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Windham school lawsuit moves ahead, but most claims dismissed

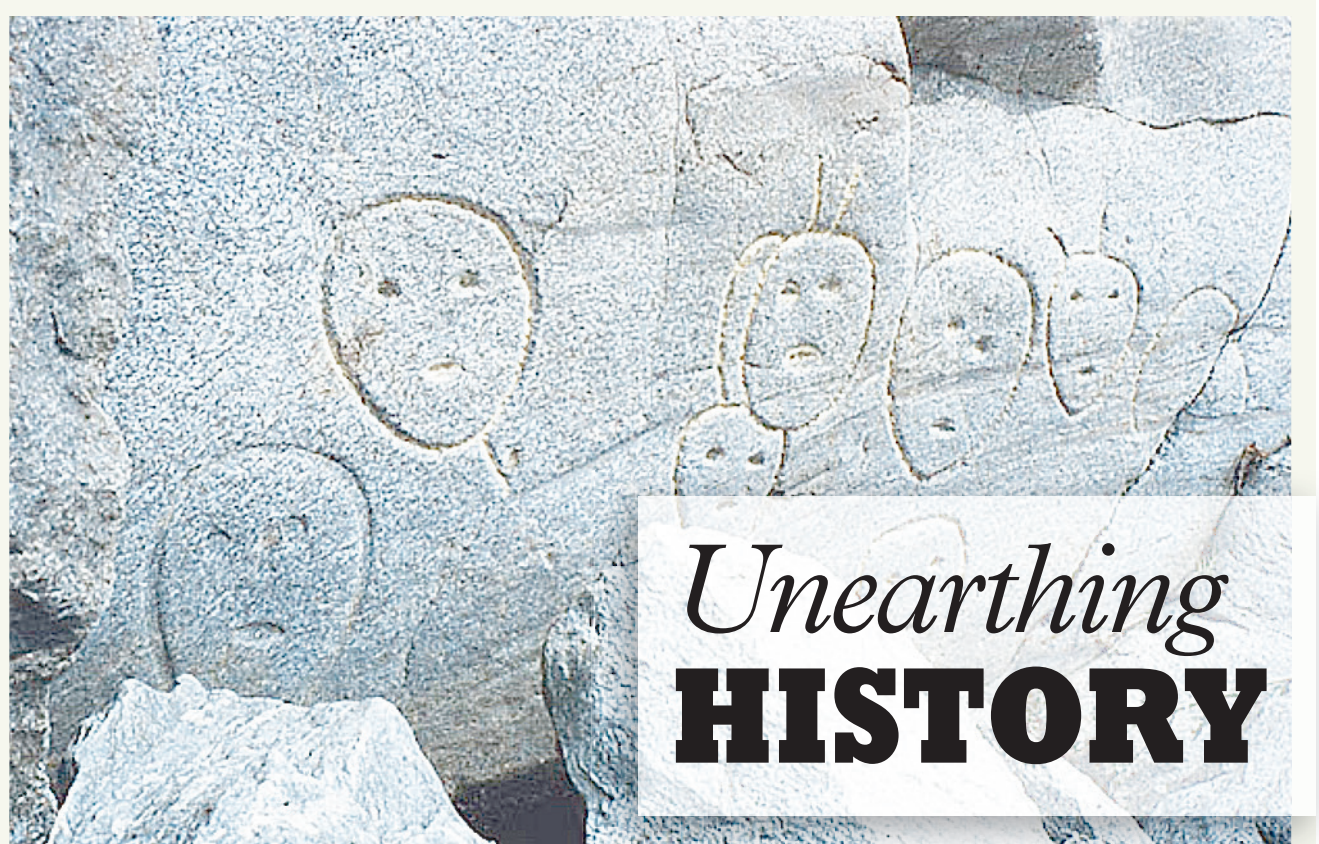
Question remains whether the elementary school failed to provide 'quality basic education'

By **Ethan Weinstein**
ViDigger

WINDHAM—Parents in the Windham School District, who sought via a lawsuit to have the district pay tuition to send students elsewhere, have had a majority of their claims dismissed. But Windham Superior Court Judge David Barra allowed a central part of the suit to continue — the allegation that Windham

Elementary School, which last spring had fewer than 20 students, failed to meet the state's quality standards for education. "The only claim that remains is [...] for deprivation of the constitutional right to an education under the Education Clause due to Defendants' failure to provide 'quality basic education' as defined by Vermont's Educational Quality Standards," Barra wrote

■ SEE LAWSUIT, A6



Unearthing HISTORY

GERRY BIRON/COMMONS FILE

The petroglyphs at the Great Falls in present-day Bellows Falls, known to the Abenaki as Kchi Pôntegok. A \$37,000 study of the Native rock carvings is coming to a close, and the findings will be unveiled to the public in the months to come.

Construction innovator looks to take on housing crisis

Brattleboro firm creates modular rooms and works to develop open standards for their installation, hoping to weaken one barrier to affordable housing: construction cost

By **Ellen Pratt**
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—Talk to anybody about Vermont's housing crisis, and the subject of high construction costs will inevitably come up. It currently costs about \$500,000 to build a modest apartment or small home in the state, according to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA). That's up from about \$370,000 in 2022.

High interest rates, supply shortages, and a lack of labor all contribute to these high costs. The result is a widening gap between what's needed (VHFA estimates 40,000 more homes will be needed by 2030) and what's being built (the number of building permits issued each year has stagnated at about 2,300 homes).

Jason Van Nest is the co-founder and CEO of Logic Building Systems on Main Street, an off-site manufacturer of kitchen, bathroom, and utility room modules. He said he is "laser-focused" on driving down the costs of housing construction.

His solution? Manufacture kitchens, bathrooms, and utility rooms off site, then "plug [them] into" host buildings using standardized connections.

Van Nest said Logic's modular room units "will be picked up with a forklift, put on a truck, lifted up to the floor of the building, dropped in place,

and plugged in. Just like installing an appliance."

"The time between when it arrives on the job site and the time when you flush the toilet can be as little as 15 minutes," he said.

Van Nest trained as an architect and spent his college summers building homes with Habitat for Humanity. In addition to being an entrepreneur, Van Nest also runs

■ SEE MODULAR ROOMS, A2

After years of work, the Kchi Pôntegok Project concludes and offers a deeper understanding of the story of Native peoples of the Connecticut River Valley

By **Robert F. Smith**
The Commons

BELLOWS FALLS—In May, a community group will begin unveiling its work on a \$37,000 study of the Native rock carvings next to the Vilas Bridge on the Vermont side of the Connecticut River.

The Kchi Pôntegok Project (kit-see pohm-tuh-guk), named after the Abenaki expression for "at the Great Falls," which refers to the location of the petroglyphs. The group is at the point of wrapping up the project and

members are planning public presentations of their findings.

The group will also present on Wednesday, June 5, when Bellows Falls hosts the state's annual Downtown and Historic Preservation Conference.

Those responsible for fulfilling the grant included archaeologist Gail Golec as project coordinator; master scuba diver Annette Spaulding, who was responsible for all underwater research with help from diver Tom Martell; Walter Wallace, the coordinator of the Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission; and



WENDY M. LEVY/COMMONS FILE PHOTO

Project Coordinator Gail Golec says the Kchi Pôntegok Project has two "spheres of influence": the area in the 2-mile radius around the petroglyphs, and the broader Connecticut River region.



CONNECTICUT RIVER CONSERVANCY/SCREENSHOT/COMMONS FILE

Master diver Annette Spaulding, of Rockingham, logged 77 dives in the Connecticut River over two years.

Diana Jones, Rich Holschuh, and Roger Longtoe Sheehan of the area's Elnu Abenaki band.

Partway into the project, a newcomer to the area, a for-ester named Hale Morrell, offered her computer expertise to create maps and a database for the information collected, which Golec described as an

invaluable tool.

The original grant wasn't sufficient to cover the cost of the mapping work. Holschuh received a small Vermont Humanities Grant through the Atowi Project to fund a database of maps, images, and text.

The database will soon be

■ SEE PETROGLYPHS, A5

BMH Auxiliary celebrates a century of service

For 101 years, the nonprofit organization has raised money for Brattleboro Memorial Hospital with clambakes and a beloved coffee shop — all fueled by the energy of a who's who of Brattleboro women

By **Fran Lynggaard Hansen**
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—JoAnne Rogers has been a member of the Brattleboro Memorial Hospital Auxiliary since 1993.

"I joined the organization and was the manager of the gift shop and the coffee shop at BMH," says Rogers, the organization's current president, who remembers "so many wonderful ladies" with whom she has worked over the years.

The names of members past and present are a who's who of

Brattleboro women.

"If you've lived in this town for very long, you'll likely remember the BMH coffee shop where Gladys Earle, Claire Lavender, Betty Tyler, and so many others have volunteered," she says.

The organization, established in 1923, "is 101 years old, but we missed the opportunity to catch [the centennial] anniversary last year," says Rogers with a chuckle.

That list of important local women reaches back all the way to Florence Estey, wife of Julius Estey, the second-generation president of the eponymous

■ SEE AUXILIARY, A3



Members of the BMH Auxiliary celebrated their 100th anniversary at their annual meeting in April. Left to right: Diane Cooke (newly elected auxiliary co-president), Carol Stack (Auxilian of the Year recipient), Wendy Dougherty (co-president), and JoAnne Rogers (BMH).

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 Randolph T. Holhut, News Editor
 John Sherman, Assistant Editor
 Elizabeth Julia Stoumen, Calendar and Proofreading
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SPECIAL FOCUS

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CONTRIBUTING WRITERS

Virginia Ray, Joyce Marcel, Fran Lynggaard Hansen, Robert F. Smith, Annie Landenberger, Dot Grover-Read, Victoria Chertok, Deborah Lee Luskin, Elaine Cliff, Kevin O'Connor, Alyssa Grosso, Thelma O'Brien

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

VOICES

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

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

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

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

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

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

Modular rooms

FROM SECTION FRONT

the Center for Offsite Housing at the New York Institute of Technology, where he and his team are developing the first standards for how modular kitchen, bathrooms, and utility rooms would plug into a host building.

Van Nest said that modular construction, which has been around since the mid-20th century, is hindered by a lack of technical standards for integrating modules into buildings.

“Not everybody agrees how to connect manufactured pods to the utilities in the basement of a building,” Van Nest said. “The modular industry can’t work at scale because currently you have to design how the product will fit into every single building.”

That’s where his standards come in.

A visit to Van Nest’s lab on Main Street clarifies what he is describing. At about 7 feet tall and 8 inches wide, the “coupling,” as Van Nest calls it, has ports for electricity, HVAC, plumbing, sanitary, and data that the manufactured kitchen plugs into.

Van Nest equates his innovation to the invention of the USB port.

“Before the standard USB port came about, there were multiple ways that printers, keyboards, and other peripherals connected to the back of the computer,” he said.

“Then Hewlett-Packard and other big corporations got together and made the open-source standard USB. Nobody owned it. Everybody could make a USB plug that plugged into somebody else’s USB. And then the computer peripherals marketplace exploded,” he continued.

As with the USB standard, Van Nest’s connectivity standard will be open source, which means that companies can freely use the technical specifications without paying licensing fees to an owner.

Once finalized, the standard will be handed off to the American National Standards Institute (ANSI), a private nonprofit organization that collaborates with industry and government to identify and develop standards and conformance-based solutions to national and global priorities.

“ANSI tells us how big an inch is,” said Van Nest. “And because of that, I can go into any hardware store in America and buy a tape measure, and it’ll agree with everybody else’s tape measure. So that we can concentrate on building buildings — not calibrating our tape measures.”

Van Nest believes his standard will help to create a thriving marketplace for modulars. He also said that although he’s an entrepreneur, he’s not in this business to get rich.

“I’m a professor! I’ve got patches on my tweed jacket,” he exclaimed.

“If Logic Building Systems ends up getting whipped in the marketplace because other capitalists can make factories faster and manufacture modules to the standard, I’ll be tickled,” he said. “I’ll be absolutely poor, but smiling. We’ll have established a basic technology to help address the affordable housing crisis.”

Van Nest described the region’s housing crisis as consisting of four separate crises on the supply side: inefficiencies, waste, high material costs, and labor shortages.

He believes off-site manufacture of modular kitchens, bathrooms, and utility rooms, along with standards for installing them, will directly attack these crises.

“We haven’t updated the way we build homes in 100 years,” Van Nest said. “And these current onsite construction methods are inefficient and profoundly wasteful.”

According to Van Nest, about 32% of construction materials that are purchased “end up in the dumpster before the occupant moves into the building.”

Through off-site manufacturing, where the same product is built repeatedly, the manufacturer can find ways to eliminate waste and save materials and labor, Van Nest said.

He said that soaring material costs, combined with inefficient construction systems, compound the problem of high costs.

He also noted that there is a severe labor shortage in the construction industry because skilled tradespeople are retiring and fewer students are replacing them.

“We tend to send a lot of our students for bachelor degrees. We don’t have a healthy trade training path,” he said.

Van Nest believes that Brattleboro needs these skilled laborers to refresh the area’s aging housing stock. He wants to train the next generation of local tradespeople through a project that he hopes will be funded with a \$9.9 million congressional discretionary spending request to Sens. Peter Welch and Bernie Sanders and Rep. Becca Balint.

The project will test and document the system of training the work force, manufacturing Logic Building System’s modules, and installing them using the new standards.

The plan is to build and install 200 modules in 50 new homes from four affordable housing developers in Vermont.

These include Groundworks Collaborative, which will be constructing a new shelter at 81 Royal Rd. in Brattleboro; Windham & Windsor Housing



ELLEN PRATT/THE COMMONS

Jason Van Nest of Logic Building Systems of Brattleboro says his coupling will allow his manufactured pods to easily plug into the host building.

Trust, which builds affordable housing in Windham and Windsor counties; Community Development Support, Inc., the nonprofit arm of Stevens and Associates of Brattleboro; and Downstreet Housing and Community Development, an affordable housing developer in central Vermont.

“We’re very interested in the work of Logic Building Systems, as it holds the promise of lower construction costs and directly deals with the most significant

barrier to building more homes in Vermont,” said Elizabeth Bridgewater, executive director of Windham & Windsor Housing Trust.

“We welcome this entrepreneurial approach and look forward to collaborating with them in the future,” she said.

Van Nest envisions a future in which consumers can build the home of their dreams using off-site manufactured modules.

His goal is to design software that would allow consumers to

design their home choosing from a catalogue of parts: the foundation, the structural elements, the outside shell of the home, the rooms, and even the chimney.

Consumers would be able to drag and drop the various parts into an online design, then Logic — or other module manufacturers — would build and deliver the parts.

“This is the way we should be building homes in the 21st century,” he said.

Gateway Foundation offers scholarships for local students

BRATTLEBORO—The Gateway Foundation of the Brattleboro Rotary Club will again offer college scholarships this year to graduating students at Brattleboro Union, Leland & Gray, and Hinsdale high schools. The amount of assistance will be \$2,000 to \$3,000 per student.

A combination of financial need, academic achievement, and community service will be used as the criteria for selecting the recipients. Every application must include a student application, a Parent Contribution Questionnaire (PCQ), a 250-word

essay entitled, “What I learned by doing community service this year,” and a current transcript of grades.

The applications and financial assistance forms are available at each school’s guidance department and at brattlebororotaryclub.org. They must be submitted by Friday, May 17, to John C. Mabie, Esq., 45 Linden Street, Brattleboro, VT 05301.

The awards will be presented during part of the graduation festivities at each high school in June. In addition, the Rotary Club will invite every student given an

award to attend a Rotary Club meeting this summer to be recognized by its members.

The Gateway Foundation was established by the Brattleboro Rotary Club more than 30 years ago to help enable deserving students to attend the college of their choice. It has given over \$500,000 in scholarships over the years. The scholarship money awarded comes from annual rotary fundraising projects including Christmas Tree sales and generous contributions from Rotarians and members of the community.

Spring adventures begin at the Rockingham Free Public Library

BELLOWS FALLS—As the weather warms up, the Rockingham Free Public Library invites patrons to find adventure this spring — starting at the library.

The library is launching a new outdoor, immersive experience throughout the village and Bellows Falls history called “Bellows Falls in Time.” Part scavenger hunt and part history lesson, all anyone needs to play is a cell phone.

Bellows Falls in Time begins

in front of the library by texting “Hello” to a number or scanning a QR code (both available at the library) to receive messages from a character lost in time — one who needs to visit historic locations in the village to remember their identity and the significance of Bellows Falls.

Participants will need to have their cell phone sounds on, answer their phone (or check messages), and click the links to find clues, get directions, and solve the mystery.

The game was developed with help from the community, according to Youth Services Librarian Sam Howard. One aspect of designing he enjoys is including other organizations, like the Historical Society and Rockingham for Progress, “as well as other individuals who lent their voices and talent to making the game more interesting,” he says.

This project is made possible through a program called “Engaging Beyond Our Walls,” with funding and support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, Playful City Lab, and American University Game Center.

The library now joins a small group of libraries nationally offering community game-based programming. The goal of this game, according to the library, is “to connect the community more deeply to our neighborhoods and our history.”

For more information about this program, email youthservices@rockinghamlibrary.org, call 802-463-4270, go online at rockinghamlibrary.org, or visit the library at 65 Westminster St.

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Births, deaths, and news of people from Windham County

College news

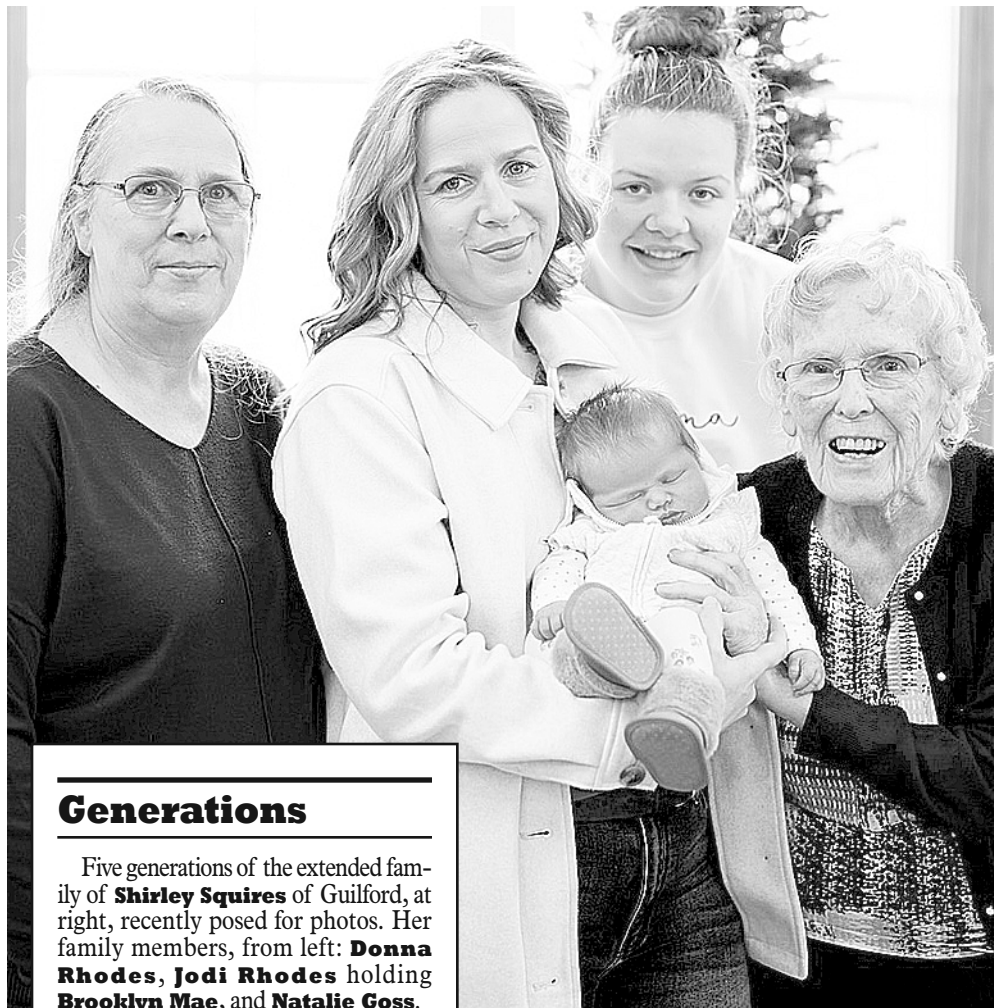
- **Leah Madore** of Williamsville has been inducted into Psi Chi, the international honor society in psychology, at Russell Sage College in Troy, New York.
- **Jessica Tatro** of Brattleboro, a biology major in the Class of 2024, has been inducted into the Tau Chapter of the Delta Epsilon Sigma National Scholastic Honor Society for the 2023-24 academic year at Saint Anselm College in Manchester, New Hampshire.
- **Grace Conety** of Brattleboro and **Sam Mills** of Marlboro were named to the fall 2023 Dean's List at Simmons University in Boston.
- **Nieve Whitehouse** of Marlboro made the fall 2023 Dean's List at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington.

Obituaries



• **Carolyn A. Dompier, 82**, of Brattleboro. Died in the comfort of her home, surrounded by her loving family, on April

19, 2024. Carolyn was born in Brattleboro on June 4, 1941, the daughter of Henry and Mary (Jasienowski) Wojchick. She attended Hinsdale, New Hampshire, public schools and graduated from Hinsdale High School in 1959. She attended the Doerr Academy of Beauty Culture in Springfield, Massachusetts and graduated in 1961. Carolyn later opened her own business, which she operated out of her home. She catered to her elderly clients by traveling to nursing homes and making house calls to those who were unable to travel. Carolyn enjoyed and found great comfort attending church and was a communicant of St. Michael's Roman Catholic Church and was a former parishioner of St. Joseph's Church in Hinsdale. On May 25, 1963, at St. Joseph's Church in Hinsdale, she married Donald S. Dompier. Carolyn loved to spend time and travel with her husband Don, traveling to many places including Niagara Falls for their honeymoon, Dutch Amish Country, New Mexico, Hawaii, Venezuela, and the Dominican Republic. She loved going to the beach, whether it was Spofford Lake or Hampton Beach. She loved to "people watch," sitting in the sun and floating for hours in the water. She loved flowers and was always puttingtering around in her flower beds. She loved feeding and watching the birds at her home, especially the cardinals that visited her on a daily basis. She was a caring daughter and spent most Sundays with her mother when she was alive, both shopping and hosting Sunday dinners at her home. She enjoyed spending time with her brothers and sisters and loved her nieces and nephews. However, her greatest joy was becoming a mother and grandmother. She was loving, compassionate, fun, and devoted. She found great joy in planning holiday celebrations for her grandchildren and attending their school and sport functions. She valued family over everything else. Carolyn is survived by her beloved husband of 61 years and their three children and grandchildren: Kenneth Dompier of Chester, Connecticut and his wife Kimberly and their two children Jared and Kamilla; Steven Dompier of Spofford, New Hampshire and his wife Kristi and their two children Jacob and Justin; and Cheri Hill



Generations

Five generations of the extended family of **Shirley Squires** of Guilford, at right, recently posed for photos. Her family members, from left: **Donna Rhodes**, **Jodi Rhodes** holding **Brooklyn Mae**, and **Natalie Goss**.

of Brattleboro and her husband Bill and her two children Gregory and William. She also leaves behind her two brothers, Martin Wojchick of Chesterfield, New Hampshire, and Michael Wojchick of Hinsdale, her sister, Janet Faucher of Hinsdale, and her many nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents and her sister, Patricia Lord. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A funeral Mass was celebrated at St. Michael's Catholic Church on April 26, followed by committal rites and burial in the family lot in Christ Church Cemetery in the Algiers section of Guilford. Donations to St. Michael's School or Brigid's Kitchen, 48 Walnut St., Brattleboro, VT 05301. To offer condolences, visit atamaniuk.com.



• **Russell "Russ" Haviland, 82**, passed away peacefully in North Haverhill, New Hampshire on

April 18, 2024. He was born on in Brattleboro on March 17, 1941, to E. Randall Haviland and Gretchen (Shaw) Haviland. Russ's time was a life well-lived in the mountains of Vermont, fulfilling his dream of raising a big family with his wife of 50 years, Margaret "Peg" Haviland, serving his community as an educator, and farming the land. Russ was a graduate of Brattleboro Union High School, Keene State College, and Fitchburg State College, where he pursued advanced degrees to prepare him for a long career in education. Russ also proudly served in the Army from 1961 to 1964, where he was stationed in Germany. With his education and military service in hand, Russ started his career in education as an industrial arts teacher, where he guided students to discover wood-working, a hobby that he enjoyed all his life. Most in the community knew him as the Director of River Bend Technical Center, formerly known as Oxbow Vocational Center, in Bradford. After retiring in 2003, he stayed busy by driving a school bus and working in his woodshop. He would seek respite every summer on the coast of Maine with his family, enjoying a gin and tonic while overlooking the ocean. Russ loved nothing more than being outdoors. From tending his cows, chickens, and garden on his Brock Hill farm to

taking long walks hand-in-hand with Peg. Russ was a dad to five children — Christopher, Samuel, Leslie, Patrick, and Brenna — whom he raised to be hard-working, dedicated, and generous to others. These virtues were passed on to his 10 grandchildren — Kaleb, Colin, Aryana, Jillian, Brodie, Malakai, Bennett, Conor, Charlotte, and Lilah. Russ was known affectionately as "Poppa" by his grandkids, and he cherished the time spent with them at holidays and family gatherings. Russ was predeceased by his wife, Peg, and is survived by his sister, Gretchen "Jane" Jenkins of Naples, Florida, and his brother, Randall Haviland of Portland, Oregon; his children and grandchildren, and his daughters-in-law Lynne Audet Haviland and Ashley Haviland. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: His life will be celebrated on Saturday, May 18, at 1 p.m., at Ricker Funeral Home in Woodsville, New Hampshire. To offer condolences, visit rickerfh.com.



• **Michael E. "Mike" Kendall, 65**, died on April 15, 2024. He was born in Bellows Falls on Nov. 3,

1957, the fourth of 10 children to Frederick Sr. and Beatrice (Stowell) Kendall. On June 26, 1979, at Centre Congregational Church, he married the love of his life, Tammie Clement, who survives. They built a beautiful life that took them and their daughters many places. Mike was a family man and his family meant the world to him. His greatest accomplishments in life were his three daughters, all whom survive: Denise (Dj) Bell, Sarah (Mark) Hamilton, and Michaela (Ryan) Stone, all of Brattleboro. He leaves behind his nine grandchildren whom he loved greatly: Anthony, Harmony, and Taylor Bell; Katelynn, Kyle, and Tyke Hamilton; Landon, Elias and Emma Stone; as well as his eight great-grandchildren. His hobbies included riding the back roads and enjoying the scenery and wildlife. He also enjoyed classic cars and spending time showing his grandchildren that "they don't make 'em like they used to." His latest classic was a 1946 Ford Coupe which he bought from a longtime friend and "the coolest part of it was the cut out in

disabled associates. She made the library space available for community meetings ranging from the Italo Balbo Lodge (Sons of Italy) to the League of Women Voters. She created an annual community celebration day that brought together the full range of diversity represented in the town. During her directorial tenure, she undertook a major renovation of the library, ultimately functioning, as a result of construction consultancy prepermission, as on-site construction supervisor. She also served the community as a member of the Uniondale Community Council and an associate and advisor to the town program for disadvantaged youths. In retirement, she served as chair of the library board of the Lydia Pratt Taft Library in West Dummerston. Susan was a deeply committed and caring woman who put the needs and interests of others above her own. In a progressively darkening world, she never gave up hope. She will be sorely missed by colleagues, friends, and family. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: Those wishing to honor Susan's memory may contribute to the scholarship established in her name. Make checks payable to Clark University and send to: University Advancement, 950 Main St., Worcester, MA 01610. Please indicate that your gift is in memory of Susan Kern '65 for the Susan A. Keene Kern '65 & Gail A. Anderson '65 Memorial Scholarship Fund.



• **Joan Ada (Braman) Morse, 84**, of Vernon. Died April 19, 2024 at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center

in Lebanon, New Hampshire. Joan was born in Clarksburg, Massachusetts, on June 18, 1939, to Walter Alfred and Anna Rose (Duverney) Braman. Joan attended Drury High School in North Adams, Massachusetts, and received her GED from Greenfield Community College. Later, she lived with her sister, Anna Rose Spagnolo and her husband, Joseph, in North Adams. Joan met her husband, Eugene Leland Morse, the son of Wendell and Hilma (Bishop) Morse, at a Morse's Barn Dance in Whitingham, and later got married on Oct. 17, 1959, at the Burrington Hill Ski Resort in Whitingham. They would reside in Readsboro, Jacksonville, and Vernon. Joan had worked for the Readsboro Chair Factory (Vermont Hardwoods), Vernon Green Nursing Home, and Clear Solutions. She enjoyed country music, feeding the birds, cooking, and growing plants. She was predeceased by sisters Kathleen (1931), Loretta (1932), Dorothy Mazza (2008), and Anna Spagnolo (2011); brothers Eugene "Bill" (1995), Walter Jr. "Bud" (2007), and Leo (2011); and half-brother Mitchell (2015). She is survived by her daughter, Linda Morse of Vernon; a sister-in-law, Roberta M. Kellogg of White River Junction; grandchildren Michael Evans of Brattleboro, Elizabeth VanDeMar of Halfmoon, New York, and Jonathan (Samantha) Gallup of Winchester, New Hampshire; and four great-grandchildren, as well as nieces and nephews. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A graveside service took place on April 28 at Sadawga Cemetery in Whitingham.



• **David Carl "Dicker" Noyes, 69**, of Bellows Falls. Died on April 20, 2024. David was born to

Arnold J. and E. Carroll (Chadwick) Noyes on Feb. 28, 1955 in Bellows Falls. David attended school in Bellows Falls and graduated from Bellows Falls Union High School in 1973. On Oct. 12, 1991 he married Laurie (French) Noyes. His working career included F.W. Whitcomb, Community Feed, Gays Fuel Service, and Cota and Cota, from which he retired in 2018. David's biggest joys were his home, of which he was a proud fourth-generation owner, his family, and his trucks, tractors, and motorcycle. He is survived by his wife, Laurie; his daughter, Ella (Noyes) Cademartori (Elijah); his stepchildren Philip Clark (Theresa), and Alison (Clark) Amidon (Jesse); siblings Richard (Dotsie), John (Elaine), Ellen Allman (Robert), Nancy Tenney (Edwin), and Linda Noyes; and eight grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, and many nieces, nephews, and cousins. MEMORIAL INFORMATION: A memorial service was held April 27 at his favorite place, 6 Noyes Road. Donations may be sent to the Bellows Falls Alumni Association Scholarship Fund in Dicker's memory at P.O. Box 172, Bellows Falls, VT 05101. Arrangements were under the care of Fenton & Hennessey Funeral Home.

Services



• Graveside committal services for **Norma A. Ives** will be conducted in Meetinghouse Hill Cemetery in Brattleboro on

Friday, May 10, at 10 a.m. Norma, 86, of Huckle Hill Road, died peacefully in the comfort of her home with her family by her side on Jan. 4, 2024, following a period of declining health. To view her full obituary and offer condolences to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.



• Graveside committal services with full military honors for **Robert J. "Bob" Kenney** will be conducted Saturday,

May 11, at 11 a.m., in Tyler Cemetery in Vernon. Bob, 88, of Central Park Road, died Nov. 4, 2023, in the comfort of his home. To view his full obituary and offer condolences to the family, visit atamaniuk.com.



• Join family and friends for a Celebration of Life for **Douglas John "Doug" Kroc** on Saturday, May 11, from noon

to 4 p.m., at the Brattleboro Country Club. Doug, 71, of West Dummerston, died peacefully at home on Sept. 25, 2023. To view an online tribute, send condolences, or for more information, visit csnh.com.

St. Michael's Episcopal Church plans annual tag sale

BRATTLEBORO—St. Michael's Episcopal Church hosts its annual Terrific Tag Sale, which has been taking place annually since 1993 (excepting the pandemic year of 2020) at St. Michael's on 16 Bradley Ave. on Saturday, May 4, 8:30 a.m.–2 p.m.

This year, the proceeds from the sale will benefit Loaves and Fishes, Brattleboro's community meals program whose mission and work is "to feed anyone who is hungry and food insecure."

Loaves and Fishes, located in Centre Congregational Church in Brattleboro, is a nonprofit committed to providing food, both as prepared meals and as groceries, for anyone who needs it, free of charge.

Twice a week, approximately 20 local volunteers prepare, serve, package, and deliver more than 350 hot meals and 60–75 bags of groceries to area people in their homes, in hospice care, in senior housing, in shelters or transitional housing, or who show up at the Loaves and Fishes door on Tuesday and Friday mornings.

Tag Sale coordinator Liz Vick said in a news release that the event offers a vast array of good-quality items: summer and winter clothing and shoes for young and old; dishes, pots and pans, and other housewares; lamps, furniture, and beautiful linens for bed and bath; plus good books, jewelry, and sporting goods.

"Displays of various goods will be both downstairs in the church building and outdoors under big tents," she says. "We will be selling some items (furniture, sporting goods, and jewelry) at set prices, and everything else will be available on a 'take what you need, give what you can' basis with requests for financial donations to benefit Loaves and Fishes."

Additionally, delicious homemade soups, grilled hotdogs, and baked goods will be for sale at reasonable prices at the Tag Sale Café.

"Enjoy the festive atmosphere, eat some good food, and feel great that you are also supporting the amazing work of Loaves and Fishes," says Vick.

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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Petroglyphs

FROM SECTION FRONT

available to the public in a form that will redact culturally sensitive information such as specific burial and ceremonial sites.

The grant proposal, “Revisiting the Historic Landscape of the Bellows Falls Petroglyphs,” was developed as an amendment and update to studies done in the area of the petroglyphs in the 1980s and 1990s. Those studies were used to nominate the area around the carvings to the National Register of Historic Places (NRHP) as the Bellows Falls Island Multiple Resource Area.

The “historic landscape” includes the petroglyphs’ connections with other First People sites surrounding the carvings in the Connecticut’s watershed, from the Massachusetts border north to the White River Junction region.

The amendment will include the work of the past two years, plus all the findings and research done in the 30 years since the original NRHP nomination application was completed.

Two years of work

Golec said that the group members quickly realized that they “wanted to expand on the work of the original researchers. There’s been a lot of archaeological work in the Connecticut River Valley since then.”

The group began by collating and combining all that research into the database.

They visited, photographed, mapped, and catalogued archaeological and historic sites in the study region, as well as local libraries in towns up and down the Valley. Local libraries will often have unique documents found only at that location, which can provide important historic information.

For example, libraries may have documents from local citizens who interviewed early settlers and collected oral stories and traditions.

These were found in libraries up and down the valley in both Vermont and New Hampshire, and were included in the database.

“This is where Hale’s work was so important,” Golec said. “She made a big database to tie this all together. It was so great to find her.”

Golec said that the group created “two spheres of research,” the first comprising a 2-mile radius around the petroglyphs.

The second sphere is much larger, incorporating the Connecticut River watershed from Massachusetts to the uplands of northern Vermont and New Hampshire.

Modern political boundaries very often use rivers as borders — for example, the Connecticut River forms the boundary between Vermont and New Hampshire. But Indigenous people tended to occupy the entire watershed of a large river, with the main river as the center of their territory.

The Abenaki homeland included the tributaries on both sides of the Connecticut, so this project focused on sites and resources in both Vermont and New Hampshire.

Spaulding said that she was intensely occupied with creating an underwater inventory of the Great Falls themselves. That portion of the river was mapped into five sections, from just below the Bellows Falls hydroelectric dam to just south of the petroglyphs.

Spaulding logged 77 dives in that part of the river over the two years. She said she would have done more, but diving in 2023 was cut short by the July flooding, which roiled the waters for some time and made them unsafe.

Her dives uncovered numerous artifacts from the river’s long use in logging and other industries, from tools to large stone wheels that were used to grind pulpwood for papermaking.

Spaulding said she also located numerous underwater potholes, including an extraordinarily large one measuring 16 feet deep.

Golec said that sometimes the Connecticut River has “a reputation that very little is available here” with regard to archaeology. She believes the data collected will help to change that perception.

“Here we have two important petroglyph sites within 20 miles of each other,” she said, and one of them is “one of the largest in this part of the country.”

“We have archeological evidence of long-term Abenaki settlements all up and down the Connecticut River here,” Golec added. “In Springfield, in Walpole, and especially up the Ashuelot River to Keene. That’s what makes this area so special.”

The data also includes a 3D scan of the Great Falls petroglyphs was completed by anthropologist Jonathan Alperstein, a graduate student in archeology at Dartmouth College.

A long history

The approximately 28 rock carvings on the two panels now visible at the site make up one

of the largest collections of such artifacts in the eastern U.S., and scholars believe they were likely part of a much more extensive group.

The site itself is quite significant to Abenaki culture. The falls drop 52 feet over about a quarter of a mile.

Migrating salmon and shad as well as a large eel population made the site a major food source for Native people. It is pockmarked with numerous potholes, which are important in Abenaki culture as places where underwater spirits reside.

The area west of the petroglyphs is known to have been a large Native burial site. Native village sites have been identified and excavated both north and south of the Great Falls.

Across from the petroglyphs, Fall Mountain rises steeply from the New Hampshire bank of the river several hundred feet above the river valley and falls.

All of these factors — the site’s history as a major food source, the turbulent waterfall, the potholes, the burial sites, the mountain, the nearby villages on excellent open farmland, the confluence of other nearby rivers in the watershed, and the petroglyphs — give this site huge cultural significance for the Abenaki people and their predecessors, the group asserts.

As the researchers stated, this “historic landscape” was a large part of the reason the NPS elected to fund an updated study of the region.

The history of the petroglyphs goes back at least several centuries. A written record from 1789 by Rev. David McClure records that English visitors to the Great Falls and settlers in the area 50 years before his writing had found and commented on the carvings.

Reliable sources indicate that the carvings are 300 years old at the very least, and some estimate that they may be 10 times older than that.

Nearly two dozen archaeological digs and carbon-dating examinations of campsites in a 20- to 30-mile radius of the Great Falls have confirmed the presence of Native people in the region for more than 10,000 years.

In his book *A Deep Presence: 13,000 Years of Native American History*, archaeologist Robert Goodby of Franklin Pierce University in southern New Hampshire writes of the things he discovered during his 30 years of fieldwork in the southern New Hampshire area — tools, pottery, fire pits, campsites, stone implements, and structures — that provide details of Native culture here going back through those millennia.

The Bellows Falls carvings have been written about, sketched, and eventually photographed, and they have been considered authentic since they were first seen by European settlers.

In 2015, while searching underwater at the mouth of the West River, 20 miles downstream in Brattleboro, Spaulding discovered a single carved face similar to the Bellows Falls petroglyphs, as well as another larger panel near it.

This is the second set of notable petroglyphs in the region that Golec commented on.

One concern is that some of the earliest drawings of the carvings in Bellows Falls are quite different from the ones visible now, creating the theory that once many more carvings graced the rocks along the Great Falls.

There is strong evidence for this. In Lyman Hayes 1907 *History of the Town of Rockingham, Vermont*, he writes that when the railroad came to town in the mid-1800s, a branch rail line was built from the depot to the mills at the south end of the falls.

The roadbed for that line is still there, right above the remaining carvings, and Hayes writes that the construction “covered a portion” of other petroglyphs that were there.

He also wrote that cinders from the boilers at the nearby mills were dumped on top of the carvings, which could still be buried near the current panels.

Another reason stems from the area’s logging history.

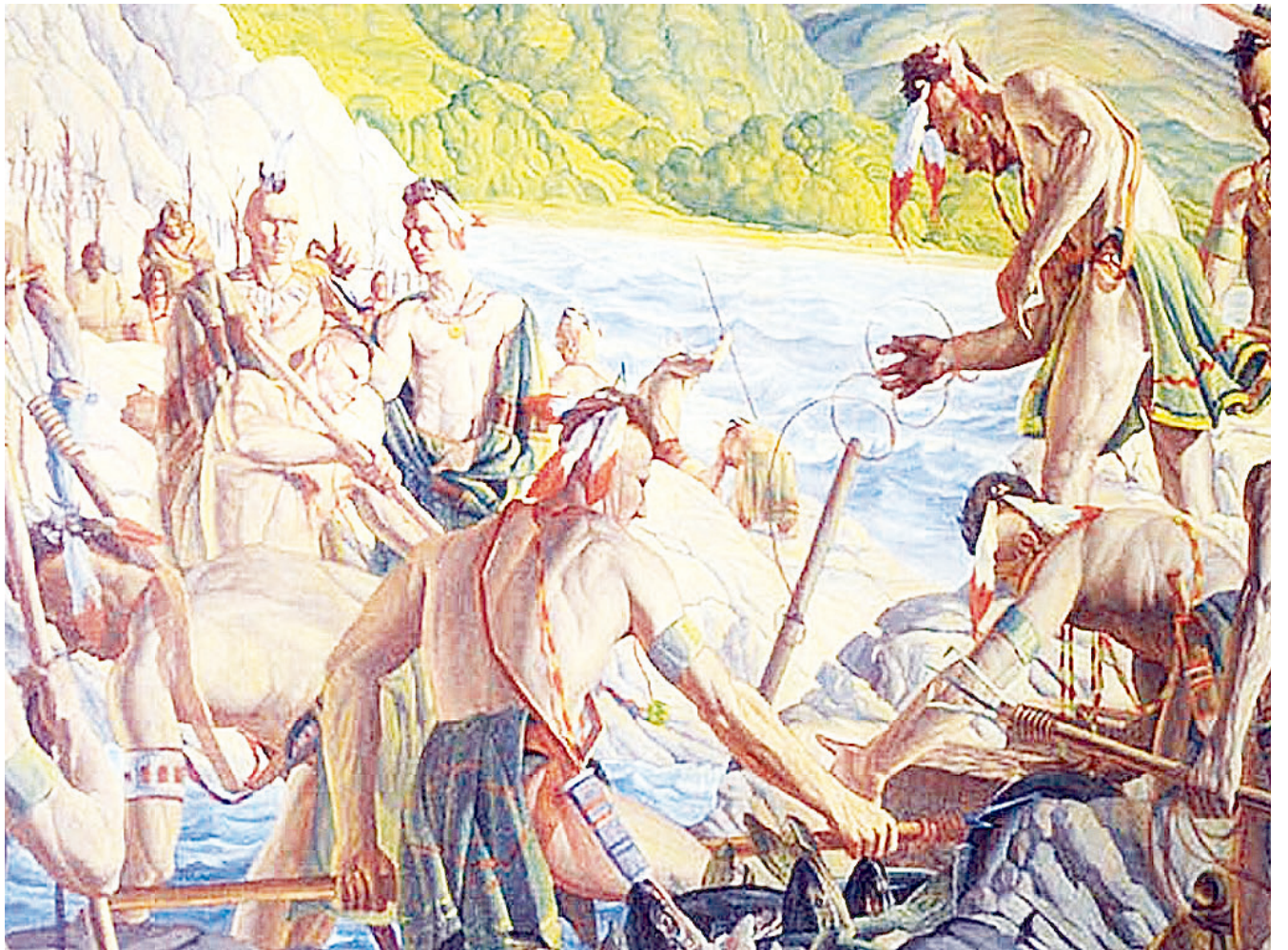
From 1860 to 1915, every spring three-month long log drives sent wood from northern Vermont and New Hampshire down the Connecticut River to the lumber mills in Bellows Falls and into Massachusetts.

The ledges that form the gorge at the Great Falls were dynamited to widen the channel, and local historians state that doing so also destroyed carvings.

The narrow falls also was the site of frequent logjams, which were also dynamited apart, causing further damage to the gorge.

It is known that the two panels of carvings in Bellows Falls have been altered.

For many years, winter snow from the plowed streets of the village — containing gravel, ash, and sand — was disposed of in



A detail from the Stephen Belaski mural at the Bellows Falls Middle School of the Abenaki salmon fishing in the Great Falls at the site of the petroglyphs. The mural was painted in the 1930s as part of the Work Progress Administration Federal Art Project.



The Vilas Bridge in Bellows Falls at the Great Falls and directly over the petroglyphs, which was the geographic center of the two-year Kchi Põntegok Project to document, catalog, and study Native culture.

the river, on top of the carvings.

By 1928, the carvings were in poor shape from this abuse and normal erosion and were in danger of disappearing. The Daughters of the American Revolution hired a local stone-cutter to recut them in the early 1930s; what liberties he may have taken in the process are unknown.

The Kchi Põntegok Project has been in touch with the DAR to see if the project members can find out more about this event from the records of the fraternal organization.

The historic landscape: Graves and artifacts near the carvings

In his history, Hayes interviewed Dr. S.M. Blake, who told him that “the whole distance across the island had, in a much earlier period, been used for an Indian burial-ground.”

According to Blake, the grave sites were mostly discovered as streets were being built on the Island and the bodies inside were sitting upright, “the knees drawn up to the chin, in a circular hole dug deep enough so that the top of the heads came within a foot or two of the surface of the ground,” Hayes wrote.

There were reportedly artifacts in the graves as well, and one skeleton was supposedly displayed for some time in one of the stores in the town square.

“Dozens of skeletons were found,” Hayes wrote.

Members of the Chapin, Nims, and Bolles families were among the earliest settlers of North Walpole and Bellows Falls. They were known to have an extensive collection of mostly local Native artifacts.

Descendants of both the Blake and Bolles families have been contacted in recent years, including during this project. While they confirmed there had been an extensive collection of Native artifacts at one time, they were not passed down, and it is unclear where the artifacts and the disinterred skeletons ended up.

Golec said that, after a pretty intense two years with the project, “I’m getting excited about it again as you see it come together.



Numerous natural potholes in the ledges above and below water at the site of the Bellows Falls petroglyphs play a significant factor in Abenaki culture, where they are viewed as places that connect the upper world, the underground world, and the water world.

We found out some very cool things.”

Morrell said that putting all the data — burial sites, petroglyphs, habitations, forns, natural features, rivers, mineral deposits, springs, and more — into text, maps, and pictures in one database, gave her a real appreciation

for the region.

She added that she feels it will do the same for others.

“I hope this draws attention and makes the landscape part of the story. And these are just the sites we’ve found. With more time and more resources, there is so much more to find here.”

“People have been seeing and using Fall Mountain and the

Great Falls for thousands of years,” Morrell said. “This helps make the landscape part of the story. And these are just the sites we’ve found. With more time and more resources, there is so much more to find here.”



Landscape architecture students look at Route 30 with fresh eyes

UMass class will present Route 30/West River Corridor designs, created with support of Windham Regional Commission

NEWFANE—The students of the senior capstone landscape architecture studio of the UMass-Amherst Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning (LARP) Department will present designs focused on the Route 30/West River Valley corridor.

UMass Landscape Architecture and Regional Planning students dive deep into the design of the Route 30 corridor.

The public is invited to drop by to meet the students and to view and discuss their designs at the Union Hall in Newfane Village from 4:30 to 6 p.m. on Wednesday, May 1.

The Windham Regional Commission (WRC) invited LARP faculty Associate Professor of Landscape Architecture Carolina Aragón and fellow instructor Kate Cholakis to have the 18 students use the Route 30/West River Valley corridor as a lab for their final studio, “with an eye toward better connecting the people and communities of the corridor to one another and to the West River,” according to a joint news release from the

WRC and LARP.

“Each student developed their own ideas and conceptual design solutions,” the team said.

“Students can bring fresh eyes and a different perspective to a place that we, as residents, may sometimes take for granted,” said Chris Campany, WRC executive director.

The WRC has also engaged with the LARP program to support a four-town housing planning project in Jamaica, Londonderry, Weston, and Winhall.

Aragón said the experience “has truly been an outstanding opportunity for learning and professional growth.”

“The students have been thinking critically about the concept of placemaking, understanding it as a means of highlighting or augmenting the ecological and social parts and systems of a place,” said Kate Cholakis.

“They’ve also considered the role of social infrastructure — those spaces that allow residents to interact with one another and strengthen community ties,” she added.

For more information, contact Aragón at caragon@umass.edu, Cholakis at cholakis@csld.edu, and Campany at ccampany@windhamregional.org.

Lawsuit

in a filing last week.

He specified that the claim would advance only against the state. The Town of Windham and Windham Central Supervisory Union, which had been named as defendants in dismissed claims, were not deemed defendants in the remaining claim.

The parents’ lawsuit alleges that Windham Elementary’s small size and limited staffing prevented students from receiving a quality education. They had also argued that the district’s refusal to pay tuition for their children to attend school elsewhere prevented them from receiving a quality education, a claim the judge rejected.

After the lawsuit was first

filed in August, the Windham School Board voted to close its elementary school temporarily and send students to Townshend Elementary, roughly 10 miles away. Families filing the lawsuit had wanted the district to pay for their kids to attend the Mountain School.

Administrators have said that recent staffing challenges prompted this year’s closure, but the school’s fate has been under debate for years.

Under Vermont statute, the state’s secretary of education is responsible for ensuring that schools are providing “substantially equal” educational opportunities. To do this, the secretary is

empowered to rearrange districts, close a school, or take “administrative control” of a school.

Deborah Bucknam, the parents’ attorney, called the judge’s decision a “major win,” acknowledging disappointment that all other claims had been dismissed.

As of April 26, the next hearing in the case had not been scheduled, according to the docket.

Later this year, Windham School District voters will consider whether to close their elementary school and pay to send elementary students to the public and private schools of their choice next year.

FROM SECTION FRONT



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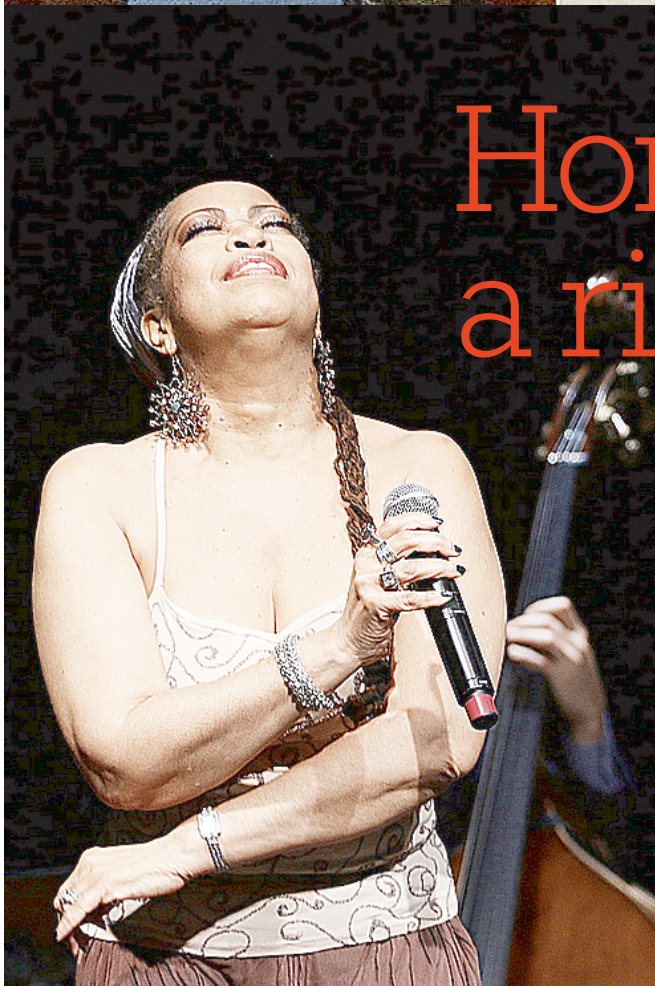
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Becky Graber leads the Brattleboro Women's Chorus in rehearsal for its spring concert.

VICTORIA CHERTOK, THE COMMONS



Samirah Evans, soloist for the Brattleboro Women's Chorus May 12 concert.

Honoring, and crediting, a rich musical heritage

Brattleboro Women's Chorus celebrates Mother's Day with a concert featuring songs by composers of the African diaspora

By Victoria Chertok
 The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—The Brattleboro Women's Chorus spring concert, "Better Days," will showcase powerful and poignant songs by composers hailing from the African diaspora and will feature Brattleboro's own Samirah Evans as guest soloist.

According to Graber, the concert, which takes place on Sunday,

May 12, at the Latchis Theatre, was inspired by the teachings and repertoire of singer and composer Ysaye Barnwell and the work of the Black Lives Matter Commissioning Project (blmcommissioning.com).

"The chorus aims to honor the rich cultural heritage and musical contributions of composers of African descent who may have been underrepresented or unnamed in traditional choral settings," says Graber.

This year's concert will specifically honor the compositions and teachings of Barnwell, who "inspires both my teaching style and our repertoire," she adds.

Barnwell, a longtime member of the African American capella women's ensemble Sweet Honey in the Rock, "had the belief that everybody can sing, everybody does sing and everybody should sing," Graber adds. "There was never a question that someone should be shuffled off to

the side. I wanted to be that way as well."

Music, Graber says, "has the power to bridge cultures, foster understanding, and evoke deep emotions. Through this concert, we hope to celebrate the talent and creativity of the brilliant composers who have created and crafted many of the songs we sing."

The program will feature a selection of songs, ranging from

■ SEE CHORUS CONCERT, B5



Ahren Ahrenholz asks questions through the process of creating his art, using materials like seared wood (top left and top right); pigment on canvas, metal hoop, and thread (bottom left), and paint on canvas with wood (bottom right).

'The questioning is all important to me'

East Dummerston artist Ahren Ahrenholz will display works at Crowell Gallery in May

By Alyssa Grosso
 The Commons

NEWFAFNE—The Crowell Art Gallery at Moore Free Library, 23 West Street, will present Ahren Ahrenholz's "Objects" exhibition in May.

Ahrenholz has been making pottery since 1971, when he ran a pottery studio in Cornwall, England.

After returning to the United States, "we had a 6-month-old baby and no money [...] so I opened the pottery studio with my family in Kensington, California, which is just north of Berkeley," he said.

They stayed there until 1981. "I wasn't in love with California and our place came up for sale — I couldn't afford it," he says. "We just

decided to move back East. And we ended up in Vermont."

The object-ive of the exhibit

Ahrenholz still makes and sells hand-thrown pots, bowls, and other functional household pottery (partridgepottery.com), but for the past 25 years, he has also expressed his vision as an artist in a prolific body of sculpture and fine art.

He explains that he finds inspiration in the need to ask questions.

"I construct objects," Ahrenholz says. "It is a process of arranging materials and the inquiry into the elements of a visual vocabulary."

He creates his pieces with a range of materials, from paint on canvas to sculptures of wood, iron, bronze, straw, wire, fabric, newspaper, and found objects. One mixed-media

■ SEE AHRENHOLZ, B5

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arts & community CALENDAR

THURSDAY	THURSDAY CONT.	FRIDAY CONT.	SATURDAY CONT.	SUNDAY CONT.
2	<p>Returned art includes paintings by André Derain and Maurice de Vlaminck and lithographs by Paul Cezanne, Pablo Picasso, Pierre-Auguste Renoir, Pierre Bonnard.</p> <p>► 7 p.m. <i>Reichsman's grandfather, Dane, and his wife, Frieda, were forced from their home during the war and killed at Auschwitz.</i></p> <p>► \$10. Tickets can be purchased: In advance at brattleboromuseum.org, call 802-257-0124 x101, or at door if still available.</p> <p>► <i>Brattleboro Museum & Art Center, 28 Vernon St. Information: 802-257-0124; brattleboromuseum.org.</i></p>	<p>► \$10: <i>No one will be turned away.</i></p> <p>► Zoom. Information: Full schedule and registration: www/nwtrcc.org.</p> <p>Arts and crafts</p> <p>PUTNEY Expert Material Makers and Crafters Theresa Emmerich Kamper & Caroline Ross to Present at Putney Library: Meet the two visiting faculty from the "Making the Materials" series of workshops at In Situ Polyculture, Theresa Emmerich Kamper is an expert in leather and tanning ancestral skills, a former contestant on the TV show "Alone" who excels at 'using the whole animal' and careful, beautiful designs for buckskin clothing, and more. Caroline Ross (art moniker 'Found and Ground,') is a pigment and drawing materials expert with great knowledge of bushcraft as it</p> <p>► 6:30 p.m. <i>Kemper and Ross give a short talk, answer questions about their work/materials, converse with attendees. They'll have some copies of their books on hand. Light refreshments, Q&A, fabulous materials - ink, quills, buckskin, traditionally tanned furs, more.</i></p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Putney Public Library, 55 Main St. Information: 802-387-4407; putneylibrary.org/events.</p>	<p>America's multi-generation folk music family brings his Lomax On Lomax presentation to VT for his New England debut. Prodigiously talented fiddle legend John Specker and his gifted daughters Ida Mae and Lila open the show. Local resident George Alexander is promoting this one-of-a-kind event.</p> <p>► 6:30 p.m. <i>The Speckers and their triple fiddle performance kick off proceedings with Lomax following after brief intermission.</i></p> <p>► \$20 at door or MKT Grafton, 162 Main St., 802-843-2255.</p> <p>► Brick Church (First Baptist Church), 190 Main St. Information: Market open 7 a.m.-7 p.m. daily (cash/checks for ticket sales).</p> <p>PUTNEY Polky: Eastern European Folk / Polish Traditional / Global Roots music ensemble Polky: Toronto-based Polky, featuring 2022 Canadian Folk Music Awards "Traditional Singer of the Year" winner Ewelina Ferenc and Suka (lap fiddle) virtuoso Marta Solek delight us with joyful vocal harmonies, unusual instruments, upbeat performances. Drawing deep inspiration from Poland's rich cultural tapestry, they push musical boundaries by fearlessly blending Polish traditional music with sounds/rhythms from across the globe, carving out a niche entirely their own.</p> <p>► 7:30 p.m. <i>With infectious charm, captivating performances, and unyielding passion for exploration, Polky introduces Polish culture to North American audiences, embodying the role of cultural ambassadors for Polish modern traditions.</i></p> <p>► \$22 in advance, \$25 at door, \$10 livestream.</p> <p>► Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill. Information: Information: 802-387-0102, nextstagearts.org.</p>	<p>House, 29 South St. Information: 802-254-9377; ascvt.org.</p> <p>BELLOWS FALLS "Painting Water" Workshop with John Dimick</p> <p>► 9:30 a.m. - 3 p.m.</p> <p>► \$70 member, \$90 non-members - includes materials.</p> <p>► Saxtons River Art Guild, United Church, 8 School St. Information: Register with Carolyn at poohbear@ne.rr.com.</p> <p>Tag sales, auctions, bazaars</p> <p>WALPOLE First Congregational Church of Walpole: Rummage Sale: All Seasons Clothing and Select Housewares. 12 noon-1 p.m.: Bag Sale: Large bag \$5, small bag \$2. Food Sale Table - Hotdogs: 10 p.m.</p> <p>► 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. on the Common.</p> <p>► First Congregational Church of Walpole, 15 Washington St. Information: 603-756-4075; walpolechurch@yahoo.com.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO St. Michael's Episcopal Church's Tag Sale: Clothing for all ages, linens, housewares, books, jewelry, sporting goods, furniture, more. Homemade food at the Tag Sale Café. Furniture, sporting goods, jewelry will be priced; most other items offered in exchange for donations. Proceeds benefit Loaves and Fishes - Brattleboro's community meals program whose mission and work is "to feed anyone who is hungry and food insecure."</p> <p>► 8:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Indoors in Church basement and outdoors under tents. St. Michael's Episcopal is handicapped accessible.</p> <p>► Free admission.</p> <p>► St. Michaels Episcopal Church, Putney Rd. and Bradley Ave. Information: 802-254-6048.</p> <p>Ideas and education</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Hot Sauce Showdown: Are you a hot sauce fanatic? Come to the Brattleboro Food Co-op to sample four different hot sauces on a Mi Tierra (Springfield, MA) Tortilla filled with Seriously Sharp Cabot Cheese (Waitsfield, VT) and vote on your favorite. Featured hot sauces will be Dosa Kitchen's Mysore Chutney (Brattleboro, VT), Poor Devil Green Widow (Hudson NY), Bloodroot Mountain Jalapeno Lime Fresh Tang (Morrisville VT), Benito's Hot Sauce Mango Habanero (Morrisville VT).</p> <p>► 11:30 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. Keep it spicy & keep it local!</p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Brattleboro Food Co-op, 2 Main St. Information: 802-257-0236; brattleborofoodcoop.coop.</p> <p>Film and video</p> <p>BELLOWS FALLS "Cycle of Memory" - Documentary: Filmmaker Alex Leff and younger sibling Koby try to uncover the past and capture the present in order to be remembered in the future. Their grandfather Mel Schwartz escaped the Great Depression on a bicycle adventure he'd remember for the rest of his life... until Mel lost his memory to Alzheimer's. Now over 75 years later, his grandchildren set out to recreate his life-changing journey and find those memories before they slip away.</p> <p>► 2 p.m. <i>Film explores importance of healing painful pasts, intergenerational connection, leaving meaningful time capsule for the future. Guided by old photographs of a 1945 trip, they search for places aged by time. While searching for Grandpa Mel's past, they are confronted with their own fraught history. If they're going to complete the turbulent journey, they'll face their own emotional potholes and tumultuous relationship. "Cycle of Memory" appeals readily to bicyclists, adventurers of all types, anyone who affected by a love one with Alzheimers. But all of us are involved with the cycle of life which this film adeptly portrays, Brief discussion after film.</i></p> <p>► Free and open to the public.</p> <p>► Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: 802-463-4270; rockinghamlibrary.org.</p>
3	<p>FRIDAY</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO The Soubrettes: The Soubrettes are a vocal ensemble under the umbrella of the Vermont Jazz Center, led by director/arranger Anna Patton, who sing intricate vocal harmony arrangements of swing, jazz, blues, and songs by contemporary songwriters. The Soubrettes program this spring includes songs by Cole Porter, Irving Berlin, Vilray, Peter Mulvey. They'll be joined by Ron Kelly on Tenor Sax and Mathew Sharff on Bass.</p> <p>► 5:15 p.m. <i>'Soubrette': Term from musical theater for the non-leading lady who is usually more worldly, more instrumental in the plot intrigue, funnier than the lead. These are the kinds of songs the group tends to do - songs w/ plenty of wit/sass. This set is an action-packed 35 minutes, so don't be late!</i></p> <p>► Donations are appreciated and go to pay our accompanists and support the Vermont Jazz Center scholarship fund.</p> <p>► Heart Rose Club, 11 Green St. Information: 802-380-0333; heartroseclub.com.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO The Woodpeckers: Boisterous, celebratory, danceable, improvisatory, spontaneous, embodying the spirit of the earliest jazz, The Woodpeckers bring their music to the Latchis Pub the first Friday of each month. Walter Slowinski, clarinet; Ron Kelley, tenor saxophone; Ty Gibbons, stand up bass; Mark Anagnostopoulos, rhythm guitar; all sing. Join the party, bring a friend. Stop by during or after Gallery Walk.</p> <p>► 7:30 - 10 p.m. <i>Congenial welcoming atmosphere.</i></p> <p>► No cover.</p> <p>► Latchis Pub & Latchis Underground, 6 Flat St. Information: 802-246-0487.</p> <p>Government</p> <p>National War Tax Resistance Gathering (via Zoom): Learn about resisting federal income taxes for war. There will be an introductory workshop as well as discussion on a variety of related topics.</p> <p>► Through Sunday, May 5.</p>	<p>SATURDAY</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">4</p> <p>Music</p> <p>MARLBORO & #65279;The Brattleboro Concert Choir presents "In Paradisum": Music of Gabriel Fauré: Featuring the Requiem, "Cantique de Jean Racine," and "Tu es Petrus" with orchestra. Usually, musical Requiems are quite dark, fearful, and almost violent, since they are drawn from the Roman Catholic service for the dead. Fauré's is different - the core of the piece is for it to act as a comfort to those who are still living."</p> <p>► 5/4: 7 p.m., 5/5: 4 p.m. <i>Musical Dir. Jonathan Harvey: "All three pieces on the program are by French Romantic composer Gabriel Fauré, whose music has an indefinable transcendent beauty. American composer Aaron Copland wrote of Fauré's music that "those aware of musical refinements cannot help but admire transparent texture, clarity of thought, the well-shaped proportions. Together they constitute a kind of Fauré magic difficult to analyze but lovely to hear."</i></p> <p>► Through Sunday, May 5.</p> <p>► General Admission: \$20 In Advance, \$25 at the Door, Youth: \$10; free for ages 12 and under.</p> <p>► Potash Hill (formerly Marlboro College) Dining Hall, 2582 South Rd. Information: Tickets: app.arts-people.com/index.php?ticketing=bmctv.</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Famed Folk Families join for Grafton Performances: John Lomax III of</p>	<p>MONDAY</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">6</p> <p>The written word</p> <p>BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro Great Books Group: Discuss Bill McKibben's "The End of Nature"</p> <p>► 7-9 p.m. <i>in mezzanine History Room. Some are free, online, as pdf files or can be bought online, electronically, for \$9.99. Wikipedia has short synopses of each book as does Amazon and other websites such as Good Reads.</i></p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Brooks Memorial Library, 224 Main St. Information: More information, email Michael Landis at emagicmtman@gmail.com or call 802-257-1851.</p> <p>BELLOWS FALLS Discussion of "Allah Have Mercy" - Short Story by Mohammed Naseehu Ali: Pick up a copy and join discussion. Story features 12-year-old boy Yaro trying to stay in his Uncle Asama's good graces. This proves difficult for Asama often flies into unpredictable violent rages with Yaro as his target. Will Yaro finally figure out how to please his uncle or will a concerned adult stand up to Asama and stop the violence? It's surprising how many personal connections can be made reading this compact form of literature.</p> <p>► 3 p.m. <i>Large print copies are also available. Rockingham Library will meet on the first Monday of each month to discuss a different short story.</i></p> <p>► Free.</p> <p>► Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: More information: programming@rockinghamlibrary.org or call the library at 802-463-4270.</p> <p>Arts and crafts</p> <p>WILMINGTON Craft and Crochet on Mondays: Bring a project you are working on or find some materials at the library to start something new! We now have circle looms for knitting to check out!</p> <p>► 12 noon - 2 p.m. on Mondays.</p> <p>► Free.</p>	

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SCAN HERE



SUNDAY

5

Performing arts

BRATTLEBORO Duffy x Uhlmann: Meg Duffy (Hand Habits) and Greg Uhlmann (Perfume Genius) are two guitarists in conversation: looping feelings, braiding sound, blowing kisses, and finishing each other's sentences. Less of an echo and more of a nod, their improvisation unfolds in radical, mutual witnessing and trust. Each note saunters by like initials etched into tree bark: a devotion both passing and eternal.

► 8-11 p.m.

► \$15.

■ STORY CONTINUES ON FACING PAGE

MONDAY CONT.

► **Pettee Memorial Library, 16 S. Main St. Information: 802-464-8557; petteelibrary.org.**

TUESDAY

7

Kids and families

GUILFORD Storytime at the Guilford Free Library: Bring your baby, toddler or preschooler to Storytime. Storytime is so much more than just the reading of books. It is the planting of seeds for life-long learning, the awakening of imagination, and the widening of mind and spirit.

► **2 p.m. on Tuesdays.**
 ► **Through Tuesday, July 30.**
 ► **Free.**
 ► **Guilford Free Library, 4024 Guilford Center Rd. Information: 802-257-4603; guilfordfreelibraryvt.org.**

Well-being

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

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

BELLOWS FALLS Medicaid and Health Resource Information at Rockingham Library: All are welcome to stop in to get updated about Medicaid, Medicare Savings Programs, and other health care resources. If you have been cut off of Medicaid and are wondering if you still qualify, or whether you qualify for other programs, stop by for the latest information. You can also find out about your rights in the Medicaid redetermination process and review any communications you have received about Medicaid or other health insurance. Hosted by the Vermont Workers' Center.

► **10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m. in the Meeting Room.**
 ► **Free.**
 ► **Rockingham Free Public Library, 65 Westminster St. Information: 802-257-4436, windham@workerscenter.org.**

Ideas and education

PUTNEY Tracking Lynx in the North Maine Woods with Bob Etzweiler: For over a decade, Bob Etzweiler has led tracking expeditions to northern Maine to find and follow the trails of Canada Lynx, a carnivore uniquely designed for the deep snows and the rugged and remote environment of the North Maine Woods. The purpose of these expeditions is to learn about this incredible carnivore experientially while following its trails and to connect with the landscape that it calls home.

► **6:30 p.m. Bob Etzweiler lives in East Dummerston and works with VT Wilderness School leading programs for children in Nature Connection. He also runs adult programs teaching Wildlife Tracking and Hunting Skills and is certified by Tracker Certifications of North America as a Professional Tracker.**
 ► **Free.**
 ► **Putney Public Library, 55 Main St. Information: 802-387-4407; putneylibrary.org/events.**

WEDNESDAY

8

Music

BRATTLEBORO Brattleboro American Legion Concert Band presents Spring Concert
 ► **7 p.m.**
 ► **Free.**
 ► **American Legion Hall (Post 5), 32 Linden St. Information: 802-257-1872.**

Co-curators, artists will offer tour of 'In Nature's Grasp'

Exhibit explores 'the centuries-old concept of the Sublime in nature' at BMAC

BRATTLEBORO—Inspired by the natural world, artists have long contemplated diverse themes such as history, science, memory, and spirituality. Eleven contemporary artists explore these ideas and more in the exhibition "In Nature's Grasp," currently on view at the Brattleboro Museum & Art Center (BMAC). The public is invited to join a curator tour of the 32 artworks in the exhibit on Thursday, May 9, at 7 p.m.

BMAC Director of Exhibitions Sarah Freeman, guest curator Michael Abrams, and several of the exhibiting artists will guide visitors through the exhibit, welcoming questions and conversation.

The artists featured in the exhibit approach nature both literally and abstractly, some working with landscape imagery and others conjuring ideas of nature through textures, shapes, and color, or through an aspect of their artmaking process.

Their common thread, Freeman explains, is the centuries-old concept of the Sublime in nature, first described by the



Co-curators Michael Abrams and Sarah Freeman.

ERIN JENKINS

philosopher Edmund Burke in his 1757 book, *A Philosophical Enquiry*. Burke noted that certain experiences supply a thrill that mixes fear and delight, which he called the Sublime. He declared the Sublime to be the strongest human passion, and observed that experiences and sensations elicited by nature were more powerful examples of the Sublime than any others.

"All of the artists in 'In Nature's Grasp' offer different visual and tactile interpretations

of our fragile living environment," Freeman says. "They each take viewers to different realms of the senses."

Included in the exhibit are sculptural works of Athena LaTocha, Richard Fishman, and Jai Hart; landscape paintings by Shawn Dulaney, Marcy Hermansader, Lily Prince, Ron Milewicz, Eileen Murphy, and large-scale works of Rick Harlow; photography by Renée Greenlee; and landscape video by filmmaker Jeffrey Blondes.

These artists revere our planet in unique ways "for its awesomeness, beauty, and capacity to astonish and thrill," says Freeman. "In Nature's Grasp" is on view through June 16.

Admission to the event is free. Registration is recommended, but walk-ins are welcome. To register, visit brattleboromuseum.org or call 802-257-0124, ext. 101. Call for accessibility questions and requests or email office@brattleboromuseum.org.

Erin Jenkins is May's featured artist at Harmony Collective

BRATTLEBORO—Harmony Collective features artist Erin Jenkins during May, and the public is invited to the opening event during this year's first Gallery Walk on Friday, May 3, 5 to 8 p.m.

Jenkins's linocut prints and handmade sketchbooks in the exhibit "Meander" revolve around memories of "quiet moments that emerge from taking time for a slow aimless wander, looking with patience and curiosity, and capturing the calmness found there," write organizers in a news release.

Jenkins says she finds herself inspired by nature, especially water — oceans, lakes, ponds — and to the convergence where water and land meet the sky. She explains, "I'm energized by traveling and seeing unfamiliar landscapes — but also by seeing familiar landscapes with new eyes. Taking time to pause, notice, and create in a place makes me feel like I know it a little bit better, like we've shared an intimate moment."

She hopes this idea of exploring without a destination extends beyond this exhibit. The handmade sketchbooks on view are not

meant to be stagnant objects on a shelf admired from afar, but to be "used, loved, filled with notes, scribbles, sketches."

"Let them accompany you as you meander on your own adventures; as you collect your own memories and stories." She adds, "I like the idea that something I made can be a small part of others' journeys, too."

Jenkins is a printmaker, specializing in linocut relief images and carved wood blocks. Printmaking blends her love of creativity — carving into blocks to create images — and process — editing prints — to create the final product.

Jenkins is drawn to art that shows the artist's hand, and she leaves evidence of that in her own work. One can identify individual, carved marks throughout her linocut relief prints; a combination of gestural and deliberate hatch lines visible in the final result.

"Meander" is on view May 2 through June 4 at Harmony Collective. More information can be found at harmonyartsbrattleboro.com/events.



Erin Jenkins

COURTESY PHOTO



Polky

COURTESY PHOTO

Polky to perform in Putney on May 4

PUTNEY—Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music present Eastern European folk/Polish traditional/Global Roots music ensemble Polky at Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill, on Saturday, May 4, at 7:30 p.m.

This Toronto-based band, featuring 2022 Canadian Folk Music Awards "Traditional Singer of the Year" winner Ewelina Ferenc and suka (lap fiddle) Ewelter Marta Solek, "delights audiences with joyful vocal harmonies, unusual instruments, and upbeat

performances," write organizers in a news release.

The group draws inspiration from Poland's cultural tapestry, blending traditional music with sounds and rhythms from across the globe. Polky introduces Polish culture to North American audiences "with their infectious charm," and "unyielding passion for exploration."

Songs From Home, Polky's 2020 debut album, received praise from *Songlines* magazine, which characterizes their sound

as expressing "an energetic wildness." The artists' website describes their music as "cultural diversity, women empowerment, an invitation to revel in the joy of life, and a reminder that, deep down, we are all connected by the power of music."

Tickets are \$22 in advance, \$25 at the door, and \$10 for access to the livestream; visit nextstagearts.org. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar. For information, call 802-387-0102.

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MAY 3 - 9

STAR WARS EP. 1 THE PHANTOM MENACE PG
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 MON.-THUR. 4:15 & 7:00

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 SATURDAY 2:15 & 6:35 / 8:35
 SUNDAY 2:15 & 6:35
 MON.-THUR. 4:15 & 6:35

THE FALL GUY PG-13
 FRIDAY 4:15 / 6:45 / 9:05
 SATURDAY 2:00 / 6:45 / 9:05
 SUNDAY 2:00 & 6:45
 MON.-THUR. 4:15 & 6:45

CHALLENGERS R
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COLUMN | Creative Conversations

'I love finding songs that speak to me and sharing them with others'

Becky Graber speaks about the Brattleboro Women's Chorus, repertoire, influences, and the path of honoring and celebrating Black culture through music



Becky Graber conducts the Brattleboro Women's Chorus.

Dimick leads watercolor workshop

SAXTONS RIVER—The Saxtons River Art Guild (SRAG) will offer a workshop with watercolorist John Dimick on Saturday, May 4, at the United Church of Bellows Falls, 8 School St., from 9:30 a.m. to 3:30 p.m. The theme of the workshop is "Painting Water ... Ripples, Reflections, and Whitewater."

Dimick will demonstrate and discuss his techniques for drawing using a grid system and reference

photo, for identifying and defining the white areas he wants to protect, and for splattering paint. He will also discuss the advantages of preserving the white of the paper over gouache, as well as tools such as frisket and painter's tape, for preserving the white areas.

Dimick is an award-winning artist at various juried shows and a member of the Vermont Watercolor Society. His work has

been featured in a number of regional publications. Vermont Artisan Designs in Brattleboro carries many of his paintings, prints, and notecards. He will bring some of his paintings to the workshop. His work may be viewed at johndimickartist.com.

The workshop is open to all abilities, with some watercolor experience recommended. Participants should bring a completed drawing, a color reference photo, watercolor paints and brushes, tape, and frisket/masking fluid if possible. Workshop fees are \$70 for SRAG members and \$90 for nonmembers.

SRAG will offer coffee and tea, and participants are welcome to bring a lunch. To register or for more information, contact Carolyn Berglund at poohbear@ne.rr.com.

Brattleboro
THE COMMONS met Brattleboro Women's Chorus Director Becky Graber at her home recently to talk about the chorus's upcoming spring concert, her long career, and what this repertoire means to her. Here's an excerpt of the conversation.

VICTORIA CHERTOK:
 Tell me about your early career. How did you start the Brattleboro Women's Chorus?

BECKY GRABER: I moved to Brattleboro in 1977, straight out of college. There was a folk music scene that was welcoming, and one of my first jobs was working in the kitchen at the Chelsea House Folklore Center, so I got to hear concerts every weekend!

I met Peter and Mary Alice Amidon early on, and Karla Baldwin. All three became good friends.

Karla and I worked together on musicals at the Brattleboro Center for the Performing Arts and later at the Putney School. Peter and Mary Alice and I pulled together some performances and also founded the Christmas Street Band in 1978.

Brattleboro was a fun town, a wonderful home; I loved that the arts were so participatory.

I taught music and piano lessons in the West River Valley and at the Grammar School in Putney, and I also took over for the Suzuki piano teacher at the Brattleboro Music School.

I was on the staff of Camp Allegro, the Brattleboro Music Center's day camp, for over 20 years.

For 11 years, I worked at New England Youth Theatre as musical theatre director and teacher.

V.C.: What did you study in college?

B.G.: I went to Colgate University thinking I would major in something "more practical" than music, because I'd done so much music already, but I found that without music, I didn't feel like myself.

So I studied a broad range of subjects, and I was one of two music majors the year I graduated. I got to do a lot of accompanying and performed the

VICTORIA CHERTOK
covers arts and entertainment in Vermont for The Commons. She is a classically trained harpist and received a B.A. in music at Bucknell University.

student concerto.

Later, I went to Lesley College in Cambridge, Massachusetts, for my master's degree in the creative arts in learning, and my student job was in the storytelling center.

During graduate school, I moved to the Seacoast near Portsmouth, New Hampshire, where I worked in schools and began a career as a storyteller.

Our daughter, Sarah, was born in 1990 and our son, Jacob, was born in 1993. When I moved back to Brattleboro in 1992 with my husband, Tim Ellis, I was a traveling storyteller, which didn't seem to fit that well with parenting two children.

V.C.: How many women sang in BWC in the beginning?

B.G.: We had about 55 women and girls by our first concert in December 1996. Later on, there was a time when I had a limit of accepting 120 singers and people had to be on a waitlist to join us. Today, we have 108 singers from ages 25 to 90!

V.C.: What was it about Ysaÿe Barnwell's teachings and her music that drew you in?

B.G.: I had a good friend and mentor, Carolyn Parrott, who directed the Songweavers Women's Chorus in New Hampshire. I went with Carolyn to a Ysaÿe Barnwell workshop, "Singing in the African American Tradition."

The power of the music embedded in the history and Ysaÿe's teaching style (in a circle, by the oral tradition, no written music used or in evidence), I was inspired to start a chorus of that style here in town.

My friend Mary Alice was just letting go of a women's singing circle she'd started, so I wrote to those people and others I knew, and the BWC was born.

V.C.: You teach the Chorus using the oral tradition — by ear?

B.G.: I love the style of teaching people by ear. It does take a lot of time to learn music. I've always made recordings for people to listen to and learn from. That format has changed from cassette tapes to CDs to now an online choral app.

V.C.: How do you choose repertoire for your concerts?

B.G.: After many years of being music director at NEYT and musical theater director at the Putney School, organist and choir director at Second Congregational Church in Londonderry, Vermont, and music teacher in many places, I started to work toward gathering up the songs I've created for women's chorus and putting them together in a songbook, *All I Need Is Here*, which was published in 2022.

All along, the thread of the Brattleboro Women's Chorus has been grounding and sustaining me, connecting with a community of inspired and inspiring women who come together weekly to raise their voices together.

I love finding songs that speak to me and sharing them with others.

V.C.: What was your inspiration for this Mother's Day concert?

B.G.: This concert was inspired by the great debt I owe to Dr. Ysaÿe Barnwell. She inspired my teaching style and the way I look at community music making. She generously shared the songs that she had grown up with and arranged them beautifully for community singing.

I attended her workshops, in which groups of mostly white people came to learn from her. She taught us the songs and the history of the songs.

I was so grateful for her education, and it has taken me years to learn how to do the music and the history justice.

I originally thought we might title this concert "Thank You, Ysaÿe." But then I realized it was a deeper and wider project — much more to do with the whole question of how an almost-all-white chorus can sing music composed by Black composers in a respectful way, honoring the history and the music.

It has been a meaningful journey for me and for the singers.

V.C.: I heard you say that the Black Lives Matter Commissioning Project was also an inspiration.

The project aims to commission eight new songs from Black composers for community choirs and singing groups.

Say more about that.

B.G.: The Black Lives Matter Commissioning Project was one of the first choruses to sign on and support this wonderful effort by several people in the Natural Voice Network in England, a group which I belong to.

"Say Say Yes," "Let Time Be Your Friend," and "Better Day" — were all part of the commissioning project.

V.C.: What else would you like our readers to know?

B.G.: We are seeking to recognize and share the genius, the beauty, the breadth of music we've learned — created by Black composers. And who better to help us than our local supremely talented vocalist, Samirah Evans? And a very talented backup band and crew!

I have loved working with Samirah toward this concert, taking our time selecting the music and the flow of the order. She will be singing four songs with her band and four songs with us, and the chorus will sing nine songs on our own (some a cappella, some with the band).

Music, at its essence, is what gives us memories. And the longer a song has existed in our lives, the more memories we have of it.

—STEVIE WONDER

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

bc tv LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS
April 29-May 5
 CHANNEL 1078 CHANNEL 1079

PLEASE NOTE NEW CHANNEL NUMBERS!

Here We Are - Dar Tavernier: Mon 8p, Tues 9a, Wed 11a, Thurs 5p, Fri 7a, Sat 8:30p, Sun 4p	Wintham School District Board Special Mtg. 4/18/24: Mon 7:55p, Tues 6:45a, Wed 1:45p, Fri 3:55p
The World Fusion Show - Ep 177 - Christiane Karam: Mon 8:30p, Tues 9:30a, Wed 11:30a, Thurs 5:30p, Fri 7:30a, Sat 8p, Sun 4:30p	River Valleys Unified School District Public Information Mtg. 4/22/24: Mon 6:15p, Tues 7:15a, Wed 12p
Vermont Independent Media presents Voices Live - Conversations of Homelessness: Wed 3:30p, Thurs 1:30p, Fri 12:35p, Sat 9a, Sun 6p	Wintham Southeast School District Board Mtg. 4/30/24: Thurs 6p, Fri 7:30a, Sat 1
Around Town with Maria - Artful Ice Shanties at Retreat Farm 2/28/24: Wed 12:35p, Thurs 9:30a, Fri 4p, Sat 6a, Sun 8:30p	Dummerston Selectboard Mtg. 5/1/24: Fri 6p, Sat 9a, Sun 2:30p
RivTheSkid - Baseball Run: Mon 6:55p, Thurs 1:20p & 6:55p, Sat 12:25p, Sun 10:55a	Putney Selectboard Mtg. 5/1/24: Fri 8:30p, Sat 6a, Sun 11:30a
Brattleboro Literary Festival - Eve: How the Female Body Drove 200 Million Years of Human Evolution: Mon 10a, Tues 8p, Wed 9a, Thurs 4p, Fri 11a, Sat 6p, Sun 2p	Brattleboro Selectboard Special Mtg. 4/25/24: Wed 8a, Thurs 2p, Sat 6p, Sun 6a
Sunflower Court - "A Moment's Pass": Mon 6:30p, Tues 6:55p, Wed 1:55p, Fri 6:55p, Sat 6:25a & 5:55p, Sun 8:55p	Community Forum - Public Mtg. for Proposed Flood Resiliency Projects on Sand Hill Road: Tues 6:30p, Wed 2p, Fri 1:30p, Sun 7:15p
Perspectives on Trauma - Part 5: Jen Larsen: Mon 9p, Tues 4:30p, Wed 9p, Thurs 9a, Fri 3:30p, Sat 6:30a, Sun 5:30p	Brattleboro Housing Partnership Board Mtg. 4/22/24: Mon 5p, Thurs 1p
Solar Eclipse 2024 at Putney Great Meadows: Tues 12:35p, Wed 6:55p, Thurs 12:5p, Sat 12:20p, Sun 10:45a	Guilford Selectboard Mtg. 4/22/24: Tues 10:45a, Sat 5:10p
Energy Week with George Harvey & Tom Finnell: Mon 9a, Tues 5p, Thurs 11a, Sat 7p	Jamaica Selectboard Mtg. 4/22/24: Thurs 9a
Vermontwide - Weekly Episode: Tue 11:30a & 6:30p, Wed 6a, Thu 1p, Sat 12p, Sun 5p	Townshend Selectboard Mtg. 4/23/24: Wed 6a, Sat 5p
News Block: Reformer News Break: Mon-Fri 12p & 6p BUHS-TV News: Mon-Fri 12:15p & 6:35p	Town of Brattleboro - Brattleboro Farm & Food System Assessment Presentation 4/23/24: Mon 12p, Tues 4:45p, Fri 4:45p, Sun 6p
St. Michael's Episcopal Church - Weekly Service: Wed 2p, Sat 7:30a, Sun 11a	Vernon Selectboard Mtg. 4/16/24: Mon 10a, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:40a
Trinity Lutheran Church - Weekly Service: Wed 10a, Thurs 7a, Sun 3p	Brattleboro Development Review Board Mtg. 4/17/24: Tues 2:25
Guilford Community Church - Weekly Service: Wed 6:30a, Fri 8p, Sun 8a	Town Matters - Weekly Episode: Mon 6p, Wed 4:45p, Thurs 11a, Fri 11:30a, Sat 5p
St. Michael's Catholic Church Mass: Tue 6:45a & 2p, Thurs 8p, Sat 4p (LIVE)	The David Pakman Show: Mon 8a, Tue 9a, Wed 5p, Fri 10:30a, Sun 5p

Note: Schedule subject to change.

View full schedule and watch online at brattleborotv.org

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

Brattleboro Community Television - 257-0888

Architectural historian to discuss local connected farm buildings

PUTNEY—The Landmark Trust USA (LTUSA) invites the community to learn more about one of our region's most distinctive architectural typologies, one that many Northern New Englanders call home: the connected farm building.

On Tues., May 14, at 7:00 p.m., LTUSA will host noted scholar and vernacular architecture historian Thomas C. Hubka to speak on his seminal book *Big House, Little House, Back House, Barn*. The presentation will take place at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill, and will be livestreamed.

The book, which received the Abbot Lowell Cummings Award from the Vernacular Architecture Forum, has been in continuous publication for 40 years and has become a scholarly and popular standard for New England architectural history and cultural studies.

This engaging talk will highlight the four essential components of the connected farm

buildings made by 19th-century New Englanders that stand today as a living expression of a rural culture, offering insights into the people who made them and their agricultural way of life. It will feature numerous local examples as well as The Landmark Trust USA's Amos Brown House.

Books will be available for purchase and signing.

"May is Preservation Month, and these special buildings are an important part of our architectural and cultural heritage in Northern New England unique to our region," LTUSA Executive

Director Susan McMahon said in a news release. "Whether you live in a connected farm building or have just noticed them while driving along New England back roads, this talk will provide a new appreciation for why they're here and what they say about us as a people."

This program is supported in part by Vermont Humanities with space provided by Next Stage. For more information and to register for the livestream, visit landmarktrustusa.org/events. No registration is required to attend in person at Next Stage.

Brattleboro Concert Choir presents the music of Gabriel Fauré on May 4, 5

MARLBORO—The Brattleboro Concert Choir presents "In Paradisum: Music of Gabriel Fauré," featuring the Requiem, "Cantique de Jean Racine," and "Tu es Petrus" with orchestra.

The concerts, scheduled for 7 p.m. Saturday, May 4, and 4 p.m. Sunday, May 5, will be performed at Persons Auditorium on Potash Hill on the former campus of Marlboro College.

"Our 'In Paradisum' concerts are meant to be a balm and a respite in stressful and troubling times," Musical Director Jonathan Harvey said in a news release. "All three pieces on the program are by French Romantic Gabriel Fauré, whose music has an indefinable transcendent beauty."

He explains composer Aaron

Copland wrote of Fauré's music that "those aware of musical refinements cannot help admire the transparent texture, the clarity of thought, the well-shaped proportions. Together they constitute a kind of Fauré magic that is difficult to analyze but lovely to hear."

Harvey said the central piece of the program is Fauré's Requiem. "Usually, musical Requiems are quite dark, fearful, and almost violent, since they are drawn from the Roman Catholic service for the dead," he said. "Fauré's is different. The core of the piece is for it to act as a comfort to those who are still living."

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, \$10 for youths, and free for under 12. They may be purchased via bmcvt.org, 802-257-4523, or info@bmcvt.org.

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COLUMN | Creative Conversations

‘The importance of this music is to bring people from all walks of life together’

Soloist Samirah Evans
on music from the
African diaspora and
the concept of sankofa

SAMIRAH EVANS of Brattleboro (samirah.evans.com) will be a special guest soloist joining the Brattleboro Women’s Chorus for the group’s May 12 concert. *The Commons* caught up with her by phone recently to find out more. Here’s an excerpt from the conversation.

VICTORIA CHERTOK: Hi, Samirah! What have you been up to musically?

SAMIRAH EVANS: I’m happy to be coming up on 10 years of teaching jazz vocals at Williams College. I just completed my last day presenting my students’ incredible recital.

I’m looking forward to a great summer and fall season of making music that includes Samirah Evans and Her Handsome Devils returning to the Springfield Jazz & Roots Festival this summer, and a tribute to Billie Holiday at the Colonial Theater in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, in the fall.

V.C.: I’m thrilled to hear that you are singing with the Brattleboro Women’s Chorus. What has it been like to work with them and with Becky Graber?

S.E.: Becky has been incredible to work with! It’s a great opportunity for me to get to know her more. It’s really satisfying to work with someone who is so open and with such a big heart. She’s really made me a partner in a lot of the work we’re doing. She’s so amenable

to ideas that I have.

We are both very passionate about the music! All of the songs are heartwarming and encourage togetherness, and I’m very happy to be part of it.

V.C.: I hear you will sing one of your original songs which you wrote with your husband, Chris Lenois. Tell me about it.

S.E.: Well, a portion of the song (“Wireless Boy”) is a sing-along, which is why I chose it, as I love engaging the audience that way.

It’s a fun song that reminds us of the importance of relationships face-to-face with each other instead of depending on our devices to communicate. It’s unbelievable how much energy we now put into relating to people through our devices — sometimes texting people in the same house or even across from you in the same restaurant.

V.C.: You mentioned the African song “Sankofa” and said you chose that song because you felt it was perfect for the theme of the concert.

S.E.: “Sankofa” is a song written by Cassandra Wilson, a jazz vocalist and composer. I chose this song because the repertoire Becky has chosen is music by African Americans and deeply rooted in the African diaspora. The word “sankofa” originated in the Twi language of Ghana that literally means “go back to get it.”

Another take on it is “taking from the past what is good and bringing it into the present in order to make positive progress through the benevolent use of



COURTESY PHOTO

Samirah Evans, special guest soloist, joins the Brattleboro Women’s Chorus on May 12.

knowledge.”

Sankofa is important to African Americans because it represents the need to reflect on the past to build a successful future. Two symbols both represent Sankofa: the bird with a contorted neck looking back, and another which looks more like a heart.

For me this song is significant because I recently discovered my Ghanaian heritage. I’m very excited to be singing this for the first time.

V.C.: Becky said that “to do this concert justice, we need to take a whole year to embed both music and cultural context so

we can go beyond simply learning notes.” She mentioned the workshops that the chorus took to further understand music from the African diaspora.

S.E.: I think it’s interesting that the music that Becky put together for this show was for that purpose. The importance of this music is to bring people from all walks of life together. This idea is really important to me.

The only way this world will thrive is if we all come to realize we are all part of the human race and we’re all part of our habitat and our entire universe.

Presenting a concert like this together is a reminder of us recognizing that, yes, we come from different backgrounds but we don’t need to be apart from each other — we can do so much better if we enable ourselves to open up to each other, to respect each other for who we are and what we have to offer.

Another reason why I love this repertoire is that the

majority of the music is written by women — the nurturers of the world! It’s a wonderful gift for women on Mother’s Day.

Women are important in moving forward what is vital in our world, and many are often not recognized. To see how women can make a difference through music is awesome in this context, and I appreciate Becky for putting a program together that does that.

V.C.: Any closing thoughts?

S.E.: My ancestors are from Africa, and I like the idea of looking back to what I may have forgotten in my life — another expression of sankofa.

Without Africa, I wouldn’t be; without Africa, there’d be no America. This is our country — we built it.

Because of how difficult it is to look back and see how our people were treated, we may not look back at the importance of what Africa is for us in America today.

Chorus concert

traditional spirituals arranged by Rollo Dilworth and Barnwell, to contemporary compositions by Barnwell, Abbey Lincoln, Cassandra Wilson, Stevie Wonder, and Bobby McFerrin, “each chosen for its ability to resonate with audiences and convey themes of resilience, hope, love, and unity,” according to the chorus’ publicity materials.

Accompanying Evans will be a band of regional musicians created just for this concert: Cathy Martin on piano, Steve Rice on drums, Genevieve Rose on bass, and Ronald Smith on saxophone.

Honoring a rich cultural heritage

A \$5,000 grant from the Thomas Thompson Trust supported this concert and rehearsals and allowed the Chorus time to explore more deeply the context of the African-American experience and the roots of the music being sung.

“We asked: How can a mostly white chorus in a mostly white state honor the composers of the African diaspora?” notes Graber.

They learned from two African American women who have made careers of teaching and contextualizing a rich musical heritage.

Group members participated in workshops led by Kathy Bullock and Melanie DeMore, “talking with us about the history of Africans in America and talking about their music in depth,” Graber says.

In a 2001 interview with *Works & Conversations*, DeMore credited her time with Linda Tillery and the Cultural Heritage Choir with inspiring her commitment to teaching and performing music as a full-body activity.

“We specialized in African-American roots music, folk music — music from the Gullah South Sea Islands, old slave songs, moans, all of those things,” DeMore said. “Part of our mission was the preservation of that.”

DeMore, who describes herself as a “vocal activist,” came from California to teach a workshop with the BWC. Graber describes her as a “a wonderfully welcoming singer and leader.”

“Kathy Bullock’s workshop took us through the history of African American music and talked about enslavement,” she continues.

Bullock, a professor emerita of music at Berea College in Kentucky with a rich background in music performance, direction, and scholarship, has been a visiting faculty member at Bennington College.

“She told the real stories, and it was hard to hear but so important to hear,” Graber said.

Building community through music

When she was 5 years old and growing up in Minnesota, Graber learned to read music at the same

time she learned to read words.

She credits her mother, a salesperson of the *World Book* encyclopedia who designed a component of the company’s homeschooling curriculum to give Graber those skills at such an early age.

“That was such a kindness to me that I hadn’t thanked her for, since she’s gone,” noted Graber, who is ramping up for the 28th year of the Brattleboro Women’s Chorus.

She reflects on the early days of the group.

“I was looking for a way to have local work that was meaningful and to build community for myself and others,” she says. “I wanted to bring people together to sing. I love to do that.”

In those first few months of 1996, the Brattleboro Women’s Chorus attracted 55 singers. This year, 108 voices will participate.

Betsy Williams of Westminster West, a board member and chorus singer, joined the BWC “in the midst of a big snowstorm.”

In the early winter of 1996, she attended the BWC’s first concert at what then was the First Baptist Church downtown.

“I enjoyed the concert, and it all looked like so much fun, I decided to join,” Williams says. “And, well, I have been a member ever since!”

She describes Graber’s qualities as musical director as “a rare gift.”

“She welcomes all singers, regardless of previous musical

experience, and is able to lead rehearsals in a manner that meets people where they are — while also providing helpful information and direction to those with more musical background,” Williams says.

She describes the spring program as “a particularly high level of power and connection, embracing that we are all a part of this grand community of music together, generated through a shared history that shows humanity at its worst and its best.”

“I feel honored to be able to be a part of that,” adds Williams.

Norma Willingham, 71, of Brattleboro, a board member and member of BWC, joined the chorus that first fall and, similar to Williams’ introduction, “walked a mile in an intense snowstorm to perform,” though it was not the same snowstorm as her board colleague endured.

“I was hooked,” she says.

“Singing with the Women’s Chorus was an uplifting experience where I joined my voice in community, singing songs of hope, joy, and inspiration,” says Willingham.

She says that her singing voice has “changed dramatically thanks to Becky’s frequent, quick lessons on how we can use our voices in a different way.”

But for Willingham, it’s about more than the technique.

“Singing always makes me happy, but nowhere else am I quite as happy as singing with Becky. I have had the pleasure of watching Becky hone her skills to become the most amazing musical director,” she continues.

“With good humor, she helps a group of amateurs learn about using their voices to become one voice,” adds Willingham to the chorus of praise for Graber.

The Brattleboro Women’s Chorus Mother’s Day concert takes place at the Latchis Theatre, 50 Main St., on Sunday, May 12 at 3 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased at the door on the day of the event. The cost is on a sliding scale of \$15 to \$30, though no one will be turned away for lack of funds.

For more information about the Brattleboro Women’s Chorus or to purchase tickets, visit brattleborowomenschorus.org.

FROM SECTION FRONT

FROM SECTION FRONT

I’m interested in process,” said Ahrenholz.

Ahren Ahrenholz’s “Objects” exhibit will run from Saturday, May 4, to Friday, May 31, at the Crowell Art Gallery at the Moore Free Library, 23 West St. The private library is supported by the residents of Newfane. Admission is free. A reception will be held Saturday, May 4, 1 to 3 p.m. Hours for the library and gallery: Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 1 to 5 p.m.; Thursdays, 1 to 6 p.m., and Saturdays, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Information: moorefreeibrary.org/crowell-gallery.

Ahrenholz

sculpture featured on his portfolio (ahrenahrenz.com) includes nine whisk brooms.

By themselves, the materials “are of no iconic significance,” he says. Rather, “I’m questioning properties of line, mass, density, texture, color, and the way light is reflected and absorbed.”

Ahrenholz emphasizes the importance of asking questions throughout this process.

“What are the visual, tactile elements involved? What exists in perception beyond literal meaning? What is the essence of iconic versus symbolic form?” he asks.

He calls the results the “artifacts of this inquiry.”

“The questioning is all important to me,” he says. “And one thing builds on another, which expands hopefully my visual vocabulary.”

Ahrenholz has advice for aspiring artists.

“Just ask questions,” he says. “Follow your needs.”

The artist, who will also exhibit his work from October to December at the C.X. Silver Gallery in West Brattleboro, calls it “a real mistake for people to be involved with expressing themselves or trying to come up with a creative process that gives a product.”

“I’m not interested in product,

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In Paradisum
Music of Gabriel Fauré

Brattleboro Concert Choir
Jonathan Harvey, Music Director

Saturday, May 4
7:00 pm
Sunday, May 5
4:00 pm

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Potash Hill, Marlboro

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Audience members enjoy a performance by Midnight Betty, a duo act comprised of Chelle Murrey and Oriana Barros.

Open Mic at the River Garden carries on a Brattleboro tradition

By Victoria Chertok
The Commons

BRATTLEBORO—On a recent Monday night, The Commons stopped in to see and hear what all the fuss was about at the weekly Open Mic at the River Garden Marketplace at 157 Main St.

There, 15 or so musicians — guitarists, banjo players, pianists, accordion players, and many singers — each awaited the chance to perform a 10-minute set of two or three songs for an audience of approximately 25 people.

Kevin Parry, a local musician and teacher who has run open mic programs in Brattleboro for more than three decades, including at the Marina for 10 years, now does so exclusively at the River Garden. He plays guitar and sings, and he ended the show with three of his original songs.

Some of the other performers on April 15 were Alex Pastahov, Step, Addison Rhys, Midnight Betty, Owen McLoughlin, Dylan Patrick Ward, Sharon and Daniel, Jenn, Daniel Hales, Bob Havens, Jonny Sheehan, Mark Borax, and Ben.

Parry's guidelines make it

clear: "This is an acoustic open mic for musicians only. We do not feature poetry, comedy, or karaoke. We discourage the use of pre-recorded backing tracks of any sort. Our audience wants to hear live music only."

Within that constraint, creativity blossoms.

"Monday nights are the highlight of our week at the River Garden," says David Hiler, who owns the River Garden Marketplace with partners Amy and Tim Brady.

"The best part of Open Mic is seeing all the people who just come out to see local talent in action. Many of them don't even play an instrument — or, if they do, they simply come for the inspiration that someday they might get up there themselves," he said. "And they do!" he added. "That's truly the best part."

Open Mic at River Garden Marketplace, 157 Main St., Brattleboro, takes place every Monday night from 6 to 9 p.m.

For more information, contact Kevin Parry at parrykevin@hotmail.com. For guidelines and a link to sign up online, visit bit.ly/761-openmic.



Kevin Parry of Brattleboro has run open mic nights in Brattleboro for over three decades.



Alex Pastahov performs at the weekly Open Mic at the River Garden Marketplace in Brattleboro.

AROUND THE TOWNS

Famed folk families join for Grafton performances May 4

GRAFTON — John Lomax III of America's multi-generation folk music family brings his "Lomax On Lomax" presentation to Vermont for his New England debut Saturday, May 4, 6:30 p.m. at the Brick Meeting House, 2 Main St.

Fiddler John Specker and his daughters Ida Mae and Lila (The Speckers) will perform.

Local resident George Alexander is promoting this event. "Growing up, some of the favorite songs in my grammar school songbook were 'Home On The Range,' 'The Old Chisholm Trail,' and 'Streets of Laredo,'" he said in a news release. "I was amazed to meet the Lomax family after moving to Houston, Texas, and learning that their efforts had preserved those folk songs for us. Bringing this show to my new hometown of Grafton is a real joy."

The Speckers and their triple-fiddle performance will kick off the proceedings with Lomax following after a brief intermission. Tickets are \$20 and are available at the door as well as from MKT Grafton, 162 Main St., The market is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. daily and accepts cash or checks for ticket sales.

Medicaid and health resource info available at RFPL

ROCKINGHAM — The Vermont Workers' Center is hosting drop-in informational hours on Tuesday, May 7, from 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m., in the Rockingham Free Public Library Meeting Room. All are welcome to stop in to get updated about Medicaid, Medicare Savings Programs, and other health care resources.

Those who have been cut off of Medicaid and are wondering if they qualify for other programs can learn the latest information. Information about rights in the Medicaid re-determination process will also be available, as well, the option to review any communications received about Medicaid or other health insurance. This event is free. For more information, email programming@rockinghamlibrary.org, call 802-463-4270, or stop by the library at 65 Westminster St.

Etzweiler gives talk on tracking lynx in the North Maine Woods

PUTNEY — For more than a decade, Bob Etzweiler has led tracking expeditions to northern Maine to find and follow the trails of Canada lynx, a carnivore uniquely designed for the deep snows and the rugged and remote environment of the North Maine Woods. The purpose of these expeditions is to learn about this carnivore, experientially, while following its trails and to connect with the landscape that it calls home.

Etzweiler lives with his wife in East Dummerston and works with Vermont Wilderness School, leading programs for children in Nature Connection. He also runs adult programs teaching wildlife tracking and hunting skills and

is a certified professional tracker. All are invited to join Etzweiler for this free event at the Putney Public Library, 55 Main St., on Tuesday, May 7, at 6:30 p.m., where he will share photos and stories from his experiences leading groups on the trail.

Senior meal served in Dummerston

DUMMERSTON — Senior Solutions and Evening Star Grange will present their first of two monthly meals on Wednesday, May 8, at the Evening Star Grange hall in Dummerston Center, with take-out meals available from 11:30 a.m. to 1 p.m., and the in-house meal served at noon.

The menu features roast loin of pork, mashed potato, marinated carrots, with pineapple/cherry crisp for dessert. The vegetarian entree will be vegetable quiche. Reservations are strongly encouraged by calling the Grange at 802-254-1138. Leave complete name, phone number, number meals desired, and whether meals are for eating in or taking out. A donation to help defray expenses of \$3 for those 60 and older and \$4 for those under 60 is suggested.

Legion Band presents spring concert

BRATTLEBORO — The Brattleboro American Legion Concert Band will present a spring concert on Wednesday, May 8, at 7 p.m. at American Legion Post 5 on Linden Street. There is no admission charge.

Brattleboro Watershed Forest hosts 'BioBlitz'

WEST BRATTLEBORO — On Saturday, May 11, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. a Bio-Blitz will be held to explore the biodiversity of the Brattleboro Watershed Forest and determine how it is recovering (or not) from last winter's (2022-23) timber harvests.

A BioBlitz is a crowdsourced community science effort to record as many species within a designated location and time period as possible. Everyone works together at a BioBlitz — scientists, families, students, teachers, and other community members—to get a snapshot of biodiversity.

This BioBlitz is co-hosted by the Brattleboro Conservation Commission and Bonnyvale Environmental Education Center (BEEC). Participants are asked to bring water and a smartphone with the iNaturalist app installed. Binoculars or a macro lens for phones will also be helpful. The group will meet at Yankee Dog/Mama Sezz parking area on Marlboro Road. Locations to survey will be divvied up, and groups will carpool to the Gulf Road and Pleasant Valley Road entrances from there. A wrap event will follow at BEEC to gather, help with any lingering observations or uploads, and share out the results of all the work.

Join online for free at bit.ly/763-bio and join the iNaturalist project at bit.ly/763-inat.

For those who cannot make the event but still wish to contribute, the iNaturalist project remains open and automatically adds any public observations made within the boundaries of the Pleasant Valley Reservoir.

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VIEWPOINT

Local antisemitism threatens safety of Jewish Vermonters

Acknowledging Palestinian rights and suffering shouldn't be silenced; instead, we must approach discussions with an understanding of the complexities and steer clear of extremist views

Guilford

AS A Jewish Vermonter who has spent the past three decades working to improve our synagogue's safety and counter local antisemitism, I feel compelled to clarify that concerns about local antisemitism are neither unfounded nor a mere reflex. They are deeply anchored in the stark realities of our history and the present-day situation.

Recent letters to the editor, including those by Jewish authors, deny the reality and danger of local antisemitism. One by Matt Dricker and co-authors on March 25 dismissed a "reflexive, future-imagined fear of our neighbors repeating Jewish historical trauma." On Jan. 18, Dricker et al. dismissed a letter written by members of our local temple as exhibiting "saddening white fragility in our relatively safe community."

The U.S. has seen a disturbing surge in antisemitic incidents. Close to home, the attempted bombing in 2020 of a nursing home in Longmeadow, Massachusetts — targeted for its overt Jewish association — solidifies the reality that our concerns are based on tangible threats to our community's safety.

IN BRATTLEBORO, antisemitism has manifested in various alarming incidents: a threatening letter aimed at our synagogue leadership several years ago, the discovery of neo-Nazi flyers around town, a hateful antisemitic podcast from nearby Keene, and numerous other

MICHAEL KNAPP is a software developer and entrepreneur who is passionate about social justice.

incidents. Swastikas have defaced the walls of too many area schools.

We don't have to trivialize these events to acknowledge the horrors of war. Many aren't like the terror of the Tree of Life synagogue shooting in Pennsylvania or the war in Gaza, but they are nonetheless significant.

Each incident, large or small, feeds into a broader pattern of antisemitism that affects communities deeply and personally. They remind us that the threat we face is not an imagined fear or a manifestation of our fragility, but is grounded in the documented history and present reality of hate and bigotry.

Statements that dismiss antisemitism as a real and growing danger empower the worst and most dangerous elements of our society.

In January, a man was arrested after allegedly making a series of threats against Jewish individuals and places of worship in Massachusetts.

The man justified his planned acts of violence by referring to the broader political discourse, and he is alleged to have made a number of disturbing statements in a voicemail to a synagogue in Attleboro, Massachusetts, one of which was, "With supporting the killing of innocent little children,

■ SEE NATIONAL PARKS, C2

COLUMN



BERNARD GOTTFRYD/LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Children mingle in New York City during the first Earth Day in 1970.

I can grasp what a massive environmental problem we're facing. Or I try to.

Determining truly effective measures to combat climate catastrophe is complicated. But planting the seeds of hope and doing 'whatever it takes' are more important than ever.

Williamsville

IMARCHED WITH my mother in the first Earth Day Parade, on April 22, 1970, just a week before my 16th birthday. Manhattan's Fifth Avenue was all rainbows and flowers, picnics, and Frisbee games: we thronged — 100,000 of us — to march from 59th Street, at the southern edge of Central Park, to Washington Square Park, while fueled vehicles were held at bay.

For a teenager who'd never gone hungry and had always had clean air to breathe, it was, perhaps, an abstraction.



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

But I do recall being bothered by Long Island Lighting Company erecting three massive, candy-striped towers on Asharoken, an isthmus across our stretch of Northport Harbor, and by the

evermore frequent red tides that threatened safe swimming.

On that first Earth Day, 20 million people protested nationwide to raise awareness about the crisis facing our environment. I may have been too innocent then, too naïve to grasp what a massive problem this was, this would be. Now, just days away from 70, I do.

Or I try to. It seems that some solutions — electric vehicles, for example — might only pose more problems and that greed stymies the good intentions behind

■ SEE CLIMATE CATASTROPHE, C2

ESSAY



Zion National Park, Utah.

A change of scenery in an extreme natural world can offer a change in perspective on many levels

In our national parks, some common ground

IF YOU FIND yourself frowning too much and assuming the worst of your fellow Americans, I have this to offer as a corrective.

I don't get out much. Winters are long here at home in Vermont. No snow, no bitter cold, no struggle to mark the days.

So my daughter and granddaughter challenged me to join them for a week in Utah, hiking — gently, they promised.

Putney

LISA CHASE is retired and lives in Putney when not exploring national parks.

We spent three days in a state park prowling all over Padre and Snow Canyons, then three days in Zion National Park. Wow. Knocked the socks off this aging provincial.

The landscape and

■ SEE NATIONAL PARKS, C2



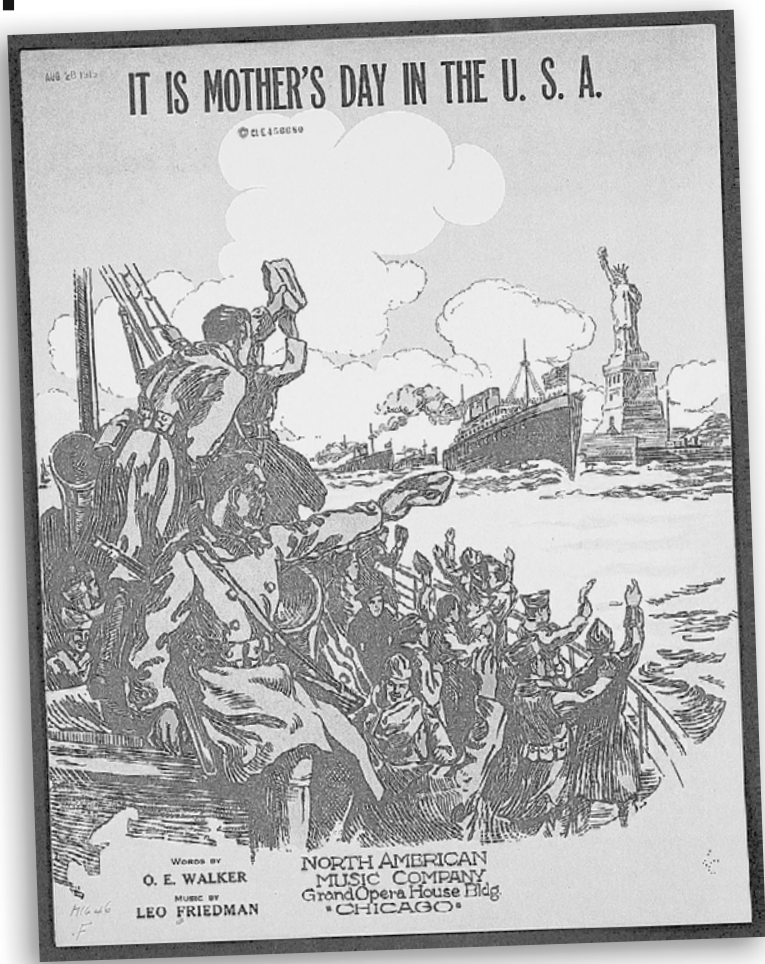
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ESSAY

Sheet music published in 1917, several years after Mother's Day became a national holiday in the United States and in the throes of World War I.



LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

VIEWPOINT

Rethinking cohabitation

There are many ways to share housing. Changing how we think about living together could have benefits for all of us.

IT WAS ENLIGHTENING to hear Rep. Becca Balint describe the omnibus housing bill she is working on with her fellow congressional representatives. It is shocking to hear of a half-a-trillion-dollar price tag! but it is so appropriate — housing is a basic need.

Almost at the close of the talk, Windham Regional Commission Executive Director Chris Campany says, “Younger workers [...] are only going to rent a room in a house for so long, in your late 20s, early 30s, before you say, ‘I probably need to do something different.’”

I feel strongly that sharing housing is not just for younger people.

We need a paradigm shift. People can live together at all stages of life. Where did we get the idea that if you are single you have to live alone?

The loneliness that living alone engenders is deeply painful. It strikes the same part of the brain as being hungry or thirsty. We are wired to be connected, and we have a crisis of social isolation.

Researchers have figured that social isolation and loneliness in seniors costs Medicare \$6.7 billion each year. Currently, almost 20% of all households in Windham County are occupied by seniors living alone.

That's a lot of empty bedrooms. What does it take to help those seniors who are on their own to open up their homes and hearts to living with others?

HERE AT Sharing Housing, Inc., we are trying to figure this out.

ANNAMARIE PLUHAR is executive director and founder of Sharing Housing, Inc. (sharinghousing.org), a non-profit organization promoting shared housing as a viable and enjoyable answer to the joint crises of housing affordability and loneliness facing our society through education and advocacy. To read excerpts from the forum on housing to which Pluhar is responding, see “Crushing the housing crisis” [Voices Live! Forum, April 10].

The day after the Zoom session with Becca, I wrote to her and asked her to put money in the bill to:

- Identify the legal barriers that inhibit this option and how to address them. (How do I get rid of a bad housemate? Will I lose my benefits? What are the rent lease arrangements?)
- Determine what it takes to message to normalize this option.
- Perform rigorous quantitative and qualitative research in the benefits for home sharers.

Many efforts to encourage shared housing have failed for lack of funding.

SCANT MONIES are available for this effort because shared housing is a hybrid solution and doesn't fit neatly into current priorities.

Housing funding is typically either for brick-and-mortar projects or addressing homelessness. As a solution for social isolation, the model has to be proven in order for funders in the social arena to invest.

With a small grant from Senior Solutions, using American Rescue Plan Act funds, we have created a pilot program we call SHIFT — Shared Housing Incentives for

Taking Action.

This program is intended to teach Windham and Windsor County homeowners how to find a good housemate, and to support them in the process. We continue to look for funding to build it out.

THERE ARE SO many bedrooms that are not being used! There are so many people for whom life could be less difficult if they had one or two home-mates.

Our definition of a “home-mate” is a person you like and respect whose ways of living at home are compatible enough that everyone is comfortable.

As Kirby Dunn, the former executive director of HomeShare Vermont, said in *The New York Times* in 2008, “When you look at the data on people living alone, they tend to die younger and be sicker.”

Dunn cited surveys where “people say they're happier, sleeping and eating better, and feel safer in their homes with someone around.”

“If I sold you that as a drug, you'd pay thousands of dollars,” he said.

We should promote and celebrate these unique and potentially life-enhancing relationships.

FROM SECTION FRONT

Antisemitism

that means it's OK to kill your children.”

REVIEWING THESE statements, it is evident that his intent to commit violence was influenced by rhetoric on the latest Israel-Hamas war, as it is alarmingly similar to what is published again and again in our local newspapers.

Words meant to express solidarity can, unfortunately, serve as justification for those intent on rationalizing their hatred and

violent actions.

Acknowledging Palestinian rights and suffering shouldn't be silenced; instead, we must approach discussions with an understanding of the complexities and steer clear of extremist views.

Creating spaces for dialogue is crucial for fostering understanding and solidarity among communities. Thoughtful communication and standing against bigotry — in our word choices and how we frame our

discussions — can prevent well-intentioned statements from being misconstrued to justify hate.

Support from Brattleboro's wider community, including its clergy, politicians, and citizens, has deeply affected many in the Jewish community, playing a key role in making our town safer in the face of rising antisemitism. I urge that we move beyond divisive arguments and instead foster peace by reinforcing Brattleboro as a community united against discrimination.

FROM SECTION FRONT

National parks

precipitous trails were a thrill, but what is sticking with me the most?

I find myself still marveling about the phenomenon of being among hordes — and I mean hordes — of people, folks, fellow humans in state and national parks, just digging the drama.

THE PHENOMENON is this: people management and crowd control is the biggest job for our park rangers. I'm sure they devote themselves to flora and fauna as well, but the crowds — oh, my goodness.

And about these crowds? Never did I see a bit of litter. On all those towering rock faces never did I see a bit of graffiti.

In all that shuffling of crowds, never did I hear a discouraging word.

Compliance was everywhere. And the thing about compliance is this: it doesn't show. It just is.

But there were also lots of families, lots of children of all ages. Forging ahead, running, scrambling over impossible rocks and ledges. Being intrepid. Totally having fun and not being hovered over or freaked out over by parents.

But also: These children were not buried in their phones.

But also: Everyone was enjoying themselves.

And furthermore, I heard lots of languages. All nationalities — the gamut.

THERE WERE old people. Birders. Toddlers! Very urbane young people being freshly exposed to the challenges of an extreme natural world.

Then there were the serious hikers being seriously pleased with themselves and their gear. *Smile more, you guys! Look like you're having fun!*

And then there was this: I never saw a single political bumper sticker, roadside sign, hat, or T-shirt. Not once.

I take that back — I did give a thumbs up to a Caitlin Clark T-shirt.

If you find yourself frowning too much and assuming the worst of your fellow Americans, I'm offering this as a corrective.

Celebrating motherhood

Traditions vary, but celebrating the mothers in our lives is a global phenomenon

West Dummerston

MOTHER'S DAY is probably one of the most popular holidays we celebrate. It is a special day to honor the most important person in a family.

My perspective, of course, might be old-fashioned, but I am 84 and was brought up in another era, one with different behaviors and different values. However, there are things that have not changed, and celebrating motherhood is one.

The origin of Mother's Day is believed to go back to the Romans and Greeks, who honored mother goddesses Rhea and Cybele.

Today, it is celebrated around the world on various dates. In England, the celebration used to be the fourth Sunday of Lent and was called Mothering Sunday.

The celebration originated in the United States. Three women were responsible.

Before the start of the Civil War, Ann Reeves Jarvis (from West Virginia) started Mother's Day Work Clubs designed to teach local women how to take care of their children. These clubs became very important and, in 1868, Jarvis created Mother's Friendship Day to reunite soldiers with mothers.

In 1870, Julia Ward Howe wrote the Mother's Day Proclamation to promote world peace, and she later called for it to be celebrated annually on June 2.

By 1912, thanks to the persistence of Jarvis's daughter, Anna Maria Jarvis, Mother's Day had become a holiday in many states. In 1914, President Woodrow Wilson officially declared Mother's Day to be a national holiday, celebrated on the second Sunday in May.

COUNTRIES AROUND the world celebrate the day in different ways. For a long time, many families started the day by serving Mom breakfast in bed to give her a break. However, times have changed and cultural habits vary, so this tradition might no longer be the case.

In today's world, the traditional family role of the mother is not limited to being a woman or spouse. Two people, not even necessarily women, now might be assuming family household responsibilities.

BEATRIZ FANTINI is a professor emerita at SIT, where she worked for 50 years. She is a freelance writer and has published short stories in her native Bolivia and in Venezuela. Her husband, Alvin Fantini, is an SIT professor emeritus.

Yet the celebration of Mother's Day is pretty strong. Even the tradition of carnations for mothers — red for those who are still alive or white for those who are deceased — is practiced in many places.

As with any other holiday, commercial interests also guide activities. It is believed that, second to Christmas, Mother's Day is the biggest seller for greeting card manufacturers like Hallmark and Gibson. And of course, flower shops and specialty stores see this as a money-making activity.

The one commonality we definitely have with other countries is the restaurant business — again, in an effort to give Mom a free day, lunches or dinners at restaurants are in order.

AND WHY DO all this for Mom? Let's imagine we needed to hire one. The following might be the required qualifications and expected responsibilities.

Position: Mother (no experience needed)

Required qualifications: patience, flexibility, ability to improvise, tolerance for ambiguity, ability to serve as arbiter, nursing skills, counseling skills, selflessness, good management skills, fast learner, spirit of sacrifice, ability to please everyone, good listener.

Responsibilities: cook, clean, wash clothes, supervise homework, entertain children's classmates, organize activities, buy children's clothes and school supplies, drive children to extracurricular activities and/or school, take children to doctor's appointments, make sure spouse's clothes are OK.

Compensation: Heaven!

Any applicants?

So, let's celebrate and remember mothers.

Happy Mother's Day to all those fantastic women, dead or alive.

Climate catastrophe

FROM SECTION FRONT

initiatives such as carbon offset dollars.

It is complicated.

A FEW YEARS AGO, I attended a meeting of 350.org, a movement for “bold climate action,” at which I asked:

“Wouldn't it be smart if folks in my village — especially time-flexible and older ones — started to pool their errands and resources more?”

I got a pretty abrupt shutdown. *It won't make any difference, the 30-something leader said — emphatically. Tail between my legs, I've learned since to speak less on the subject and to listen more.*

But I'm not programmed for despair, so when I can't sleep at night for worry about our kids and theirs in the face of climate catastrophe, I scan for solutions — little things that some would say won't amount to anything.

But the perennial Pollyanna I am believes that trying is better than turning our backs on the crisis, hands tossed up in resignation.

We try. Back in 2015, Efficiency Vermont conducted a full audit of my old Vermont village home; they plugged up the energy leaks, and I had solar panels mounted on the south-facing roof.

My partner and I eschew plastic; we cluster trips to town to get more bang for the gas buck; he drives a Prius, and I'm researching what direction to go with a car. We use e-bikes for running errands and have downsized our vacation expectations.

Hopping a train to the Pacific Northwest seemed preferable to flying to Europe, until an April 4 article in *The New York Times* cast doubt on the assumption that train travel has a smaller carbon footprint than air travel.

It is complicated.

A COUPLE YEARS ago, St. Michael's Episcopal Church in Brattleboro set out on a project, Building Hope for the Earth (BHE), aimed at making the whole church campus powered by 110% clean, renewable energy by 2030.

I pledged more than I could afford and more than I ever have to anything. Others did, too,

and the \$800,000 fundraising goal for phase one of the project was exceeded within five months. I guess a lot of people want to do something — anything — to dodge the despair and ameliorate the situation.

At St. Michael's annual meeting in January, the church community received an update from parishioner Cary Gaunt, who provided visionary leadership for the initiative.

“We never know how a seed we plant will grow, but that should never stop us from planting seeds,” Gaunt said. “A seed planted as a dream way back in 2008, when church members began expressing interest in addressing the climate crisis and living our stewardship commitments through tangible actions, began to germinate with vigor in the fall of 2021.”

That October, St. Michael's rector, Rev. Mary Lindquist, formed a team to explore the potential of switching to solar power for the church campus.

“None of us,” Gaunt continues, “could have imagined that the seed would blossom into a whole-church energy transformation, [...] nor could we imagine the generosity of the parish in supporting with time, talent, and financial resources such an audacious vision.”

Gaunt elaborated on the choice of name for the Building Hope for the Earth project.

“Hope is so desperately needed by so many during this time of global upheaval, social and environmental injustice, and the climate crisis,” she said.

“Earth's cries grow louder every day as evidenced with even a cursory glance at the headlines or an attentiveness to what is happening in our own communities,” Gaunt continued.

“The cries are many,” she added. “Those who hear are few. Those who hear and then decide to sow seeds of hope are fewer still.”

Climate prophet and Vermonter Bill McKibben says that it is “high time for the human heart to do its job” in responding to these crises.

The BHE project involved installing a new roof

to replace an irreparably leaky one, adding insulation, changing to more energy efficient light fixtures, transitioning from oil heat to electric mini splits and adding solar panels to the church and the rectory. Phase one was completed in early March.

Gaunt said that phase one “gets us a long way toward achieving our vision and goal, but there is more to go.”

She added that the church community had submitted even more ideas for “tangible ways to better support and engage our broader community,” and that BHE project leaders “look forward to re-engaging with the church community come late spring [...] to roll up our sleeves to build more hope for the earth and our community.”

Phase two begins later this year.

AS I WALK AND BIKE — and, OK, drive — around these days, I look at the buildings of other nonprofits, of businesses, and of private homes, and I keep spotting empty roofs that would be well-suited to solar paneling. With all the incentives out there and the clock ticking, it seems like a no-brainer: Go solar — or wind, or hydroelectric. Whatever it takes.

The National Weather Service reported that 2023 was Vermont's hottest year on record. According to the The National Centers for Environmental Information, in 2022, the average winter temperature statewide was 27.2 degrees F. In 2023 it was 31.3.

That's 4.1 degrees in a year. Even considering El Niño — which, I confess, I'll never quite grok — that's huge. Extrapolate that.

The more I dig into climate disaster, the more riddled with paradox and confusion the climate landscape is, and the quicker the shifting sands one has to navigate to find a path toward amelioration.

I try to learn, and to act responsibly.

I only wish I could rewind the clock and caution my 16-year-old self and all her peers.

If I could, I would simply say, “Use less.”

LETTERS FROM READERS

Brattleboro: Don't throw away the PAYT program

RE: "Brattleboro must decide on contract for solid waste, with few options" [News, Apr. 24]: I just sat down to make a list of the pros and cons of our current trash/recycling/compost curbside program versus the mechanized program proposed by Casella Waste Systems. I believe it tips heavily in favor of our current program. Almost 15 years ago, our residents were up in arms over a proposed pay-as-you-throw (PAYT) system. A townwide vote was taken and PAYT was soundly defeated. Then, over a number of years, an extensive education program and curbside pilot was undertaken. Now, Brattleboro's weekly curbside recycling and compost pick-up and biweekly PAYT trash pick-up is embraced by residents and is the envy of the entire state of Vermont (and beyond).

available for pick-up the week before the event at Brown and Roberts Ace Hardware, the Brattleboro Area Chamber of Commerce, Brooks Memorial Library, and the Brattleboro Food Co-op.

On Green Up Day itself, May 4, look for tabling locations at the Turning Point of Windham County, M&T Bank on Canal Street, Subaru on Putney Road, and the West Brattleboro Fire Department lawn.

For a complete list of Green Up Day bag locations and additional information, please visit the Green Up Vermont website at greenupvermont.org or call Robin Rieske at 802-275-7232.

Let's come together, celebrate Connie's commitment, and make this Green Up Day the cleanest and most successful one yet!

GREEN UP DAY VERMONT
Brattleboro

Robin Rieske and Becky Anderson, local organizers

Thanks to Hashim, Harrison for support of Fish and Wildlife bill

I was so pleased to see that Sens. Hashim and Harrison voted to support S.258, An act relating to the management of fish and wildlife. This common-sense bill would make wildlife management decisions in Vermont more democratic, fair, and humane.

Updating the constituency of the Fish and Wildlife Board would make it more democratic. Especially when the agency is funded significantly by the General Fund, and their mandate is to manage wildlife for all Vermonters, the board should have broader representation, rather than be controlled by hunters and trappers. The amended bill doesn't exclude hunters, trappers, or anglers; it simply requires "balanced viewpoints" and training of board members. Those requirements don't seem unreasonable to me, as a tax-paying Vermonter who cares deeply about wildlife but who doesn't kill animals.

Furthermore, the agency is staffed by well-educated wildlife scientists who should have more authority than they currently do. Changing the rule-making from the board to the agency would shift the balance of power in an appropriate way.

If this legislation passes, baiting and hounding of coyotes would not be allowed. Those practices are not ethical forms of hunting; there is no element of fair chase. Furthermore, hounding is cruel and barbaric; there have been many cases of hounds running across posted property in pursuit of coyotes, harassing people, pets, and livestock.

S.258 is currently in the House Committee on Environment and Energy; hopefully, that committee will advance this bill so that all of our representatives have the chance to vote Ye.

To share your opinion, you can contact committee members (legislature.vermont.gov/committee/detail/2024/200) and your own representatives (legislature.vermont.gov/people/search/2024).

Linda Huebner Halifax

Our current law-breaking president

Joe Biden, the nation's top law enforcer, is breaking the Leahy Laws. According to the

Washington Post: "The United States has quietly approved and delivered more than 100 separate foreign military sales to Israel since the Gaza war began Oct. 7, amounting to thousands of precision-guided munitions, small-diameter bombs, bunker busters, small arms and other lethal aid" — making every single tax-paying American complicit in the ongoing genocide in Gaza.

Who is responsible for arresting a sitting president who is breaking the law?

Donald Trump, as a former president, has been seeking immunity for his misdeeds. But it's the sitting president who's getting it, from a clearly politicized Department of Justice.

I've been wondering lately whether the United States exports anything of greater value, dollar-wise, than the death and destruction we support all around the globe via our weapons businesses. I count in that

category the creation of SARS-CoV-2 and the new, neither safe, nor effective, mRNA vaccines, as products of our (wink wink) "biodefense" efforts, directed from at least 2002 onward by Anthony Fauci. (See Paula Jardine's 8-part series "The US biowarfare project which caused the Covid-19 debacle.") It's unfortunate that that military-industrial complex effort wrought so much blow-back here on our own soil. One way or another, the whole entire world is still paying for it. And will be for quite some time.

Jacqueline Brook Putney

Greater Falls Connections thanks voters for support

Greater Falls Connections (GFC), a substance misuse prevention coalition located in Bellows Falls, thanks

the community members from Rockingham and Westminster for their funding support.

The funds allow GFC to pay for staff and address needs that are not covered by federal and state grants as well as the capacity to react to emerging and pressing community needs around substances and their misuse.

GFC collaborates with the local school district and area community partners, and works directly with community members.

For more information about what we do, please visit greaterfallsconnections.org.

GREATER FALLS CONNECTIONS
Bellows Falls

Neil Allen, director

Green Mountain RSVP appreciates funding

Green Mountain Retired and Senior Volunteer

Program (GMRSPV) would like to thank the voters of Windham County for supporting our program with your vote on Town Meeting Day. The appropriations approved on March 4 will help to support the volunteers who are delivering meals, providing companionship and transportation to homebound seniors, serving community meals, stocking food pantries and much, much more. Your support is greatly appreciated!

GMRSPV is an AmeriCorps Senior program engaging people 55 and over in volunteer service and community engagement. For more information please go to rsvpvt.org or call 802-674-4547.

GREEN MOUNTAIN RSVP
Corey Mitchell, program director



THE COMMONS CROSSWORD

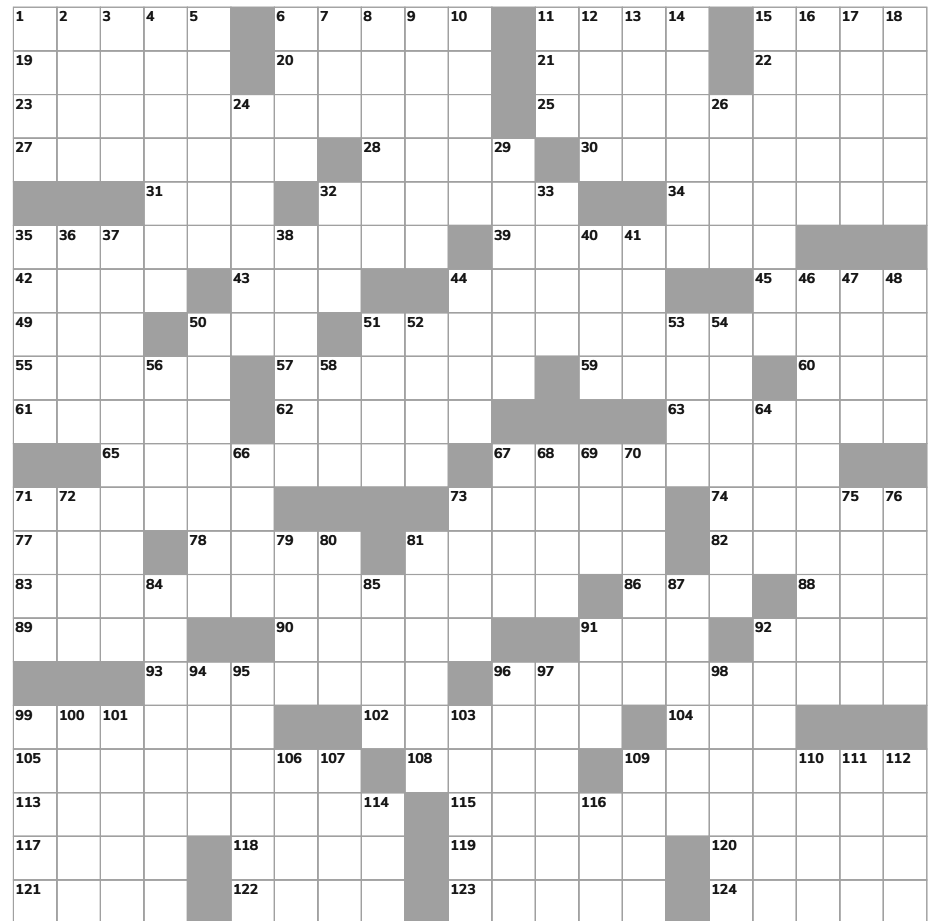
"Year-End Bonus"

Across

- 1. Go off-script
6. Rodeo wear
11. ___ of Mexico (arm of the Caribbean)
15. Hydro power sources
19. Spanish royal
20. Try to hit, as a target
21. Vast continent
22. Org. that certifies platinum records
23. Go toe-to-toe with a Spice Girl?
25. Pallid, but only on one side of one's face?
27. Sternutations
28. "J'Accuse..." author Émile
30. Obtains through trickery
31. Sunbeam
32. App developers
34. Opposite of take out
35. Community of 18-wheelers?
39. New beginning
42. Band of sisters Estee, Danielle, and Alana
43. Move a boat
44. Sports
45. Scent
49. Part of FWIW
50. Just a handful
51. Dictionary entry for "cautious"?
55. Cellist Casals
57. At the ___ of
59. Faucet annoyance
60. NAACP cofounder ___ B. Wells
61. Take the wheel
62. Gobsmailed
63. "Roma" director Alfonso
65. With 67-Across, drink a very large bottle of malt liquor without throwing up?
67. See 65-Across
71. Twain of pop
73. Wake up
74. Face-covering veil
77. Cleveland baller
78. Verizon bundle
81. Ovum or sperm
82. Piano practice piece
83. "I found that gemstone!?"
86. ___ jokes (corny humor)
88. Summer hrs. in Boston
89. Flower holder
90. Live it up
91. "Well, you see..."
92. Get together
93. Emmy-winning Phoebe Waller-Bridge comedy
96. Correctly identify the singer of "I Wanna Be Down"?
99. Courtyard
102. Utterly useless
104. Goodman of "Strictly Come Dancing"
105. California pinnipeds
108. Energetic play
109. Atonement
113. Caveman's comment upon seeing a stegosaurus fossil?
115. Puts the award for Best Musical on the scale?
117. In ___ (actually, in Latin)
118. Plains people
119. Veranda
120. Zellweger of "Judy"
121. Clarinetist's need
122. Church benches
123. Line attached to a fishhook
124. Specifics, informally

Down

- 1. Wall St. traders
2. College administrator
3. Miller ___
4. Meantime
5. "La Comédie humaine" author
6. Elliot of the Mamas & the Papas
7. Minute Maid juice brand
8. Whole Foods owner
9. Lamppoon
10. Flair
11. Cry of frustration
12. High-flying branch: Abbr.
13. Actress Taylor
14. Dragon of Germanic folklore
15. Dress-up performance of a sort
16. Window alternative
17. Alma ___
18. "What ___ thou?"
24. Pooh's gloomy pal
26. Breathe hard
29. Take into custody
32. Calf's mom
33. Line of clothing?
35. Sends for delivery
36. Patronize, as a diner
37. Acts up
38. Construction contract winner
40. Born and ___
41. River through Munich
44. Prudent
46. Blizzard purveyor
47. Novus ___ seclorum (motto on the Great Seal)
48. "Saving Private ___"
50. Permanently
51. Melt
52. Chopped with an ax
53. "The Velvet Underground & ___"
54. Rebuffed
56. L.L. Bean's first name
58. Brian who coined "ambient music"
64. "Keep ___!"
66. Speaker's platform
67. The Great Pyramid is one
68. "DuckTales" nephew
69. Approx. figure



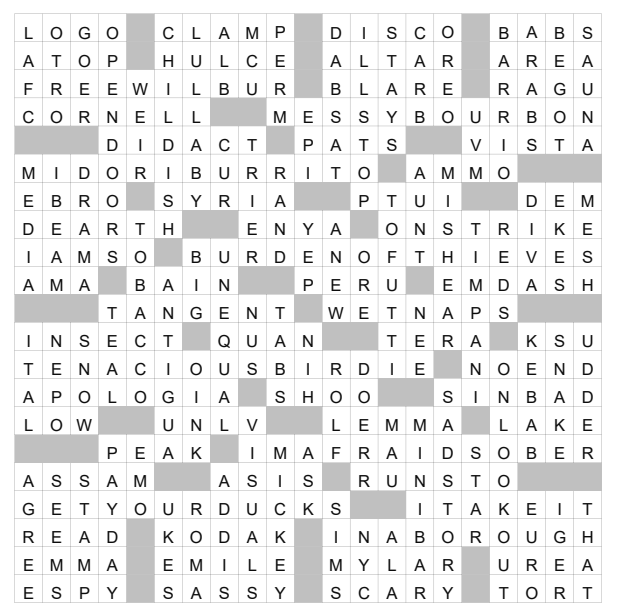
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- 70. Demand from Audrey II in "Little Shop of Horrors"
71. Canadian sketch comedy show
72. "LOL"
73. Fidel's brother and successor
75. Summed
76. NOW cofounder Friedan
79. Other: Sp.
80. Wooley who sang "The Purple People Eater"
81. Genetics pioneer Mendel
84. Topped off
85. "Dear ___ Hansen"
87. Walks unhurriedly
91. Ballpark figure?
92. Large aquatic mammal
94. "Despacito" singer Fonsi
95. Jimmy Eat World genre

- 96. ___ Lion, beast captured by Hercules in his first labor (hidden in "leonine meanie")
97. Like downhill skiing
98. French soccer star Wendie
99. Star-shaped bloom
100. Rib
101. Worker's reward
103. Laughs very loud
106. "Nick at ___" (evening Nickelodeon block)
107. Reason for a parking emergency
109. Comic actor Hartman
110. Less than any
111. Tech news site
112. Colon, in an emoticon
114. "Sounds good"
116. Lass

Last issue's solution

"Baby It's Cold Outside"



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COLUMN | Sports Roundup

Rebels off to a good start in softball

The Leland & Gray softball team has a new coach this season. Mike Bingham, who assisted longtime coach Tammy Claussen last season, took the helm when Claussen decided to step down after 23 years of leading the Rebels.

But no matter who is in charge, there are some things that never change in Rebel Nation. This small school always seems to produce hard working young people who never back down from a challenge and always strive to be better at whatever they are doing.

Those qualities were out in force on April 25 in Townshend as the Rebels rallied from a 7-0 deficit on the way to a wild 22-19 victory over the White River Valley Wildcats.

Leland & Gray trailed 7-0 after a rough first inning, but quickly got back in the game by scoring six runs in the bottom of the inning. Rihanna Dryden's two-run triple was the big blow in that inning.

After a sloppy start, Rebels starting pitcher Kristen Lowe and the defense behind her settled down and held the Wildcats scoreless in the second inning and were unfazed when WRV scored four runs in the third and took an 11-6 lead.

That's because, once again, the Rebels battled back. They sent 14 batters to the plate in the bottom of the third and scored 13 runs in an inning that saw Ava Lecours and Amanda Fontaine both hit two-run singles, Annabelle Brooks and Molly Bingham both hit two-run doubles, and Lowe hit a two-run triple. Sierra Chris and Sam Morse also had base hits that drove in runs as the Rebels took a 19-11 lead.

The Wildcats chipped away at the lead with three runs in the fourth, but were held scoreless in the fifth and sixth innings as Lowe struck out the side in order in the fifth and the Rebels got three quick outs in the sixth.

Leland & Gray got what turned out to be three important runs in the bottom of the sixth inning as Brooks had another two-run single and Lecours drove in another run on a sacrifice fly for a 22-14 lead. WRV made one final comeback attempt and scored five runs in the seventh inning before the Rebels finally retired the side and escaped with the victory.

"This was a great effort," Mike Bingham said after the game. "This was a good team we faced and we didn't get down when we got behind early. We just kept chipping away."

While all the Rebels contributed to the win, Bingham said it was Lowe who "got us through the game." She went the distance in this slugfest, and Bingham was pleased with how she was able to handle the pressure.

It was the Rebels' third straight victory, but two days later, they ran into the buzzsaw that is Izzy Stoodley and the Bellows Falls Terriers. Stoodley, who is making the case for being one of the top pitchers in the state, struck out 12 batters and drove in four runs as the visiting Terriers clobbered the Rebels, 16-1.

Now that spring vacation week is over, the pace of the season will pick up for all the teams, but Bingham is confident that the Rebels can keep improving and make the month of

May an enjoyable one in Rebel Nation.

**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.

Nation.

Baseball

• Bellows Falls is off to a 4-1 start, but coach Bob Lockerby is far from satisfied. The Terriers have a great pitcher in Jaxon Clark, who had won both of his starts this season, including an 11-0 victory over the Springfield Cosmos on April 23. But Lockerby is concerned about what happens when Clark isn't on the mound, pointing to the 13-7 win over the Fair Haven Slayers on April 26 at Hadley Field.

"We made it hard on ourselves," Lockerby said after the Fair Haven game. "We'll always take the 'W,' but our pitchers need to pound the strike zone and not give teams extra outs."

BF got off to a good start when starting pitcher Trenton Fletcher retired the Slayers in order on just five pitches in the first inning. He got a run to work with in the bottom half of the inning as Eli Allbee singled, stole second, moved to third on a sacrifice bunt by Jesse Darrell, and scored on a double by Steve Joslyn.

Things unraveled in the Slater second when Fletcher loaded the bases with one out on a single and two walks. Fletcher then hit a batter to get one run in, Mason Gutel hit a two-run single, and Trey Lee got another run in with a sacrifice fly to give Fair Haven a 4-1 lead.

BF got a run back in the second inning on an RBI single by Jake Trostrup and tied the game in the third when Darrell walked and ultimately scored on a balk by losing pitcher Noah Woodbury, followed by Fletcher reaching base on an error and scoring on a single by Walker James.

The Terriers then took the lead to stay in the fourth inning as Cole Moore hit a two-run single, and a pair of errors on balls hit by Fletcher and James led to a 9-4 BF lead.

Darrell took over for Fletcher on the mound to start the fifth inning. Fair Haven and BF each scored a run in the fifth, and the Slayers got two more runs in the sixth to cut the Terriers' lead to 10-7. BF got its final three runs in the bottom of the sixth on an RBI double by Darrell, an RBI single by Joslyn, and a fielder's choice by Moore.

Fair Haven tried to get a rally going in the seventh and had the bases loaded with two outs before Joslyn relieved Darrell and got the final out and give BF the win.

• Brattleboro is still searching for their first win, but the Bears are getting closer. On April 23 in Swanzey Center, New Hampshire, Monadnock's Ben Dean and Brattleboro's Jackson Emery each pitched five scoreless, no-hit innings, but the Huskies ultimately prevailed in a 5-1 victory.

It was Dean who broke up Emery's no-hitter with a single in the sixth. A pair of walks



Leland & Gray baserunner Molly Bingham (22) slides safely into third base ahead of the tag by White River Valley shortstop Tanner Drury in the third inning of their softball game on April 25 in Townshend.

loaded the bases for Lucas Williams, who hit a two-run double. Two more walks and a wild pitch scored three more runs in the inning.

Fittingly, Emery broke up Dean's no-hit bid with a solo home run in the seventh, but that was the only hit for the Bears. Dean finished with 16 strikeouts and two walks in the complete-game victory. Emery struck out 10 and held the Huskies to just two hits, but walked five batters in the loss as the Bears fell to 0-4.

• Leland & Gray couldn't overcome an early 12-0 deficit and ultimately lost to White River Valley, 14-8, in Townshend on April 25. The Rebels then picked up their first win of the season with a 11-1 victory over winless Springfield to improve to 1-4.

Tennis

• The Brattleboro boys swept Frontier Regional of South Deerfield, Massachusetts, 7-0, on April 22 at the BUHS courts.

In singles play, No. 1 Nate Kim, No. 4 Mark Richards, and No. 5 Ben Berg all won their matches by a 6-0, 6-0 score. No. 2 Malo Renault (6-1, 6-2) and No. 3 Thomas Hyde (6-2, 6-3) also won in straight sets.

The doubles matches were more competitive as the No. 1 team of Dorian Paquette and Eben Wagner earned a 6-3, 6-2 win, while the No. 2 team of Elias Frazier-Olsen and Wyatt Cudworth needed a tiebreaker to prevail, 7-5, 6-3. The Bears are 2-0 on the season.

• The Brattleboro girls got their first win of the season on April 20 in Rutland with a 5-2 win over Mount St. Joseph.

The doubles teams of No. 1 Amelia Laffland and Ava Bark and No. 2 Amelia Newton and Emma Lafayette-Havens stayed undefeated with wins in their respective matches. Paige Renaud and Kel Plumb picked up singles victories, while Ava Rosenzweig-Davidovits fell just short in a singles match that lasted nearly 2 1/2 hours. The Bears improved to 1-1.

Track & Field

• The Bellows Falls girls' track team is off to a good start with a second place finish in a multi-team meet in Brattleboro on April 16 and a win in a five-team meet at Green Mountain on April 23.

Laura Kamel, the reigning two-time Division III state champ in discus, won at the Brattleboro meet with a throw

of 98 feet, 6 inches, while Eryn Ross took the javelin with a throw of 86 feet, 1 inch, and Veronica Moore won the long jump with a leap of 13 feet, 8.75 inches. Nola Sciacca finished third in discus and second in javelin, while Tela Harty was third in shot put.

The Terriers were fast on the Freeman track as Hadley Gleim won the 100-meter dash in 13.90 seconds and was third in the 200 and triple jump. Harty was second in the 100-meter hurdles and Desi Broadley was second in the 3,000-meter run.

At the GM meet, Gleim and Kamel were the standouts as Gleim won the 100-meter dash, long jump, and triple jump, while Kamel was first in discus and shot put and third in javelin.

Gleim also joined Harty, Sciacca, and Ava LaRoss on the winning 4x100 relay team. Harty also won the 100-meter hurdles and was second in javelin, while Sciacca was second in discus. Broadley won the 200-meter dash and was second in the 1,500, while Addison Bacon was third in the 400. The 4x400 relay team of Hannah Terry, Ross, Bacon, and Moore finished second.

BOC announces 2024 paddling schedule, watercraft swap and sale

• The 2024 Brattleboro Outing Club paddling schedule features 14 trips on local reservoirs, lakes, ponds & rivers in, and around the Brattleboro area.

According to BOC paddling guru Larry McIntosh, the northernmost outing is Grafton Pond in Grafton, New Hampshire. To the east is Spoonwood Pond in Hancock, New Hampshire (a place motorboats can't access). The southernmost outing is Tully Lake in Royalston, Massachusetts, and in the west is Somerset Reservoir, northwest of Wilmington. "Lots of water to paddle in that big circle," he wrote in an email to *The Commons*.

BOC trips are free and open to the public; just show up at the time and place noted with your boat or board and all the safety gear (and lunch) necessary for a day's outing. Life jackets (PFDs) are required. A list of all the trips planned for this season, and the recommended gear you'll need, can be

found at BrattleboroOutingClub.org (click on "Summer Paddling").

Descriptions of all "flat water" trips can be found in the third edition of the AMC Quiet Water books for Vermont/New Hampshire and Southern New England. River trips are shown on the Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail Maps, second edition. Meeting locations provide a place to car and boat pool.

The lone BOC-sponsored camping trip this year is Saturday, Sept. 7, at Wilgus State Park, along the Connecticut River, in Ascutney. Camping is available at Spoonwood Pond, Tully Lake, Grafton Pond, and Somerset Reservoir. Paddlers wanting to include camping in their outing are advised to plan early. Reservations are required in most locations, and Connecticut River camping is first come, first served (locations are identified on the Connecticut River Paddlers' Trail Map).

• The annual BOC Consignment Sale & Swap of small human and wind-powered watercraft will be held on Saturday, May 11, from noon to 2 p.m., at Black Mountain Square, 972 Putney Rd., Brattleboro. Boats will be accepted on Friday, May 10, from noon to 2 p.m. and 5 to 7 p.m. On May 11, boats will be accepted beginning at 8 a.m., until 11:30 a.m. The swap portion of the event takes place from 11:30 a.m. to noon, with the sale starting at noon.

This is a consignment sale to fund the BOC Summer Paddling Program. Boat owners set the price, and BOC Paddling receives 10% of the eventual selling price. When two or more prospective buyers want the same boat, an "auction" will decide the eventual buyer. For more details on the sale, contact McIntosh at Lmacyak@gmail.com.

Saxtons River Rec holds fishing derby

• The Saxtons River Recreation Area will hold its annual fishing derby Saturday, May 4, at the ponds on Pleasant Valley Road. Registration begins at 8 a.m., with fishing starting at 8:30 a.m. Adults are responsible for providing their children with all the gear, bait, and assistance needed while at the derby. Trophy prizes will be given for First Fish, Biggest Fish, and Most Fish.

Donations toward expenses and snacks will be accepted at the derby, and volunteers of all ages are needed and can contact derby organizers at saxtonsriverra@gmail.com or through the Saxtons River Rec Facebook page.

Food drive this week at BCC

• The Brattleboro Country Club (BCC) is joining with golf courses from across America to try to stock local food shelves before school gets out for the summer.

Through May 5, the BCC will be collecting food for Foodworks, the food shelf on Canal Street in Brattleboro. Bring nonperishable food items such as peanut butter, canned items (soup, fruit, vegetables, beans, and tuna), and personal hygiene items such as bar soap and toothpaste to the BCC Pro Shop on 58 Senator Gannett Drive. For more information, contact BCC owner Melanie Boese at mboese@brattleborocc.com.

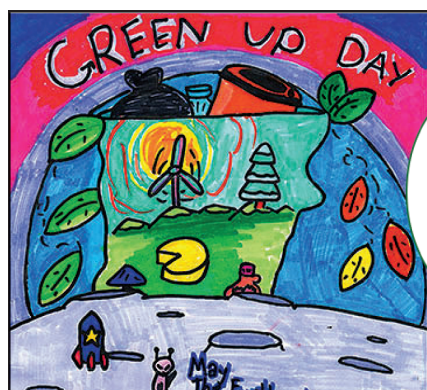
Senior bowling roundup

• The final week of the winter/spring season of the Brattleboro Senior Bowling League at Brattleboro Bowl on April 25 saw High Rollers (57-23) clinch the league title, while Stepping Stones II (48-32) leapfrogged Four Seasons (47-33) and Stayin' Alive (46-34) to finish second. Four Pins (34-46) finished fifth, followed by Good Times (32-48), Hairiers (24-56), and Slow Movers (20-60).

Doris Lake had the women's high handicap game (217) and series (626), while John Laamanen had the men's high handicap game (244) and Wayne Randall had the high handicap series (673). Good Times had the high team handicap game (836) and series (2,404).

John Walker had the men's high scratch series (645) with games of 221, 214, and 210. Robert Rigby had a 559 series with games of 205 and 193. Randall had a 520 series, Peter Deyo had a 510 series, and Warren Corriveau Sr. had a 193 game.

Carol Gloski had the women's high scratch series (468) and game (167), while Nancy Dalzell had a 164 game. The spring/summer league season begins on Thursday, May 2.



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