmusic.com.</p>	<p>► Free.</p> <p>► South St. Information: 802-254-9377; ascvt.org.</p> <p>GUILFORD Jazz Soiree: Pianist Michael Arnowitt is joined by Clyde Stats on upright bass and Keith Gibson on drums in diverse program of jazz past/present. Classics by Herbie Hancock, Pat Metheny, Bill Evans. Selections from Michael Arnowitt's Jazz Suite from "West Side Story," his arrangements of Gershwin's "My Man's Gone Now" from Porgy and Bess and the Beatles' "Eleanor Rigby," and Arnowitt's original music from jazz album "Sweet Spontaneous."</p> <p>► 7 p.m. Trio also plays two of pianist's jazz arrangements of classical music, one based on Bartok's "Rumanian Dance no. 1," and "Burana Bop," based on Carl Orff's "Carmina Burana."</p> <p>► \$20 at door.</p> <p>► Wendys Soiree, 2596 Tater Ln. Information: Call Wendy for reservations/directions: 802-254-6189.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Jake Blount: Afrofuturist Spirituals: Musician/scholar of Black American music, Jake Blount speaks about African roots of the banjo and subtle, yet profound ways African Americans have shaped/defined amorphous categories of roots music and Americana. His 2020 album "Spider Tales" highlighted Black/Indigenous histories of American folk tunes, and revived songs forgotten in the whitewashing of the canon. His new album, "The New Faith," is a towering achievement of dystopian Afrofuturism.</p> <p>► 7:30 p.m.: Doors open. 8 p.m.: Performance.</p> <p>► Tickets: \$25 or sliding scale.</p> <p>► Epsilon Spire, 190 Main St. Information: 802-451-0844; epsilonspires.org/upcoming-events.</p> <p>GRAFTON Spencer Lewis Celebrates Christmas with Musical Open House: Spencer Lewis plays solo guitar and violin and reprises songs from his "Calling in the Winter" album - includes traditional Christmas songs and originals like "Weaving World Peace." His music is uplifting, soulful and might be described as a soundtrack to his life living and growing up in VT. When he's not playing music or recording albums in his studio.</p> <p>► 1-4 p.m. Lewis has 21 instrumental albums in digital pipeline of iTunes and Spotify. He started as a folk singer-songwriter in the early '70s in Wilmington, playing The Old Red Mill and Fat City.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Grafton Congregational Church and Chapel / Brick Church Meeting House, 147 Main St. Information: 802-843-2404.</p>	<p>► Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.</p> <p>PUTNEY Next Stage Arts Hosts Sweet Celebration with Holiday Cookie Swap: Not just a culinary exchange, this is a chance for our community to come together and spread joy. Two options for participation: the "Little Elf" choice involves bringing two dozen cookies, while the "Big Elf" option calls for four dozen cookies.</p> <p>► 11 a.m.-2 p.m.: Participants encouraged to whip up favorite cookie recipes and drop them off today between 11 and 12 noon. 1-2 p.m.: Participants return to pick up thoughtfully curated assortment of cookies, creating sweet surprise for each contributor. Snow day plan is in place for Sunday-same drop-off and pick-up times. As part of Next Stage Arts' commitment to community well-being, any extra cookies will be distributed to the community through Meals on Wheels, ensuring the joy of the season extends to those who may need it most.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: Sign up at nextstagearts.org to participate.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Legislators Town Hall Meeting: Brattleboro Legislators invite the public to participate in discussing priorities for our upcoming 2024 legislative session. "Join us for a cup of coffee and conversation about what matters to you and what we can do at a state level to meet our community needs. State Reps include: Emily Kornheiser, Tristan Toleno, Emilie Kornheiser and Senators: Wendy Harrison and Nadar Hashim.</p> <p>► 10 a.m. - 12 noon.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: 802-254-5290; brookslibraryvt.org.</p>	<p>Tickets: app.arts-people.com/index.php?ticketing=bcvt.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO "Midwinter Revels": Directed by Brattleboro's Alex Cumming with special guests Keith Murphy and Becky Tracy.</p> <p>► 2 p.m.</p> <p>► Tickets: \$25.</p> <p>► Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St. Information: Tickets: tinyurl.com/58ax8u7l.</p>	
	8	<p>Performing arts</p> <p>PUTNEY Gordon Clark and his Vermont Comedy All-Stars return for a night of stand-up comedy at Next Stage Arts: Featured performers: Julia Colasanti, Julia DiFernando, Ash Diggs, Alex Duval, Levi Silverstein.</p> <p>► 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>► \$12 in advance, \$15 door. Advance ticketing closes two hours before showtime.</p> <p>► Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: Tickets: tinyurl.com/35536h3r. More information: 802-387-0102 or visit tinyurl.com/35536h3r.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Vermont Suitcase Company announces "Good King Wenceslaus": Follow King Wenceslaus and his Page, Edith, across the deep and crisp and even snow of Medieval Europe in their comedic search for meaning and goodness. Play delves deep between the stanzas of everyone's favorite Christmas carol, delighting audiences with quick-paced physical comedy, stage magic, and puppets, all performed by four actors.</p> <p>► 7:30 p.m. Plus homemade mittens, hats, and holiday gift cards will be on sale in the lobby from local maker, Knits & Mitts, and more!</p> <p>► Through Saturday, December 9.</p> <p>► \$10 suggested donation.</p> <p>► Hooker-Dunham Theater, 139 Main St. Information: 802-281-3232; hookerdunham.org.</p>	<p>Kids and families</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center: Little Explorers - Nature Playgroup for Children ages 3-5 and their Caregivers: Enjoy a morning of nature play and exploration with BEEC's Naturalist Educator Kristina Weeks and her 3-year-old child.</p> <p>► 10-11:30 a.m. Same program is also offered 12/15 and 12/22.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center, 1221 Bonnyvale Rd. Information: 802-257-5785; beec.org.</p>	<p>Celebrations and festivals</p> <p>GUILFORD Christmas at Broad Brook Community Center: Friends of Music at Guilford hosts annual Christmas celebration. The Guilford Chamber Singers present a cappella Christmas songs from classical to contemporary. Don McLean does his traditional reading of a holiday story and the whole audience joins in singing carols.</p> <p>► 7:30 p.m.</p> <p>► Through Saturday, December 9.</p> <p>► Donations at door.</p> <p>► Broad Brook Community Center, 3940 Guilford Center Rd. Information: 802-254-3600, office@fomag.org, facebook.com/FriendsOfMusicAtGuilford.</p>	<p>Visual arts and shows</p> <p>NEWFANE The Crowell Art Gallery presents Carol Schweigert's "There and Back Again"</p> <p>► 12/9 Reception: 1-3 p.m. Gallery is open Tuesday-Thursday: 1-5 p.m., Friday: 10 a.m.-5 p.m., Saturday: 10 a.m.-1 p.m.</p>	
		9	<p>Music</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Múscia Franklin 2nd Annual Holiday Cheer Benefit Concert: Orice Jenkins is a recording artist, performer, educator whose Nat "King" Cole album, "Centennial Cole," was featured in JazzTimes magazine and whose other albums have charted at #11 on the iTunes Jazz chart. For this performance, Múscia Franklin students will perform traditional seasonal carols. Khaloymes ("dreams" in Yiddish) was formed by fiddler Rachel Leader and accordionist/vocalist Ariel Shapiro.</p> <p>► 1-2:30 p.m. Weaving together lively and soulful arrangements of traditional klezmer melodies and Yiddish folk songs, Khaloymes will inspire you to listen deeply, dance and sing along, and dream of the world to come!</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► First United Methodist Church, 18 Town Crier Dr. Information: 802-254-4218; fumcob@gmail.com.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO The Soubrettes: 20-person vocal ensemble from VT Jazz Center directed by Anna Patton performs new songs in Swing Era style with humor, close harmonies, pathos, sass, written by Anna and Ben Patton. Ben released 14 albums of original songs - retro pop and folk to swing and jazz. His songs today include "Put it in a Pan and Fry It," "There Aren't Enough Love Songs," "Put on a Tie." Anna's original songs in program include "Pinwheel" and "Long Beard Wise."</p> <p>► 7-8:10 p.m. 12/9: The Chapel of All Souls' Church at The West Village Meetinghouse. (Plus, 12/10: 6-7:10 p.m.: Guiding Star Grange, 401 Chapman St., Greenfield MA.)</p> <p>► \$10 to \$20 suggested donation help cover costs and support the scholarship fund at the Vermont Jazz Center.</p> <p>► All Souls Unitarian Universalist Church West Village Meeting House, 29</p>	<p>Celebrations and festivals</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center (BEEC) Holiday Open House: All are invited to the Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center's new Farmhouse Learning Center for holiday season festivities: Warm beverages and treats and crafts for all ages.</p> <p>► 10 a.m.-4 p.m. 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.: Wreath-Making workshops. Gather materials and inspiration from the meadows of BEEC.</p> <p>► Free admission.</p> <p>► Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center, 1221 Bonnyvale Rd. www.beec.org/what-we-do/public-programs-and-events/walks-talks Register for wreath making at beec.org.</p>	<p>Well-being</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO The Brattleboro Zen Center In-Person Meditation: This group chants briefly and then sits in silence for a half hour. All are welcome to join this peaceful action, either in-person or from wherever they might be.</p> <p>► 1 p.m.-1:35 p.m. on Saturdays.</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Wells Fountain, south side Windham County District Courthouse, Jct. Putney Rd. & Main St. (Rte 30).</p>	<p>Music</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Vermont Blues Society Contest winner and singer-songwriter Jesse Lepkoff: Enjoy an evening of original and classic songs in both Brazilian bossa nova and blues styles. Lepkoff's songs can have the sophistication of art song or the knee-slapping earthiness of '30s style blues. His lyrics can be romantic or humorous, witty or ironic depending on the song.</p> <p>► 7 p.m.</p> <p>► Latchis Pub, 6 Flat St. Information: Call 802-246-0487.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Dir. Jonathan Harvey Director presents The Brattleboro Camerata: "Treasure Hidden Within": Program explores how composers take pre-existing music/hide it in structure of a new piece, infusing the latter w/ essence of the older work. Includes secular Medieval tune (in Giovanni Pierluigi da Palestrina's Missa L'homme armé a 4), sacred Gregorian chant melodies (hidden in Maurice Duruflé's Quatre Motets sur des Thèmes Grégoriens), musical puzzle/cryptogram (embedded in Josquin Desprez's Missa La sol fa re mi), and challenge melody from composition contest: "Ave Ma</p> <p>► 4 p.m. "Practice of weaving a pre-existing melody into new music has origins in the Medieval era and blossomed into a widespread practice during the Renaissance," says Jonathan Harvey. "This program is an attempt to demonstrate different ways composers can create hidden meanings w/ this technique, from the Renaissance up to the 20th century."</p> <p>► \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door.</p> <p>► Brattleboro Music Center, 72 Blanche Moysse Way. Information:</p>
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COLUMN | *Sports Roundup*

Concussions and young athletes: a growing concern

Researchers find increased risk of lasting brain injury to players of contact sports

Soccer is thought of as a safer alternative to football, with a seemingly lower risk of injury compared to the violent collisions that are common in football.

But concussions are not uncommon in soccer and, with them, the increase risk to athletes of developing conditions like chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a degenerative brain disease that can develop from repeated head impacts. Over time, it can cause behavioral, mood, and cognitive changes even if the patient has no new head trauma.

As reported earlier this year in Boston University's online compendium of their various research projects, *The Brink* (bu.edu/articles/2023/young-amateur-athletes-at-risk-of-cte-study-finds), researchers at BU's Chronic Traumatic Encephalopathy Center studied the brains of more than 150 contact sports participants — mostly football, soccer, and ice hockey—who had died under age 30.

They found that 41 percent of them showed signs of CTE, and that young, amateur athletes who play some of the most physical contact sports also seem to be at risk, despite their comparatively short, lower-profile playing careers.

The researchers began by scrutinizing brain samples for signs of an abnormal buildup of a protein called tau—a signature of CTE—as well as for damage to the white matter and other brain tissue. All of the samples were pulled from the BU-led UNITE Brain Bank, a repository of more than 1,400 brains donated after death for study, which is run in partnership with the US Department of Veterans Affairs and the Concussion Legacy Foundation.

Dr. Ann McKee, director



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.

of BU's CTE Center, said the study "clearly shows that the pathology of CTE starts early. The fact that over 40 percent of young contact and collision sport athletes in the UNITE Brain Bank have CTE is remarkable—considering that studies of community brain banks show that fewer than 1 percent of the general population has CTE."

This presents a conundrum for parents, McKee said.

"The brain is obviously so critical to a child's productivity and their potential in life," she said. "We want our kids to be physically fit, to get the benefits from playing team sports — that's important for a child's development. But we don't want to sacrifice the brain, and I do think the importance of maintaining brain health is gaining traction worldwide."

McKee is a co-author of the "CTE Prevention Protocol," (concussionfoundation.org/sites/default/files/2023-06/CTE%20prevention%20protocol%20062023.pdf) a joint project between the BU CTE Center and the Concussion Legacy Foundation. It's a guide to reducing hits to the head—and the force of those blows—in a range of sports.

Suggestions in the guide include cutting back on drills that involve hits and teaching defensive techniques that help lower

the power of tackles and collisions. The protocol also suggests rule changes, like banning fighting in ice hockey, headers after goal kicks in soccer, and home plate collisions in baseball.

The guide also suggests that coaches be more aware of how their players are doing, and offering broader support when it comes to mental, as well as physical, health. In short, for everyone involved in the lives of young athletes, McKee said it's important to recognize when they need more help than a loved one or coach can offer.

"A lot of people with these symptoms feel desperate and they aren't taken seriously," she said. "They feel they need help, but aren't able to get it for many reasons. A lot of the time, medical care providers just aren't knowledgeable enough about what might be happening in the brain of a person who's had a lot of head impacts. If a person is experiencing symptoms, they need to seek help, because it's highly probable that a lot of these symptoms can be managed."

The Vermont Principals' Association, the governing body for school sports in Vermont, has been taking a proactive approach over the past couple of years as coaches and parents become aware of the need to take concussion risk seriously. The VPA's concussion protocol guidelines can be found at vpaonline.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/09/Athletic-Injury-and-Concussion-Guidelines.docx.pdf.

We love watching our young people compete on the playing field, but they shouldn't have to risk their future health to do it. For parents and fans, McKee said a bit of attitude adjustment is needed.

"People are very attached



Nordic skiing legend John Caldwell of Putney, seen here watching a Marble Valley League race in Brattleboro in 2019, celebrated his 95th birthday last week.

to these games," McKee said. "But they are all just products of our imagination and our wanting to be entertained. The rules aren't sacred. If we put our heads together, no pun intended, we can come up with an extremely exciting, entertaining game — which is what everybody wants — that doesn't injure the players in a way they can never recover from."

Winter school sports season begins this weekend

The winter high school sports season in Vermont begins this week, with plenty of basketball and hockey action on tap this weekend.

- Brattleboro got an early start on the boys' basketball season on Dec. 5 with a game against Keene. Everyone else starts on Friday, Dec. 8, as Leland & Gray is at Bellows Falls, while Twin Valley takes on Twinfield/Cabot in the opening game of the Proctor Tournament. Those games begin at 7 p.m.

- Girls' basketball also starts on Dec. 8 with the Leland & Gray Tip-Off Tourney. Brattleboro will face Burr & Burton in the first game at 5:30 p.m. At 7 p.m., Rebels fans will see a rematch between the schools that battled each other last month in the Division IV state soccer championship game as Arlington and Leland & Gray renew acquaintances. The winners of these two games will play for the tourney championship on Dec. 9.

- On Saturday, Dec. 9, Bellows Falls and Twin Valley will open their seasons on the road as the Terriers take on Mill River at noon in North Clarendon, while the Wildcats take on Sharon Academy for a 2:30 p.m. game.

- The hockey season begins at home for the Brattleboro girls on Dec. 9 with a 4:45 p.m. game against Hartford at Whittington Rink. The Brattleboro boys also start their season at home when the Bears host Burr & Burton on Wednesday, Dec. 13 at 5 p.m.

- The Brattleboro nordic team is scheduled to start its season at Prospect Mountain in Woodford on Dec. 9 with a skate sprint race. They have two home meets scheduled at the Brattleboro Outing Club's trails at the Brattleboro Country Club — weather-permitting — in a classic race on Friday, Jan. 26 at 3 p.m., and the Southern Vermont League skate championship on Wednesday, Feb. 14, at 2 p.m.

- The Brattleboro bowling team has its first match on Dec. 9 in Rutland, and will host Fair Haven and Windsor on Dec. 16 at Brattleboro Bowl.

Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum hosts John Caldwell

- On Thursday, Dec. 7, at 7 p.m., Vermont Ski and Snowboard Museum will present an online chat via Zoom with the man that many call the "Father of Cross-Country Skiing," Putney's John Caldwell.

Caldwell competed in the 1952 Winter Olympics and later became coach of the U.S. Olympic Cross-Country Ski Team in 1960, 1964, 1968, 1972, and 1984. He was also the ski coach at The Putney School from the mid-1950s until his retirement in 1989. Several of his skiers he coached at the school, including the legendary Bill Koch, went on to become Olympians.

He also became the authority on cross-country skiing and wrote *The Cross-Country Ski Book*, which went through eight editions between 1964 and 1987 and sold a half-million copies. It was the book credited with helping to develop a better understanding of cross-country skiing in North America.

Caldwell celebrated his 95th birthday last week, and is a member of both the U.S. and Vermont Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame. His children and grandchildren have also made their mark in the sport he has done so much to promote.

Moderating the conversation will be Peter Graves, a Vermont native and Nordic skier, who has dedicated his career to the sport. Over his 40-year career, he has served as a coach with the U.S. Ski Team and head coach at Harvard for six seasons. He is perhaps best known for his long career as a television and stadium announcer, having covered 13 Olympic Games. Peter was named to the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame in 2021.

Register for the event at vtssm.org/new-events. The talk is free, but the museum asks attendees to consider making a suggested donation of \$10 to support its mission to "Collect, Preserve, and Celebrate Vermont's rich skiing and snowboarding history."

Girls on the Run Vermont announces coach recruitment for spring 2024 season

- Girls on the Run Vermont (GOTRVT) a nonprofit organization that uses a research and physical activity-based curriculum to inspire girls in grades 3-8 to be joyful, healthy, and confident, announced that coach registration for GOTRVT's 25th anniversary spring season is now open statewide.

GOTRVT needs over 500 volunteer coaches to host teams in 2024. This season, GOTRVT will be offered at over 110 locations across Vermont. The 10-week season begins March 18, with teams meeting twice a week for 90 minutes. The 20-lesson curriculum covers topics such as positive self-talk, friendship, managing emotions and more, all created to nourish participants' social, emotional, and physical well-being.

The program culminates with teams participating in a non-competitive, celebratory 5K event on June 8 at the Manchester Recreation Fields — bringing together families, friends, and community members to celebrate the participants' growth throughout the season.

All coaches will be trained in-person and will receive the materials and resources necessary to facilitate lessons for the season. Coaches do not need to be runners but are required to be a minimum of 18 years old. Students in high school may register to be a Junior Coach. All volunteer coaches must complete a background check and online training modules prior to in-person training. Coach training will be offered on Feb. 3 in Brattleboro. To learn more or to register to be a coach mentor, visit gotrvt.org.

Senior bowling roundup

- Week 13 of the fall/winter season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on Nov. 30 saw Four Seasons (44-21) have their fourth straight 4-1 week to stay in first place. No Splits (37-27) also went 4-1 to move into second place. There's a four-way tie for third between High Rollers, Hairiers, Skippers, and Stepping Stones (all 36-29), followed by Dumblebor (32-33), Four Pins (30-35), and PEWJ (25-40).

Diane Cooke had the women's high handicap game (266), while Shirley Aiken had the high handicap series (633). Eric Brown had the men's high handicap game (256) and series (653). Hairiers had the high team handicap game (890), while No Spilts had the high handicap series (2,548).

Robert Rigby had the men's high scratch series (592) with games of 218 and 203, while Peter Deyo had a 557 series with games of 210 and 195. John Walker had a 556 series with games of 192 and 191, Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 536 series, Fred Ashworth had a 512 series, and Wayne Randall had a 506 series.

Aiken had the women's high scratch series (447), with games of 158 and 155, while Cooke had a 158 game.



RANDOLPH T. HOLHUT/COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Soccer is definitely a contact sport, as demonstrated in this scene in front of the Leland & Gray goal in their Division IV girls' soccer playoff game against Proctor on Oct. 26.

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