



**MOUNTAIN VIEW SCHOOL DISTRICT EXPLAINS \$99M BOND**  
Frequently asked questions addressed for voters in Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Pittsfield, Pomfret, Reading and Woodstock.  
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**SHERBURNE MEMORIAL LIBRARY CELEBRATES HISTORY OF FIRE DEPT**  
Saturday, Feb. 10, head to the library in Killington for a presentation celebrating the Sherburne Volunteer Fire Dept. and the conservation of a sign created by its Killington Resort founder Preston Leete Smith.  
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**YOUR VALENTINE ...**  
The holiday now synonymous with flowers, chocolate and romantic love, gets its namesake from a Christian martyr.



**SNOWBATHING**  
Winter brings healing for columnist. She embraces the cold, bathing in snow and imagines herself renewed and rejuvenated.  
**Page 30**

## Construction on Killington's municipal waterline is underway

By Polly Mikula

Construction has begun with an access road from East Mountain Road up to the water storage tank and is about half completed. Casella Construction Inc. with subcontractor Maine Drilling & Blasting has been working on the first section of its Contract 1-3A for the town of Killington since early December.

The section, from East Mountain Road to the water storage tanks on Shagback Mountain is the highest section. The road is estimated to be complete by the end of March, with water lines in and access to the tanks by May.

Skiers and riders at Killington Resort can see the clearing for the water storage tanks (and the road accessing the clearing, if you look carefully) from Skye Peak Quad and Needle's Eye.

"There are unique views of Bear Mountain, Skye Peak and Pico from the water tank clearing, too," said Guy Keefe, regional vice president for Maine Drilling & Blasting, who is also a Killington resident and avid skier.

But the site is not accessible to the public at this point as it's an active construction zone with daily blasting.

Casella was selected for this portion of work last May when they came in with the lowest bid at \$18,244,850 for Contract 1-3A.

The scope includes the well house (behind the Mountain Times building), pump station (on Route 4), and a water line to storage tanks on Shagback Mountain.

Additionally, three add-ons were awarded to Casella. The first was for a



By Polly Mikula

*Elissa Spagnola, lead blasting supervisor for Maine Drilling & Blasting, explains how powder inside the yellow line ignites setting off a series of blasts inside drilled holes.*

third well with connection (\$161,000), the second for two more turbine pumps at the station on Route 4 (\$900,000), and the third for underground power lines to the Wellhouse, (\$75,000).

Contingencies in Casella's bid tacked on \$1,080,000. For a total cost of \$19,380,850.

"There was no expectation of Casella working through the winter," said Killington Town Manager Michael Ramsey,

who joined a tour of the site Wednesday, Jan. 31.

However, in order to accomplish the scope of work in the timeframe required, it was necessary to start in the winter, explained Casella Superintendent Charlie Wadleigh. "Every day you lose you never get back. We have to plan to hit the timeline and we know we'll have weather impacts during the project... forward progress is always better than none," he said.

There are many challenges to working  
Waterline → 7

## MVSU revises TMD articles

School Board decreases budget in anticipation of Act 127 reforms

By Polly Mikula

At an emergency meeting Friday, Feb. 2, the Mountain Views Supervisory Union (MVSU) district board voted to amend two Town Meeting Day (TMD) articles related to the proposed district budget and bond for a new school.

The decision came after superintendents met with the chairs of the House Ways & Means committee and Agency of Education, alerting them to likely changes in funding calculations due to revisions on Act 127.

MVSU Superintendent Sherry Sousa told the district board Friday that the transition period previously built into Act 127 (a 5% cap on the equalized tax rate increase) would likely be going away for their district due to a lack of funding in the state education fund—to the tune of \$100 million.

"We were following the law as it was written and had assumed it would hold," said Ben Ford, chair of the finance committee, in an interview with the Mountain Times, Tuesday. "We saw an MVSU ballot → 3

## State 'road map' to aid school construction needs gains traction

By Ethan Weinstein/VTDigger

A long-awaited report on how Vermont should address its billions of dollars in school construction needs arrived in the Legislature on Thursday, Feb. 1.

In short, the report suggests the state should consider incentivizing districts to build in ways that align with the state's goals. That could mean a "newer and fewer" approach, building healthier schools, and considering equity, such as support-

ing districts with more impoverished students or a smaller tax base.

Informed by guidance from the Agency of Education and the Office of the State Treasurer, the report also suggested that Vermont use its bonding capacity to support the construction, at least partially, and recommended directing the state's economists to study separate, perpetual revenue streams.

Vermont ended its school con-

struction aid program in 2007. Since then, officials say, deferred maintenance has grown significantly, with an estimated \$300 million in construction needed each year for the next 21 years if schools were only to replace buildings as they already are.

Jill Briggs Campbell, the education agency's director of operations, and Ashlynn Doyon, the director of policy in the treasurer's office, presented the recommendations and findings

of the report to lawmakers Thursday morning to the House Committee on Education and the House Committee on Ways & Means.

Briggs Campbell called the findings "step one" of what will likely become a multi-year process.

"We're hoping to lay out the road map for all of you," she said.

Vermont's schools are the second-oldest in the nation, according  
School construction aid → 14



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← **MVSU ballot:**  
from page 1

opportunity to do right by our taxpayers and pay down additional debt while still staying under the mandated thresholds, but that opportunity may have now disappeared so we backed it out," he explained.

The changes come as the state

Removing or lowering the 5% cap is now widely expected in an effort to limit ballooning education expenses.

scrambles to address higher than anticipated education spending statewide. Removing or lowering the 5% cap is now widely expected in an effort to limit ballooning education expenses.

"While there are no definitive actions, there is a lot of 'energy' at the statehouse around making these changes and so I felt it was important to bring the budget back to the board for consideration... The vote would have to happen today — that's why we're meeting at 5 p.m. on Friday — so that it can be posted by Feb. 4," Sousa explained.

**How does it affect spending?**

The MVSU board had originally approved a proposed district school budget of \$30,429,153 for FY2025 on Jan. 8. On Feb. 2 the board removed \$672,479 of advanced debt payments from the total for an amended proposed budget of \$29,756,674.

This year's revised FY25 budget is \$3.9 million over last year's \$25,836,048 voter approved budget (a 15.2% increase). The most significant increases in the MVSU budget are the same that face all other districts in the state: namely a 16.4% increase in health insurance (brokered by the state, "totally out of district control," Ford said.) Of the total MVSU budget about 80% of it is "people costs" which are contractual obligations, Ford noted.

The FY25 equalized tax rate for

the district is now \$1.6148 — a 6.39% increase if the 5% cap from Act 127 is removed.

The equalized tax rate is calculated by subtracting local revenues from the budget (\$29,756,674 - \$4,515,121) which equals an education spending about of \$25,241,553, which is divided by 1,520 long-term-weighted equalized pupils, and then divided by the statewide yield (now estimated to be \$10,250 according to Jim Fenn, MVSU director of finance and operations).

The statewide yield is a changeable factor that the state sets and adjusts as necessary. It is calculated to be the per pupil spending amount the state can support with a \$1 tax rate on homestead property and is typically set to ensure there are sufficient revenues raised to fund all expenditures, according to the Vermont Legislature's Joint Fiscal Office.

Until recently the state had set the yield at \$9,452 per student, but if the 5% cap is removed, the projected yield is projected to increase to \$10,250.

**How does it affect taxes?**

In order to derive education tax rates for each town, the FY25 equalized tax rate of \$1.6148 must be divided by the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA) which adjusts taxation on fair market values. In Killington the CLA is 0.5235 so the FY25 estimated homestead property tax rate is \$3.0846, a 24.8% increase. (Under the 5% cap it would've been a 23.5% increase).

The revised school district budget (Article 6) will be on the ballots of the seven towns that make up the district — Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Pittsfield, Pomfret, Reading and Woodstock — on Town Meeting Day, March 5.

**Article 7, new school bond**

In addition to the budget, district voters will be asked to approve Article 7, a bond for a new school. The bond article says it will not exceed \$99 million to finance construction of a new

Union Middle/High School on the site of the existing school in Woodstock. The bond would also cover athletic field reconstruction and the demolition of the existing structure.

On Feb. 2, the board also voted to change the language of the article to streamline understanding.

"We removed a lot of duplicative wording that seemed to confuse rather than clarify the issue," Ford explained.

The revised Article 7 reads:

"The Mountain Views School District proposes to incur bonded indebtedness for the purpose of construction of a new Union Middle/High School and to install athletic fields and related outbuildings and structures, and to demolish, remove and dispose of the existing Woodstock Union Middle/High School in Woodstock, Vermont, in an amount not to exceed \$99,000,000.

"The Vermont school construction aid program has been suspended since 2007. Accordingly, state funds may not be available at the time this project is otherwise eligible to receive state school construction aid. The District is responsible for all costs incurred in connection with any borrowing by the District for the Project in anticipation of state school construction aid. To meet this responsibility while limiting impacts to district taxpayers, the district intends to use other funding sources such as Inflation Reduction Act funding for renewable energy projects and amounts raised through private fundraising.

"Shall the bonds of the Mountain Views School District in an amount not to exceed \$99,000,000 be issued for the purpose of construction of a new Union Middle/High School and to install athletic fields and related outbuildings and structures, and to demolish, remove and dispose of the existing Woodstock Union Middle/High School?"

For more information, visit: [mtnviews.org](http://mtnviews.org).

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# Mountain Views School Board answers FAQs on proposed \$99m bond

Ever since a new middle school and high school was proposed five years ago, there have been discussions over the true needs and alternative options in order to keep the costs down while continuing to provide excellent educational standards. Now with a bond for a new build on the Town Meeting Day ballot (Article 7), the board explains why this is the most prudent option for taxpayers.

## **Why do we need a new school building? Why can't we just renovate and build additions to the current building?**

There are many reasons why renovation of the existing building is not the right answer.

The latest is this: "The state of Vermont will not help with the costs of renovating the building based on how bad its condition is." This is from a new report release last week from the Vermont School Construction Aid Taskforce on reinstating the school construction aid program, which has been suspended since 2007. See Feb. 1, 2024, report: [Tinyurl.com/VTschoolConstructionAid](https://tinyurl.com/VTschoolConstructionAid).

One of the new criteria for participation is: "2(c) maximum or minimum thresholds for Facilities Condition Index for the school building (e.g. the state will not invest funds in any building above an FCI index of 65%..."

In 2022, our facility was given an Facility Condition Index (FCI) of 89.2%, which would make its renovation ineligible for construction aid, and as a likely result, more expensive for local taxpayers.

The FCI rating was the result of the Vermont school facilities inventory and assessment required by Act 72 of 2021 to the House and Senate Committees on Education. On April 13, 2022, the Vermont Secretary of Education presented the results of the statewide assessment. Our school district's middle school/high school facilities were rated the second worst in the state – with the depleted percentage and value of 89.2%, meaning only 10.8% of its serviceable life remained at that time.

The state assessment, though dismal, was not a shock to the district, which completed its own comprehensive facilities assessment of the building in December of 2017. That assessment was conducted by a team of architectural, mechanical, structural, civil, landscape, code and foodservice consultants.

Their report of the assessment concluded: "The nearly 60-year old facility is maintained by an active and thoughtful facilities department and committee. With limited financial resources, they have kept the school up and running, well beyond the typical lifespan for such a facility. Many of the spaces serve their program better than should be expected under these conditions. However, much of the building and building's systems are functionally obsolescent making it challenging to support 21st Century learning and teaching"

Then, following more than a year of work involving school staff and community stakeholders, on March 19,

2019, the school district's architectural consultants presented various options for addressing the many identified deficiencies of the building. Explaining why renovation is not a viable option, they advised: "Pursuing a 'renovation only' approach to the facility requires significant cost without addressing most of the solutions needed. It does not meet modern educational or efficiency standards, does not extend the life of the facility and is not a good dollar value."

In summary, because the building is now almost entirely depleted renovation is not likely to significantly extend the life of the facility. The state recognizes this fact for buildings thus depleted and therefore disqualifies them for potential state aid to renovate. Renovation, therefore, does not provide a good cost-effective solution for taxpayers.

## **What if we do nothing?**

We will spend millions of dollars to fix increasing problems with the failing building, with no upside benefits to our students or communities. There is also growing potential for a major problem to shut down the building for repairs. In addition to the recent \$1.3 million emergency upgrade of the heating system, in the past few years, basketball games have been canceled mid-game due to snow and ice loads causing the steel supports in the gym to groan alarmingly and the cinder block walls to crack. Fixing the roof is estimated to cost \$2.4 million. At a recent graduation ceremony, calcified septic system pipes caused sewage to back up onto the bathroom floors. Repairs to that system are estimated to cost \$1.9 million and it is unknown whether the pipes can be accessed since they run through concrete supporting the weight of the building. These types of unplanned emergency expenses passed down to taxpayers will only increase as the building continues to fail.

These negative experiences have also prompted student attrition which has resulted in less efficient operations, and raised the "Per Pupil Spend" – the key driver of education tax rates under Vermont's school funding system – leading to higher property tax rates. Should district enrollment decline to 800 students, the resulting tax rates will be higher than if we build the new school — with none of the benefits to our students.

**The proposed new building is designed to accommodate 600 students. Student enrollment is declining throughout the state. Why does the MVSU School Board project that enrollment will go up in our school district?**

There are many reasons to believe the district can achieve increased enrollment with the completion of the

new building project. They include:

**NESDEC Study:** A 2021 enrollment study completed by the New England School Development Council (NESDEC) projects a gain by our district of 120 students by 2030. Consistent with the question's reference to declining statewide enrollment, NESDEC also predicts declining enrollment for the New England region, but with specific regard to our district, they predict significant growth. Notably, the study did not assume the school district would build a new middle school/high school building or implement policies to further promote enrollment.

**Halting Attrition:** The poor conditions of the current middle school and high school building are increasingly cited by families residing in the towns of our school district as reasons for choosing to enroll their children at personal cost in other area schools. A husband and wife living in Woodstock recently reported that five of their daughter's 8th-grade classmates opted to pay tuition to attend Hanover High School this year instead of continuing on to 9th grade at Woodstock Union High School. At \$20,000 per student, the loss of these students alone results in a \$100,000 impact to the district budget for this year and \$400,000 over their high school careers, to say nothing about how losing students affects relationships with their peers and the school community.

Having the second worst school conditions in the state of Vermont, a state with some of the most antiquated school buildings in the country, is a liability to our ability to attract and retain students. Replacing this liability with an asset will have a positive impact on our enrollment by reducing annually the number of students who live in our district but whose families choose to have them attend other area schools.

**Expanded Pre-K Programs:** Our school district has made recent investments to add 3- and 4-year-old pre-K classrooms to all of our elementary schools, making ours one of the only school districts in the state to do so. As a result, new families have relocated to our district to take advantage of the opportunity to enroll their children in public school pre-K at no cost. The current waitlist for our district's pre-K classes has 60 students.

Offering public school pre-K at no cost to parents makes our school district more attractive to families compared to others in the region. Since we began offering pre-K in 2016, we have consistently seen families relocate to our district from within the region for the specific purpose of taking advantage of these programs. For working families, public pre-K represents on average a \$15,000/year annual savings per child over the cost of daycare, often enabling both parents to continue working or re-enter the workforce. For a family with two children, this represents a \$60,000 benefit over two years of pre-K, helping to justify the expense of relocating to our district and explaining why these families are doing so.

**Tuition students:** In addition to students from our district's seven member towns, the current enrollment of tuition students from 13 "school choice" towns demonstrates interest in our schools and the feasibility of students from these towns attending our schools. Implementing a structured program to increase enrollment with a new middle school and high school building has strong potential to increase enrollment from these and other school choice towns.

For example, in 2023, the adjacent town of Hartland reported sending 142 high school students to area schools, but only five to our high school. At our current tuition rate of \$20,000, increasing enrollment from Hartland alone by 25 students would result in new annual local revenue of \$500,000.

The MVSU school district is adjacent to more than a dozen school choice towns. With improved facilities, we



Courtesy MVSU

The proposed new middle school and high school on the Woodstock campus is up for a bond vote of \$99 million, March 5.

Bond → 5

Year	Non-income Sensitized Homeowner				Income Sensitized Homeowner			
	For Property Fair Market Value =		\$600,000		For Property Fair Market Value =		\$600,000	
	Household Income =		\$150,000		Household Income =		\$38,000	
	Ed Taxes- No Bond	Ed Taxes With Bond	Impact of Bond (\$)	Impact of Bond (%)	Ed Taxes- No Bond	Ed Taxes With Bond	Impact of Bond (\$)	Impact of Bond (%)
FY24 to FY27	\$9,134	\$9,134	\$0	0.0%	\$5,702	\$5,702	\$0	0.0%
FY28 (Year 1)	\$10,283	\$11,933	\$1,650	16.0%	\$6,328	\$6,860	\$532	8.4%
FY29 (Year 2)	\$10,328	\$11,939	\$1,610	15.6%	\$6,356	\$7,036	\$681	10.7%
FY30 (Year 3)	\$10,328	\$11,977	\$1,649	16.0%	\$6,356	\$7,371	\$1,015	16.0%
FY31 (Year 4)	\$10,328	\$11,967	\$1,638	15.9%	\$6,356	\$7,364	\$1,008	15.9%
FY32 (Year 5)	\$10,328	\$11,955	\$1,626	15.7%	\$6,356	\$7,357	\$1,001	15.7%
FY37 (Year 10)	\$10,328	\$11,697	\$1,369	13.3%	\$6,356	\$7,198	\$842	13.3%
FY42 (Year 15)	\$10,328	\$11,378	\$1,049	10.2%	\$6,356	\$7,001	\$646	10.2%
FY47 (Year 20)	\$10,328	\$11,125	\$796	7.7%	\$6,356	\$6,846	\$490	7.7%
FY52 (Year 25)	\$10,328	\$10,926	\$597	5.8%	\$6,356	\$6,723	\$368	5.8%
FY57 (Year 30)	\$10,328	\$10,770	\$441	4.3%	\$6,356	\$6,627	\$272	4.3%
<b>Assumptions</b>			<b>Enter Value</b>	<b>Instructions for each Assumption</b>				
Bond Amount			\$99,000,000	Enter amount of bond. e.g. \$99M, \$75M, \$110M				
Interest Rate			3.60%	Enter interest rate of bond. e.g. 3.75%, 4.25%, 3.25%				
Repayment Term			40	Enter duration of bond. e.g. 30, 40, or 25 years				
New Fundraising over \$3.5M Already Pledged			\$0	Enter amount over \$3.5M in private funding				
Year 1 Enrollment Change			0	Enter change (+/-) in students for school year 2026				
Annual Enrollment Change			0	Enter change (+/-) in students for each school year thereafter				

Town CLAs for FY25						
Barnard	Bridgewater	Killington	Plymouth	Pomfret	Reading	Woodstock
0.6436	0.7432	0.5235	0.6225	1.0053	0.7643	0.6365

Peak Tax Impact (Year 3) on a	
\$600,000	Home is
\$1,649	per year, or
\$137	per month, or
\$4.52	per day (in 2025 dollars), or
\$2.78	per day if income sensitized

Courtesy Ben Ford, chair of the finance committee

Above is a screenshot of an interactive calculator the school district will soon make available online for voters to use to estimate their specific tax impact of the bond over time.

**Bond:**  
from page 4

can work to increase the number of students who choose to attend our schools from these and other choice towns. We believe our current difficulty competing for these students is in large part due to the conditions of the MS/HS facility and that these students' enrollment elsewhere represents a loss to our district from historical enrollment sources.

Stated differently, we are looking to regain students from school choice towns we have lost to other area schools. They are already here in our region; a new school will incentivize them to come back to the MVSU community.

**Killington's Growth:** Last year, Killington received approval from the state of Vermont under the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) program for the "Killington Forward" initiative. Projected to expand Killington's Grand List value by an estimated \$285 million, it is the largest TIF district in state history. In addition to 1,500 new residential units which are likely to be occupied largely by non-residents (and therefore unlikely to enroll students in our schools), the initiative includes construction of 250-300 workforce housing units intended for workers employed in the town. With 40% of the current U.S. workforce having school-aged children, an estimate of 100 new students enrolling in our schools as a result of the Killington real-estate development is conservative.

While not all of this will happen right away, Killington is growing. This growth will bring families with children. How many children is up for debate, but the true answer will not be zero, and even if it's only 50 after 10 years' time, that represents a quarter of the 200-student district-wide gain we are targeting.

**How much will the project cost and what are the sources of the funding?**

The current estimated project cost is \$99,363,893. The primary funding source will be the \$99 million bond (on the ballot March 5) with a number of other sources used to ease the impact of its repayment on taxpayers, including private fundraising and federal grants under the federal Infrastructure Reduction Act. The district is also in discussions with the Act 250 office about potentially levying impact fees on new construction projects in the district, which increase the need for school facilities and services.

**How did the supervisory union arrive at the projected \$99 million cost for the new building? Couldn't we save money by scaling it back from \$99 million?**

The final cost was arrived at following provision of initial project costing by the project's construction manager, PC Construction, which came in at \$116 million. From there, the school district's owner's representatives, PCI Project

Consulting (no affiliation to PC Construction) led a series of value engineering sessions, which resulted in \$16.5 million in reductions to the project scope, resulting in a final project cost of \$99 million.

Extensive scope, design, and materials reductions have already been made to reduce the cost to the \$99 million. These include: reducing the building size by 6,000 sq ft, to remove all the barn-like architectural features over the classroom spaces, reducing by 25% the amount of glass in the building, substituting a turf field with grass, and reducing by 50% the geothermal portion of the HVAC system. The new building now has the same number of classrooms as the old building and further cuts would require reductions to the curriculum and programs offered by the school.

New standards for school construction projects adopted by the VT State Board of Education would allow our project to be \$656 per square foot (SF). Our proposal comes in at \$627 per square foot — well below that limit and is much cheaper than many other school construction projects in Vermont. Here's how the project stacks up to other current and recent projects (in 2023 dollars):

- Burlington High School (current): \$209M/225,000 SF = \$836 per SF
- Danville Schools K-12 (2021): \$76,015,000/120,000 SF = \$633 per SF
- Allen Brook School K-12 (2022): \$51,333,333/78,500 SF = \$651 per SF
- Central Vermont Career Tech Center (2021) \$101,741,667/140,000 SF = \$727 per SF
- Milton Elementary K-8 (current): \$158,200,000/162,155,000 SF = \$721 per SF

**What entity will provide the bond funding to the MVSU and what will the terms be?**

Borrowed funds will come from the Vermont Bond Bank and/or the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) rural innovation program. The USDA has recently funded other Vermont school projects and offers favorable repayment terms and rates.

In 2023, the Vermont Bond Bank quoted the school district a rate of 3.75% for the project. Since then, municipal bond rates have dropped to 3.51%. The district expects this trend to continue and will work with its advisors and lenders to lock in an optimal bond term and interest rate to minimize impacts to voters.

Voter approval of the bond is necessary before the bond can be sold and the final term and interest rate confirmed.

**How will the bond repayments impact local taxes?**

Importantly, if voters approve the bond at the March 5, 2024, Town Meeting Day, payments for the new school will not begin until the summer of 2027, giving district taxpayers 3.5 years before the debt would impact their taxes.

The chart above shows the impacts of paying off the school bond on education taxes over time for one taxpayer paying on the basis of property value and another who is income-sensitized, both owning a home with a fair market value of \$600,000. (Note: In Killington today, this would be a home with a Grand List value of \$314,100. To calculate fair market value divide the Grand List value by the CLA, 0.5235.)

The chart above is meant show the isolated tax impact of the bond on taxes; since the state education tax and future CLA/reappraisal values are yet-to-be-determined for future years the actual tax amounts cannot be known precisely. Using fair market value of a property and a consistent placeholder for the state education tax, allows us to see the effect the bond alone will have.

There are further tax impact scenarios available at: [mtnviews.org/s/Tax-Impact-Scenarios-011124.pdf](https://mtnviews.org/s/Tax-Impact-Scenarios-011124.pdf). There you can see two scenarios showing how increases to enrollment at levels of 5 and 10 students annually could reduce amounts required to be collected in property taxes and accelerate repayment of the bond. A third scenario shows the impact to district tax rates of spending \$1.5 million per year on emergency fixes while losing 10 students per year. This "do-nothing" scenario would actually raise taxes in the long term far more than building the new building, due to increases to "per pupil spend."

**Will the new building be more energy efficient and environmentally friendly? If so, how will this impact heating, cooling, and energy costs moving forward?**

Yes, significantly. The current middle and high school is incredibly inefficient both structurally and in its heating/ventilation/air conditioning (HVAC) equipment. The building envelope—meaning the walls, insulation, windows, and doors do not effectively retain the heat generated by the building's aging fuel oil boilers, requiring them to burn a high volume of oil just to heat the facility (the current building also does not have any air conditioning). As a result, the building emits 1.8 million pounds of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere every year—that's equivalent to 81 trips in an airplane around the Earth.

The new school is designed to be "net-zero-ready" using Bond, cont. → 7

# Andrew Gieda

## For Killington Selectman



### IT'S TIME FOR A **CHANGE**

- Honesty
- Integrity
- Transparency
- Professionalism
- Locals First
- Lower Taxes

Andrew Gieda is an immigrant who moved to Killington from Belarus in 2004. This year, his family is celebrating 20 years in this community. A local business owner and property owner, he cares about the future of Killington and the direction it's going in. Andrew is running on a platform that is demanding change and doing it with integrity, honesty and professionalism.





By Polly Mikkula  
 Top left: Guy Keefe points to blasting holes before the explosion Wednesday, Jan. 31. Top right: Killington Town Manager Michael Ramsey examines the blasting site after the explosion. Below: (l-r) Charlie Wadleigh, Keefe, Elissa Spagnola and Ramsey.

← **Waterline:**  
 from page 1

on a mountain ridge in the middle of winter — on Wednesday crew members could be seen chiseling frozen mud out of the excavator tracks — and a wide range of challenging weather events often limit, delay or prevent progress, “but we work in all sorts of conditions,” Wadleigh and Keefe both noted.

“We try not to work in sub-zero temperatures too much,” Wadleigh added.

Limited daylight during the winter months also truncates safe working hours.

Elissa Spagnola, lead blasting supervisor for Maine Drilling & Blasting, said her day typically begins at 5 a.m. arriving on site in Killington at about 6:30 a.m. It takes all morning for her and the team to plan for one blast daily. Laying out the drill patterns, loading the holes and making the connection between them, setting up the rubber mats (when needed) and the vast array

of safety measures undertaken are a huge part of the operation.

Science and experience play a large role in determining the number of holes to be drilled, the depths and diameters of the holes, the pattern of the holes and the spacing between them, which determine the thousandths of a second apart each small explosion is from the one before.

Blasting crew members assemble the priming charges with detonators, load the holes with explosives, stem the holes with crushed stone, and connect each hole within the shot. Sometimes, to prevent rocks from flying, the blaster may cover the site with mats made of recycled tires tightly compressed with steel cable. A 12-foot by 12-foot mat weighs about 6,000 pounds, according to Maine Drilling & Blasting’s website.

Before the blast the shot area is secured from all directions. A horn

is sounded three times to mark 5 minutes before detonation and twice to announce the one minute before the blast.

Immediately after, the blasting crew inspects the site to make sure that all the explosives have been properly detonated and a final horn is sounded once to signal that all is clear.

Maine Drilling & Blasting has about eight people on site daily, and Casella has about 10-12.

Coordination between many teams operating on various sections of the road is also a logistical puzzle, often rendering some “land locked” on the far side of road from where new blasting has occurred or where machinery or vehicles block the one-lane road.

Beginning in April crews will begin working down the mountain from their staging area on East Mountain Road to the high service pump station on Route 4 — a much steeper section.

← **Bond, cont.:**  
 from page 5

energy efficient and sustainable high performance building materials and drawing on best practices in modern educational facility design. Incorporating sufficient, renewable energy systems such as solar and geothermal will allow the building to reach net zero. In other words, the amount of energy required from external sources to operate the facility will be equal to or less than the power the new facility generates—helping the environment while also being much less costly to operate in the long term.

Over a 40-year lifespan, the new building is projected to save district taxpayers \$18 million compared to the old building’s costs of burning fossil fuels and maintaining antiquated heating systems. And this comparison is really not “apples to apples” considering the fact that in addition to providing heat when it’s cold outside, the new building’s HVAC systems will also cool the building when it’s hot outside, a critical feature considering climate trends over the next several decades. Also significantly, over a 40-year life span, a net-zero building will prevent 72 million pounds of carbon dioxide from being sent into the atmosphere.

**What oversight will there be during the construction process? What happens if there are cost overruns and the construction costs exceed the bond? What are the contingencies for schedule and price variations?**

PCI Project Consulting has been retained as the owner’s representative to provide project oversight. The project budget and bond amount include \$5 million of contingency to address unplanned costs. If unplanned costs exceed \$5 million, the school district would evaluate its options for addressing the overrun. These options could include project scope reductions to offset the costs, a supplemental bond article seeking voter approval to borrow amounts beyond the amount of the initial bond, or using available alternate funding sources, such as private fundraising amounts (\$3.5 million has been committed as of January 2024), grant funding, or amounts available from the school district’s operations, such as budgetary surpluses or available fund balances.

For example, the new roof put on Killington Elementary this year has already reduced the amount of fuel needed to heat the building. These kinds of budgetary savings can offset unplanned project costs.

**What happens if voters fail to approve the bond issue on Town Meeting Day on March 5? Is there a backup plan, such as a scaled back version of the new school or a renovation plan for the current building?**

No. Anything short of replacing the current school building would be a poor use of taxpayer money. Further scaling back the building design would mean cuts to current programs, making it more difficult to retain and attract school choice students from whom our district currently receives nearly \$2 million annually — amounts which offset tax rates for district homeowners. Without certain elective classes, music programs or sports teams, many of these students would choose to attend other schools. Accordingly, cuts to the new building that interfere with our ability to continue receiving these revenues would be penny-wise but pound foolish.

If the bond doesn’t pass in March, the school district would evaluate the results of the bond vote and determine its next steps. Given the clear and present issues with the current school building, the nearly \$2 million in architectural and construction management services expended to date, and the \$3.5M in private funding pledged contingent on replacement of the building, the School Board would likely try again for approval of the bond with increased focus on voter information.

Many people do not understand Vermont’s complex education funding system, but when they realize losing students costs them much more than investing in new buildings, they find it much easier to support the project.

## What's a mobile home park?

A Vermont House bill could change the definition

By Brooke Burns, Community News Service

*Editor's note: The Community News Service is a program in which University of Vermont students work with professional editors to provide content for local news outlets at no cost.*

Only a third of Vermont's 20,000 occupied mobile homes qualify for the state's mobile home park registry, a list often included in criteria for home improvement loans and grants. A House bill introduced last month seeks to include more of those homes, and homeowners, in the list — and give them more financial opportunities.

The bill, H.618, aims to expand the legal definition of mobile home parks to include communities of mobile homeowners who own their own lots. Currently, state law defines mobile home parks as land with at least two mobile homes or mobile home lots, or adjacent land, owned by the same person, according to the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development (ACCD), which runs the registry.

Only mobile homes that meet the statutory definition can be on the registry.

The bill's lead sponsor, Rep. Angela Arsenault, D-Williston, said in a Jan. 12 House Committee on General and Housing meeting that she began looking into the issue when constituents reached out. Some residents of Williston Woods, a 55-years-and-over community made up of mobile homes, couldn't access infrastructure grants because their properties didn't meet the Vermont definition of mobile home park.

Some of the community's lots are owned individually, with the rest controlled by a co-op. Only the co-op properties were considered part of a mobile home park legally, so the individual owners weren't eligible for the repairs grant.

Arsenault and co-sponsor Rep. Curt Taylor, D-Colchester, chair of Vermont's mobile home task force, decided to visit the

community. They found no visible difference between the two sections and felt they should both be eligible for the funding.

"The folks who were left out of these opportunities are squarely within the group of people I believe these assistance programs want to help, want to cover," said Arsenault in committee. "Williston Woods is a HUD [U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development]-recognized senior living community with income restrictions, and it

The bill aims to expand the legal definition of mobile home parks to include communities of mobile homeowners who own their own lots. Currently, state law defines mobile home parks as land with at least two mobile homes or mobile home lots, or adjacent land owned by the same person.

is just right in that demographic of folks who really should be qualifying for the various assistance programs."

Taylor said in an interview the proposed changes would give people who own just one mobile home more access to loans and grants.

"Most mobile home parks have infrastructure difficulties that they need to address like wastewater and drinking water and things like that," Taylor said. "They could use state help or help from other organizations that sometimes say, 'If you're not in the registry, we don't offer you a loan or grant'"

The registry itself is merely data and not meant to be used to determine a community's eligibility for grants and funding, according to Arthur Hamlin, the ACCD's mobile home parks housing program coordinator.

"It's informational. It's not a license or a permit of any kind," said Hamlin. "But we're required by the state park law to have all the

Mobile home → 14



Submitted

A Vermont House bill aims to expand the definition of mobile homes to qualify for aid.

## Scott administration proposes PCB testing slowdown as schools struggle to keep up

By Ethan Weinstein/VTDigger

More than two years since the Legislature created the PCB testing program, the state has sampled almost a third of Vermont schools built before 1980, when building materials were most likely to contain the toxins. In 35 of those 96 schools, testing has discovered PCBs at a level that mandates action. Testing is scheduled to wrap up in 2027.

But now, the Agency of Natural Resource's Dept. of Environmental Conservation is recommending that the state slow down the pace of PCB testing. In testimony last month, Julie Moore, the agency's secretary, proposed sampling an additional 65 schools through June 2025, a rate that would use up the remaining money allocated to testing and initial mitigation and remediation if schools continue to discover the toxins at the expected rate.

For schools where high levels of PCBs have been detected, the testing program has proven a source of anxiety. A handful of schools have had to navigate facility closures and costs into the hundreds of thousands of dollars to support short-term fixes, drawing on \$4.5 million in state funds for testing and \$32 million set aside by the Legislature for remediation — half of which is already obligated to support the demolition of Burlington High School.

Concerned about the unintended consequences and unexpected costs of the current program, House lawmakers last year passed H.486, which would pause PCB testing altogether. But facing opposition from both Senate leaders and the Scott administration — who have stressed the urgency of discovering and remediating cancer-causing toxins — the bill appears unlikely to pass.

With PCB testing ongoing, and 228 schools to go, the House education committee called upon principals and superintendents whose schools contain PCBs to share their experiences.

Some detailed contradictory information they'd heard about whether or not the state would fully pay for remediation. All bemoaned the new stress passed on to teachers and students alike.

A first round of PCB testing at North County Union High School in Newport discovered elevated levels of the carcinogens. The school received 200 carbon filters for about \$100,000 to help ease the problem, Chris Young, North County's principal, told lawmakers last week.

But further testing showed higher, rather than lower, levels of PCBs.

"It didn't make any sense that some levels would go up," Young said. Additional test PCBs → 14

## Vt gets \$1 million in settlement with Publicis over role in opioid epidemic

Attorney General Charity Clark today announced Feb. 1 that Vermont will receive \$1,079,000 as its share of a \$350 million national settlement with Publicis Health to resolve investigations into the global marketing and communications firm's role

and as your Attorney General, I remain committed to holding the corporations who contributed to this crisis accountable," said Attorney General Clark.

The court filing describes how Publicis' work contributed to the crisis by helping

Publicis ... even developed sales tactics that relied on farming data from recordings of personal health-related in-office conversations between patients and providers.

Purdue Pharma and other opioid manufacturers market and sell opioids. It describes how Publicis acted as Purdue's agency of record for all its branded opioid drugs, including OxyContin, even developing sales tactics that relied on farming data from recordings of personal health-re-

lated in-office conversations between patients and providers. The company was also instrumental in Purdue's decision to market OxyContin to providers on patients' electronic health records.

Vermont is a member of the executive committee that led the multi-state investigation into Publicis. Attorney General Clark is joined in the executive committee by the attorneys general of California, Colorado, Connecticut, Idaho, Massachusetts, New York, North Carolina, Oregon, and Tennessee.

"Vermont families and communities have been devastated by the opioid crisis,



# Legislative Update: First flood recover bill

As we say goodbye to our first month of our Legislative Session 2024, bills are beginning to pass and Vermont's current challenges are being further articulated. Many are flood related.

Our first Flood 2023 Recovery bill to pass both chambers is S.160, a tax abatement (relief for taxpayers) bill. The bill covers an abatement in Vermont's education prop-



By Sen. Alison Clarkson

erty Tax made to any taxpayer who incurred more than 50% loss of value on a property, or whose property was unusable for more than 60 days due to damage or loss of access to utilities, or whose property had their primary structure condemned as a result of the flood.

If a town has abated your property tax for one of these reasons, then this bill will allow the state to reimburse the town for that amount.

The reimbursement will come from the Education Fund and is estimated to cost

\$1.1 million. Many flood impacted towns are facing significant revenue losses due to damaged homes and businesses — and this is an important step in helping reduce those losses.

Any additional proposals which would affect the Education Fund will face tough headwinds this session as the Legislature is looking at a double digit increase in the education property tax due to: rising costs of health care, a backlog of school construction and renovation, workforce shortages, an increase in crucial supports for students' mental health and the loss of Covid federal money.

In addition to our finance/ways & means committees, a number of other committees are addressing flood recovery — each committee's work reflecting their jurisdiction. In Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs we have a large housing bill in the works that will address housing resiliency, loss of housing in flood plains, long term measures to incentivize building more housing outside flood hazard areas and a required disclosure that a building has to carry flood insurance for house buyers and renters.

In the Senate Government Operations Committee, we are looking at flood recovery through a governmental lens: how to improve the government's response to disasters. We have heard from a wide range of stakeholders including emergency management and services, town managers and clerks, select board members, our flood recovery officer and our agencies of natural resources, transportation and public safety.

This flood recovery bill is nearing completion and at the moment, includes:

1. The creation of the community resilience and disaster mitigation fund designed to award grants for municipal disaster mitigation projects;
2. Municipal public works personnel in the definition of emergency management personnel for the purposes of emergency response;
3. Allows municipal storm water utilities to modify their rates for run-off capacities to allow upgrades to their systems;
4. Creates the urban search and rescue team within the Department of Public Safety, enabling state recognition of these teams;
5. Requires keeping all Vermont-211 personal information, acquired from disasters, confidential except for coordinating disaster relief;
6. Creates a reverse E-911 policy and asks that the enhanced E-911 board

If a town has abated your property tax for one of these reasons, then this bill will allow the state to reimburse the town for that amount.

provide a more effective VT-Alerts in large emergencies and to have VoIP service providers to notify their customers of these as well;

7. Requires Vermont Emergency Management (VEM) to review best management practices — the adequacies of early warning and evacuation orders, routes and emergency shelters and then publish their best practices for rebuilding after a disaster;
8. Requires VEM to publish best management practices for the placement and funding of local emergency shelters;
9. Requires VEM to ensure that interpretation services are being provided for our deaf, hard of hearing and deaf/blind community and to individuals with limited English proficiency for all state emergency communications;
10. Creates a chief climate resiliency officer in the department of public safety; and
11. Asks Vermont State University to explore creating a post-secondary disaster management program.

Sen. Clarkson can be reached by email: [aclarkson@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:aclarkson@leg.state.vt.us) or by phone at the Statehouse (Tues-Fri) 802-828-2228 or at home (Sat-Mon) 802-457-4627. To get more information on the bills which have been proposed and passed, visit the legislative website: [legislature.vermont.gov](http://legislature.vermont.gov).

# Stop the presses!

It's no secret that school property taxes are heading higher. In the Dec. 1 letter from the Tax Commissioner, they were estimated to go up by 18.5%, based on a 12% increase in school district spending. That number is now over 20% statewide as proposed spending is now up 14.8% on average.

Some of the blame for increases in budgets is being placed on Act 127, which the Legislature passed two years ago to change the pupil weighting formula. The legislation was intended to give more financial help to school districts that had non-English learners, lower income families and to more rural districts. As part of the legislation, a 5% cap in equalized homestead tax rates was included for the first five years of its implementation to help with any adverse impacts the change might have on district taxpayers.

Lawmakers now believe the cap is having unintended consequences as many districts are spending more with the residential rate being capped. At the end of the day, the state tax rates are set by dividing up the total school spending based on the new weighted per pupil spending in each district. If everyone spends more, then all taxpayers will pay more. And because we have a statewide equalized education formula for education property tax rates (Act 60 was instituted when the court ruled on the *Brigham* decision), the state rate is further adjusted by a town's common level of appraisal (CLA). The CLA is designed to bring a property's assessed value up to the market value. Any CLA lower than 100% increases the state rate that properties in a town pay.

In our district, all four towns are under that 100% level, due to the runup in property values in recent years. Killington is at 52.35%, Chittenden is at 76.44%, Pittsfield at 88.78% and Mendon at 89.77%. If a school district has an equalized homestead tax rate of \$1.50, you can divide that by your town's CLA rate to get your effective rate on your assessed home value. In Killington, for example, an equalized rate of \$1.62 will translate into a tax rate of \$3.09 per hundred on the town's assessed value of your property.

**5% to be eliminated?**  
Last week, the House Ways & Means Committee, which implements education funding taxes, took a straw poll among its members, and all agreed to eliminate the 5% cap this year. Assuming that decision is approved by the full Legislature, school budgets now being proposed to voters will have inaccurate projected tax impacts to homeowners, which will likely be even higher. Hearing the news last week, the

Mountain Views School District (of which Killington is a part and which most of Pittsfield attends) quickly sent out an email to their seven towns asking them to hold off on printing and sending out the proposed budget pending an emergency school board meeting on Feb. 2. At that meeting we learned they cut \$750,000 from their previous budget proposal.

Unless other schools issued a "stop the presses" call last week, their initial proposed budgets will now be on the ballot. It is every voters' responsibility to learn more about their district's proposed budget and what the impact might be on their tax rates.

## Mountain Views District Public Information Hearing

- Thursday, Feb. 29, 6:30 p.m.
- Woodstock Union Middle and High School (and Zoom link available at [mtnviews.org](http://mtnviews.org))

## Barstow Public Information Meeting

- Tuesday, Feb. 27, 6:30 p.m.
- Barstow School, Chittenden (and Zoom link available at [nesu.org](http://nesu.org))

## Why the cost increase?

The change in pupil weighting is only one factor driving education spending. For the past two years the Legislature used surpluses in the education fund to pay for the new universal school meals program, which now must be paid for in tax rates. Declining enrollments statewide has led to smaller class sizes, which increases the per pupil costs, and there has been a reluctance to consolidate schools in many districts. Complicating things this year are the 16% increase in health insurance costs and in some cases, continuation of new temporary positions that were funded by federal grants during the pandemic. School construction costs are also impacting total spending coming out of the state education fund.

The Ways & Means Committee is also looking at a variety of new taxes to help cover some of the estimated \$240 million increased spending, including a surcharge on higher incomes, an increase in the sales tax, a new excise tax on beverages, expanding the sales tax to more products, increasing the taxes on second homes and other non-residential property.

Scott has warned against shifting to new taxes, which he equates to just taking it out of another pocket.

## A few other issues of interest:

- House leaders appear to be poised to expand the taxpayer funded Medicaid program despite budget concerns raised by the governor. The legislation being reviewed in the House Health Care Committee would expand eligibility to individuals up to age 26 and pregnant women up to 312% of the federal poverty level (approximately \$94,000 for family of four).
- The co-chairs of a special impeachment → 14

## GUEST EDITORIAL

## Stop throwing Act 127 under the bus

By Marc B. Schaubert

*Editor's note: Marc B. Schaubert, of Dover, is the executive director for the Coalition for Vermont Student Equity.*

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

Sadly, with immense and complex economic upward pressures on Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 school budgets, many

are mistakenly and unfairly blaming the equitable funding law for the sharp rise in property tax rates. There are many economic and political pressures on FY 2025 school budgets that seem to be creating a perfect economic storm.

Act 127 is not one of those pressures.

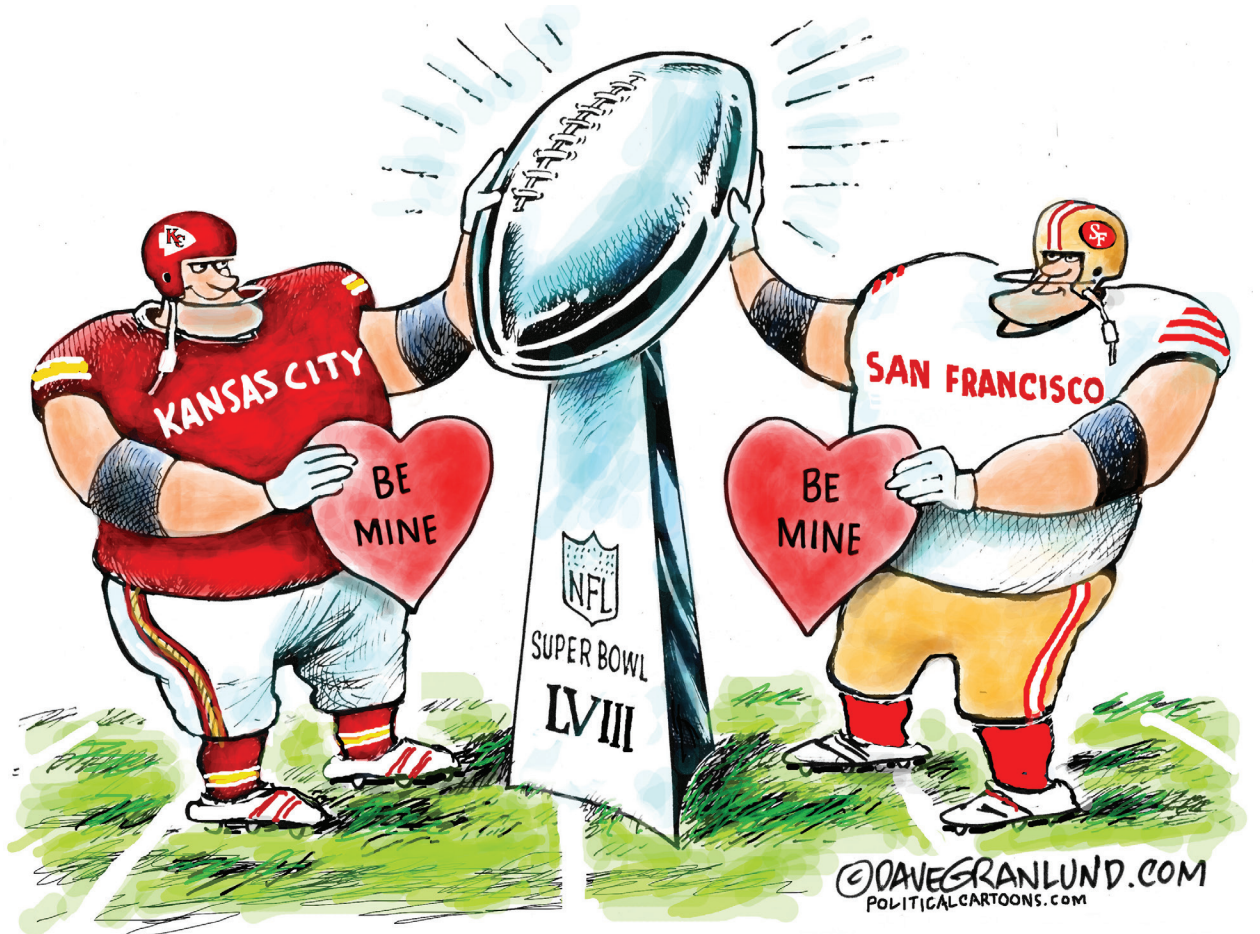
Let's consider the upward pressures on FY 2025 school budgets. Many existed long before Act 127. Inflation, double digit increases for health insurance for the past several years, and the increase in property values as reflected by the Common Level of Appraisal (CLA,) just to name a few. Other pressures have been ratcheted up for a variety of complex reasons.

Let's take special education. The recent implementation of Act 173 of 2018 changed how the state pays for special education services from a model of partially reimbursing costs incurred to a flat "Census Block Grant" dollar amount. Many districts are seeing a substantial reduction in funding from the state for these services, putting a larger and larger portion of these costs on local taxpayers.

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

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

Blaming Act 127 → 31



Plain language by Gatis Sluka, Latvijas Avize, Latvia

## LETTERS

### Renovation of middle/high school is a more prudent option

Dear Editor,

The Mountain Views Supervisory Union has recently been holding meetings with local communities asking for voter support to build a new middle and high school building on the site of the current complex in Woodstock. Having attended the recent meeting in Killington, I would first like to compliment the MVSU for their nerve in proposing this expense at this time. It takes a lot of chutzpah to come to the voters, some of whom (as in Killington) saw the state's education tax increase 18.5% this past year, are looking at another potential 17%-18% increase this year and ask them to support an additional increase of 16% to pay for a new middle and high school. Nerve like that deserves our congratulations. Their request for support, however, should be falling on deaf ears.

MVSU argues that paying \$99 million for a new school

is a better option than paying approximately \$51 million for renovation of the current structure. Their argument is that the current building is more than 60 years old, is in very poor condition, and that renovation would potentially be a waste of money as the building might need to be replaced 20 years from now anyway.

Unfortunately, while we

I have rarely voted against education funding and find it disheartening to find myself in opposition to this project.

can accept that the current facility needs a lot of work (probably) due to underfunded maintenance over a number of years, they offer no evidence to support this alleged risk of replacement 20 years out. They also argue that renovation would be disruptive to students and teachers, as if the process could not be effectively managed to minimize

No to \$99m → 13

### Gieda for Select Board

Dear Editor,

I am Andrew Gieda and I am running for Select Board. Most people know me as a builder, I've built homes and condos. I know how to repair almost anything. I've been fixing things for a long time. That is why I am asking you to vote for me. We have lots of problems and issues that are hurting this town. I believe I should be your representative to fix these problems.

The reason why I am running is because I care about this community. Twenty years ago I came here and started a business. I saw the potential and knew this is where I wanted to raise my family. I am proud to live here but these days I am questioning the direction the board is taking our town. The lack of transparency and unwillingness to face the problems without egos involved or personal feelings are ruining this community and I am demanding change.

Some of our town offi-

Some of our town officials don't want you to see, hear, or talk about the issues facing our town.

cialists don't want you to see, hear, or talk about the issues facing our town.

They want to run it their way on their own terms. Between the dismantling of the Killington Search & Rescue and punishing/firing those who spoke out against the former fire chief who was abusive, this current board clearly doesn't care about those who have dedicated themselves to volunteering for this town for years. Many of those volunteers would like to return to help the fire department. But the current board would rather use your tax dollars to hire more people to fill those vacant positions than bring back some of those who would do it for free and have decades of experience.

To me, that makes no sense.

Gieda → 12

## CAPITOL QUOTES

Senate Democrats are introducing an amendment to prevent the Biden administration from bypassing Congress when approving weapons sales to Israel. The amendment would strike language in the \$118 billion national security supplemental, that allowed the administration to send future arms sales to Israel without notifying Congress.

“The U.S. must not write a blank check for [Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu’s] war in Gaza and his right-wing government, which has demonstrated a gross disregard for Palestinian civilians ... If the Biden administration won’t be transparent with Congress and the American people, Congress should act and close these loopholes for arm sales for Israel,”

Sen. **Elizabeth Warren** (D-Mass.) told The Hill in a statement.

“Congress and the American people deserve full transparency about military assistance to all nations ... No president of any party should bypass Congress on issues of war, peace, and diplomacy,”

Democratic Sen. **Tim Kaine** of Virginia said in a statement to The Associated Press.

“Do I have concerns? Yes, I do in regard to that ... Not because it’s Israel or anyone else, because of any funding in that regards, it should come to us,”

said House Foreign Affairs ranking member **Rep. Gregory Meeks** (D-N.Y.), to Politico.

“Congressional review is a critical step for examining any large arms sale. The Administration’s decision to repeatedly short-circuit what is already a quick time frame for congressional review undermines transparency and weakens accountability. The public deserves answers,”

Sen. **Chris Van Hollen** (D-Md.) told the media according to the Chicago Morning Star.

## COMMENTARY

# It’s time to move on from Bottle Bill expansion discussions

By John W. Casella

*Editor’s note: John W. Casella is the chairman and CEO of Casella Waste Systems, Inc.*

The Vermont State Senate recently supported Governor Scott’s 2023 veto of H.158, an act relating to expanding the beverage container redemption system. The governor’s veto letter to the legislators expressed concerns on how H. 158 would result in higher costs to Vermonters and with the passage of the Universal Recycling Law in 2012, it simply made no sense to “toss aside”

the progress that has been made towards recycling by diverting the most valuable materials away from the single stream recycling system. We appreciate the governor and the 13 senators who took the time to understand and acknowledge the unnecessary economic consequences and nonexistent environmental benefits of expanding the Bottle Bill.

While we continue to hold out hope that everyone involved in this issue can turn our collective abilities towards improving existing recycling infrastructure, the continued narrative in the media coverage seems to indicate that Bottle Bill proponents will seek to bring it back to legislators again soon. It’s time to move on.

The most successful, most environ-

The most successful, most environmentally and economically sustainable recycling program is single stream.

mentally and economically sustainable recycling program is single stream. It aligns with Vermont’s Universal Recycling Law, the sorting technology is advancing regularly, and it is the most cost-effective way to meet Vermont’s recycling goals all while costing Vermonters substantially less than the Bottle Bill.

A 2018 study by DSM Environmental estimated the annual cost to operate an expanded Bottle Bill system at roughly \$12

million. This represents a 50% increase over the current system and is nearly 10 times the per-ton cost of recycling this same material through existing single stream infrastructure.

The two systems are parallel, with the material being sold into the same markets, and while the single stream recycling system captures the value from all recyclables and shares a portion back to Vermonters through a reduction in cost, the Bottle Bill extracts the roughly 5% of material with the highest value, without the benefit of the revenue sharing which helps control customer recycling costs.

And it’s not just about Casella. All recycling facilities rely on the material that is targeted by the Bottle Bill to keep recycling

Bottle Bill → 12

## ← Blaming Act 127: ..... from page 10

In many cases, the costs for those positions are now shifting from federal funds to our local taxpayer supported budgets.

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

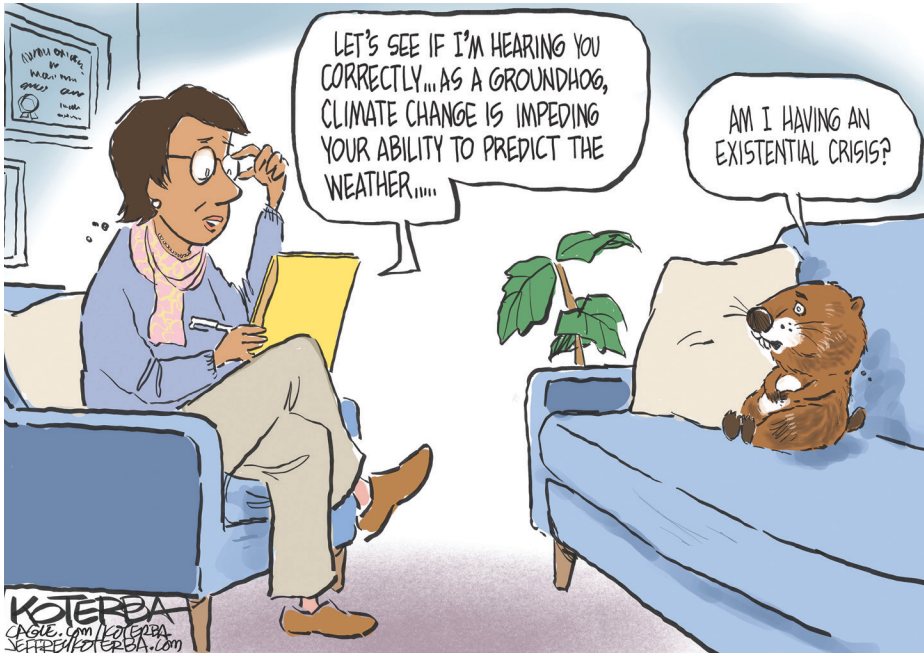
Mistakenly blaming Act 127 for the impacts of all of these upward pressures on school budgets is inaccurate and does a disservice to students and taxpayers.

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

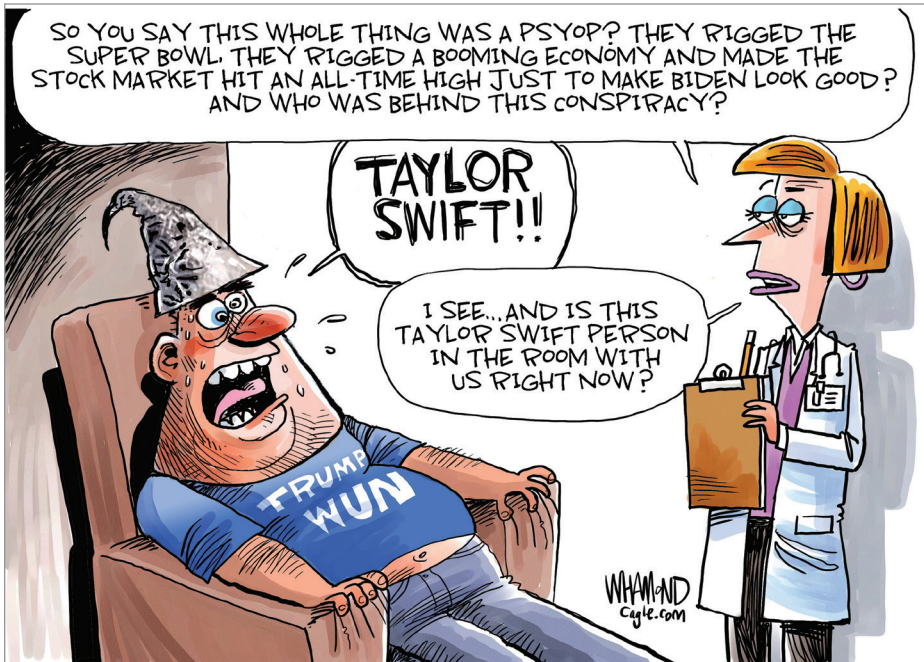
However, that provision is proving to be problematic as it also creates a gap in revenue. How will that gap be filled and where will the additional funds come from? In Vermont’s statewide education funding system, one school’s shortfall will be made up with higher taxes being borne by other school districts’ taxpayers. Moreover, many of the districts that might bear that added tax burden from higher spending elsewhere are likely among those schools that Act 127 was originally intended to help.

The transition provision is problematic and the Legislature is looking at potential solutions to address it. But make no mistake, doing so will not solve our education spending challenges. Until we address major societal issues like health care costs and mental health care, we will have an ever more expensive education system on our hands. Let’s fix this one provision in Act 127 but let’s not destroy a good law in the process and take our eyes off the real drivers of education spending.

CARTOONS



Groundhog and Climate Change by Jeff Koterba



Taylor Vision by Dave Whamond, Canada, PoliticalCartoons

### State to award \$29m to entrepreneurs, startups

Governor Phil Scott, the Dept. of Economic Development (DED) and the Vermont Economic Development Authority (VEDA) announced the first round of venture capital program investments thanks to Vermont's State Small Business Credit Initiative (SSBCI), Tuesday, Feb. 6. The venture capital program is allocating nearly \$29 million to venture capital funds to help Vermont entrepreneurs and business startups.

"Vermont has a strong start up culture and the venture capital program is only going to help it grow," said Gov. Scott. "The venture capital program will help maximize the potential of Vermont's creative and energetic entrepreneurs, and will fuel our economic growth, benefiting the entire state."

There is still \$12.5 million in funds remaining to be allocated via the venture capital program and VEDA may select more than one fund manager to manage it.

Potential applicants can reach out to VEDA via email about the venture capital program request for proposal (RFP) form until Feb. 16, 2024. The deadline to submit a proposal is March 1.

### Gieda: from page 10

Perhaps it's the egos of some current Select Board members who are preventing any progress in this town and keeping this current fire department from thriving?

My vision for the fire department, if I am elected, is to apologize formally (on behalf of the town) to the people who served for decades as volunteers to this community.

I will restore justice, eliminate the unfair blacklist that these volunteers were put on, and ask them to come back and join this town in the effort to rebuild this community.

**Andrew Gieda,**  
Killington

### Bottle Bill: from page 11

economically sustainable for Vermonters. The Chittenden County Solid Waste District (CSWD), the state's largest solid waste district and owner of a material recovery facility (MRF) that processes approximately 50,000 tons of recyclables each year, estimated that the expansion would result in a revenue loss of up to \$350,000 annually. Casella's MRF in Rutland, which is the state's largest privately-owned recycling facility, estimates a loss of revenue of roughly \$326,000. If this material is removed from single stream recycling it cannot be sold to end markets, that value cannot be shared with customers, and the cost of recycling will increase for all Vermonters to offset the losses.

It's easy for proponents to paint this as a simple issue, with only recyclers in opposition due to lost revenue, but this is about the economic wellbeing of the entire state. In

addition to the cost considerations outlined by recyclers, the bill also threatens the economic viability of numerous other entities which voiced their opposition, including the beverage industry, distributors, businesses along the Vermont/New Hampshire border, and even some redemption centers.

While we do not need an expansion of the Bottle Bill, we do need to continue to focus our efforts on how we can increase the amount of recycled content in the products we buy, educate each other on what is recyclable, and deepen our understanding of how we can all recycle better, together, while continuing to invest in the critical infrastructure needed to put this material to a higher and better use. By focusing our collective efforts in those areas, Vermonters can continue to improve recycling and the two systems can continue to coexist without increasing costs to Vermonters.



ESTABLISHED 1975

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Courtesy VTF&W

Jeremy Bicking took this 18.6 pound longnose gar bowfishing last May on Lake Champlain. It beat the 1966 record by a pound.



Courtesy VTF&W

The Northeast Kingdom region of Vermont hosts several lakes that support abundant, naturally reproducing lake trout with the occasional trophy, such as this 25.6 pound fish taken in Echo Lake last year by Roger Stoddard of Morgan.



Courtesy VTF&W

Anglers continue to reap the benefits of successful long-term sea lamprey control and an improved walleye stocking program on Lake Champlain. This walleye, taken by Grand Isle angler Nausori Osasa, was just under 12-pounds.

## New fish record set in 2023

Vermont Fish & Wildlife announced Monday, Feb. 5, that a Longnose Gar taken by a bowfishing angler in 2023 has been certified as a new state record.

In May of 2023, Pennsylvania angler Jeremy Bicking was out bowfishing in the evening on Lake Champlain and took a gar that weighed 18.6 pounds. This big fish measured 54 ¼ inches in length, a ¼ inch longer but 3 ounces lighter than the current record Longnose Gar taken by rod and reel in 2007. State records are kept separately for four species of fish that can be taken both by hook-and-line and bowfishing.

Vermont Fish and Wildlife Dept. fisheries biologist Shawn Good, who administers the state's record fish program, said in recent years, anglers have expanded their species preferences to include many of the state's under-appreciated but equally challenging native sport fish species.

"While fishing remains excellent for more traditional sport fish species such as bass, trout, walleye, and pike, there are so many other fish out there that can provide amazing action with real trophy potential. Fish like bowfin, gar, freshwater drum, suckers, and

even fallfish — Vermont's largest native minnow species — the opportunities are endless," said Good.

Although not new state records, two other notable fish were entered in the state record fish Program in 2023 — an 11.86 pound Walleye from Lake Champlain and a 25.6 pound Lake Trout from Echo Lake in Charleston.

"While Lake Champlain gets most of the attention for lake trout fishing opportunities and action in Vermont, many of the inland lakes in Vermont's Northeast Kingdom are real sleepers for big fish," said Good.

"In fact, if you're talking exclusively about trophy-sized lake trout, the Northeast Kingdom is where you want to be," said department fisheries biologist Jud Kratzer. "All 69 lake trout exceeding 20 pounds that have been entered in the record fish program over the years have come from Kingdom waters. And 530-acre Echo Lake has produced four of them, with the largest being just shy of 30 pounds. That's remarkable for a lake of that size."

While several Kingdom lakes do offer the best possibility of a Vermont lake trout over 20 pounds, Good says

the average size tends to be smaller overall than what anglers will find in Lake Champlain.

On Lake Champlain, Good says that the 11.86-pound Walleye entry is a testament to the ongoing successes of fisheries management efforts on the lake.

Good says the department's cutting edge walleye hatchery on Grand Isle, and the continued success of long-term sea lamprey control by the Lake Champlain Fish and Wildlife Management Cooperative (comprised of Vermont Fish & Wildlife, New York State Department of Environmental Conservation, and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service) has only help bolster Walleye and other sport fish species in the lake.

"It's been amazing to see what anglers are catching lately on Champlain for big Walleye. The population has really been booming in the last few years, with lots of 10-pound plus fish being caught. As one of the fisheries biologists on the lake, it's really heartening to see our hard work and long-term management efforts paying off for anglers," Good said.

For more information, visit: [vtfishandwildlife.com/fish](http://vtfishandwildlife.com/fish).

### ← No to \$99m: from page 10

disruption. With the current facility designed to serve 600 or more students, the fact that only 450 students are there at present makes potential disruption far easier to manage.

At the risk of sounding like the old guy telling you how rough he had it when he was a kid ("We walked to school in the snow, in 20 below zero weather, up hill, both ways") my personal experience would suggest that these are specious arguments.

As a baby boomer in high school in Queens, New York City, in the 1960s, I attended

that would accrue prior to bonds being issued several years out. Furthermore, the presentation minimized or totally ignored the impact that lower value properties and those with lower incomes might have as a result of a required townwide reappraisal next year. These were obvious omissions and only serve to raise more questions about the accuracy of MVSU projections.

Finally, MVSU estimates of future tax impacts and school needs are based on highly questionable student enrollment numbers. As

[With] approximately \$51 million for renovation of the current structure...

There is no known reason why the Woodstock Middle and High School buildings cannot last way more than another 20 years.

a high school built before the Great Depression. Like many city schools in that era, it was overcrowded yet the administration was able to manage class size through creative scheduling. New schools were built in growing Queens neighborhoods, but existing buildings remained in use. My high school, along with most others built in the 1920s, are still in use today although they are close to 100 years old. My mother, who taught in another high school in Queens, endured a three-year renovation project in her school, and that school continues to operate today. I would venture a guess that most if not all schools of that era have gone through multiple renovations over the past 50 plus years, disruptive as they might have been in the short term, with those facilities all still currently in use. There is no known reason why the Woodstock Middle and High School buildings cannot last way more than another 20 years.

During the Killington meeting, it became clear that the cost estimate of \$99 million is low by at least several million dollars as the cost estimate does not include short term funding costs

a former member of the Woodstock School Board recently indicated in a letter to the Mountain Times, enrollment has dropped from over 700 in FY2001 to 452 today and, based on U.S. Department of Education estimates of demographic trends, Vermont school enrollment is projected to drop over 11% between 2021 and 2030. While MVSU might do better than the current trend would suggest, it is highly unlikely that enrollment would reach their projected (hoped for? dreamt up?) levels. With state education funding tied in large part to district enrollment, the 16% tax impact could skyrocket further.

As I said, my mother was a teacher. I have other family members and friends who are currently teachers or who have retired from the profession. I have rarely voted against education funding and find it disheartening to find myself in opposition to this project. However, I cannot support what I view as unnecessary spending, especially when a more reasonable option is available. I will be voting against the MVSU proposal on Town Meeting Day and I urge others to do the same.

*Art Malatzky, Killington*

## ← PCBs: from page 7

results, he opined, “still don’t really make sense.”

The situation has left Young weighing questions “as to what might cause more harm to students” either spending time in classrooms “with PCBs that are present and have been present since the beginning of time here,” or “to go remote, which we know there is harm that is caused to students if we have to close the building or portions of the building.”

In Bellows Falls, where testing uncovered PCBs this summer, district officials scrambled to plan for the school year days before students arrived.

“We don’t have a Macy’s in our area,” Andrew Haas, superintendent of the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union, said in testimony last month, a reference to Burlington school district’s use of a closed department store as a temporary replacement for its PCB-ridden high school.

One solution Bellows Falls landed on was using tents to create new learning spaces. Staff joked that the school “looked like a wedding venue,” Haas recalled.

Kelly O’Ryan, principle of Bellows Falls Union, called the situation a “constant source of stress” and “almost a full-time job.”

Like North Country, Bellows Falls used carbon filters to mitigate risk. But the noisy machines drowned out the school’s public address system, O’Ryan said. And even with efforts to reduce PCB levels, a few students pulled out of school due to safety concerns.

“We are being tasked with an impossible mandate,” she said.

The school officials present voiced support for pausing the PCB testing program. But for the schools already tested, a pause would make little difference.

“You can’t unring that bell,” Haas said.

Mark Tucker, Caledonia Central Supervisory Union superintendent, described the urgency imposed on the schools affected.

“It now feels like a race to get what we need,” he said.

### ‘The mother of all unfunded mandates’

Moore said the state has revised its testing schedule, pushing the highest-risk schools to the front and bumping private schools that don’t serve as the local public option to the end of the list.

Lawmakers at the hearing in January praised the additional information provided by Moore but emphasized their qualms with the existing system.

“Am I correct in saying this is really to handle the immediate mitigation of PCBs and does not speak to the long-term costs of required abatement?” Rep. Peter Conlon, D-Cornwall, the committee’s chair, asked Moore, who confirmed the near-term nature of the program.

Continuing on the same path, Conlon suggested, might lead to increased burdens on the education fund at a time when the governor has already deemed education tax increases unacceptable.

“This could be the mother of all unfunded mandates,” Conlon said, “and the cost of this could significantly increase property taxes for Vermonters.”

Other lawmakers underscored the unintended consequences of PCB testing they’d heard about from educators the week prior: closing classrooms, turning into HVAC experts and wrestling with unknown costs have placed new burdens on an already beleaguered public education system.

“The impact that we know is happening in schools is significantly different than what the intent is,” said Rep. Erin Brady, D-Williston, who works as a teacher.

“You can’t unring that bell,” Haas said.

## ← School construction aid: from page 1

to the agency, and face declining enrollment. Yet increasingly, schools have become hubs for more than just learning, functioning as community social service centers, leaders say.

“We need these robust, resilient school buildings to be able to serve

The report suggests the state should consider incentivizing districts to build in ways that align with the state’s goals. That could mean a “newer and fewer” approach.

those needs. Many, many of our school buildings serve as emergency shelters,” Briggs Campbell said, illustrating the need for construction. She also pointed to “mounting evidence” indicating that healthier school buildings lead to better student outcomes.

Legislation last year created the school construction aid task force with the goal of considering funding options for a statewide school construction program, how such a program would be governed, and how to prioritize funding, among other charges.

Informing the task force’s work was Vermont’s school facilities assessment, which estimated Vermont’s schools will need more than \$6.3 billion just to fund in-kind replacements in the next 21 years, a number widely considered a significant underestimate.

The task force proposed creating an independent governing board that would oversee school construction project proposals, deciding what percentage of each project the state should subsidi-

dize, a model used in Massachusetts.

And though the task force’s report did not solidify criteria the governing board should consider, it did make suggestions.

Among the prioritization criteria proposed, the report suggested the state

give consideration to a district’s poverty level and taxing capacity, and that the state should

consider providing some money to districts that have engaged in construction projects in the years immediately preceding the yet-to-be-created school construction aid program.

Prioritization could also provide “bonuses” for projects that “align with Vermont’s education priorities,” such as a “newer and fewer” approach to school construction.

“We also know that many, many bonds fail,” Briggs Campbell said. “So we know that the local capacity ... is not there.”

The task force also recommended school districts be required to complete master plans and have some requirements in place to help guarantee that they don’t put off maintenance of new buildings.

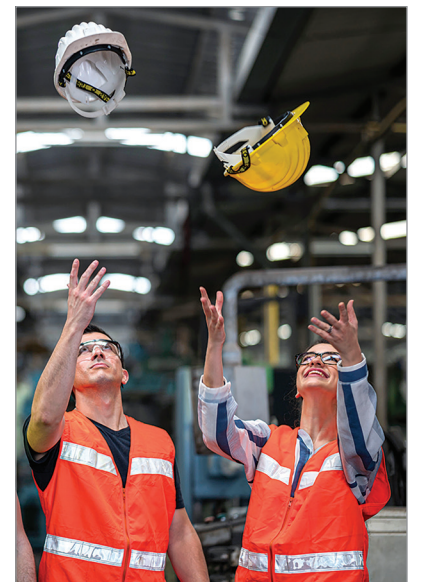
“If we’re going to do a state construction aid program, we want to ensure that those dollars are going to be invested wisely,” Briggs Campbell said.

Later Thursday afternoon, the House Education Committee met to digest

the morning’s report and drum up its immediate action items. Its goal: continue the momentum toward creating a school construction aid program.

The list includes directing the legislative joint fiscal office to begin researching possible perpetual revenue sources, thinking about the future composition of the program’s governing board, pausing PCB testing when the funds allocated to support it near zero, and creating a working group to nail down the specifics of any future aid program.

If all goes according to plan, a working group could present its findings at the beginning of the 2025 legislative session, and the construction aid program could be created in the next biennium.



Submitted

School construction aid could resume.

## ← Mobile home: from page 7

park owners register their parks with us in September each year and keep a registry database of the parks and periodically publish information, reports or park listings on our website.”

The bill is not the only recent attention mobile homes have received from the Legislature. This past summer, legislators in the House set up the task force Taylor now chairs. The goal was to address and produce a report about the ever-changing issues mobile homeowners face in Vermont.

“It was kind of to get as much information as possible together and understand how motorhomes work in Vermont, what their status is and how many there are, how many are in parks, what their needs are, what data is available on them,” Taylor said.

When catastrophic floods hit the state last summer, the task force was forced to pivot and consider flood resiliency plans, such as repairing culverts and levees, creating buffer zones with vegetation or looking at how flood-prone land is zoned. Members are working on a report to put out their findings.

“We’re now writing up the report like crazy and hope to have it out in a couple of weeks,” said Taylor.

If H.618 is passed, it will go into effect July 1. Arsenaault acknowledges the minute details being changed in the definition but emphasized the impact it could have on her constituents.

“I’ve been mistakenly saying it’s a really little bill (when it) could have a really substantial and wonderful impact for members of my community,” she said.

## ← Harrison: from page 9

ment committee investigating Sheriff Grismore of Franklin County announced they didn’t believe they had enough for an impeachable offense under the Vermont constitution.

- A proposal to amend Vermont’s constitution to allow the Legislature to set qualifications for certain county elected offices, such as sheriff and state’s attorney, has stalled after the Senate didn’t appear to have the necessary 20 votes to advance the measure to the House.
- The Scott administration has expressed concern over the House-passed budget adjustment bill because of a \$30 million increase in spending over the governor’s proposal and an expansion of the hotel voucher program. Commonly referred to as the “Dear Jane” letter addressed to Senator Jane Kitchel, chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, the administration outlined its objections to the House-passed bill and are now asking the Senate to make changes.

I’m sure there will be more to come on the education tax issue in the weeks to come, although until local school budgets pass or fail, it’s difficult to know what the total spending will look like to set state rates.

Jim Harrison is the state representative for Chittenden, Killington, Mendon and Pittsfield. He can be reached at [JHarrison@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:JHarrison@leg.state.vt.us) or [harrisonforvermont.com](http://harrisonforvermont.com).

**WORDPLAY**

HOT BREAKFAST WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards

B H P M S S S F T E A L L L S Y Y F C G  
 N C B E N T E R L B K S N E T C E T U P  
 E A H F I D B I N N N O S G I I L S L Y  
 V W R R F T S E D P E A R A U I A A V N  
 O P G T F D S D V P O O H B C O E O R S  
 C G L K U E M I L A S E L A S L R T B P  
 I T D O M H T S A O T K N M I Y E H Y F  
 N S N G I C A U C D E D U D B A C C K D  
 I C C G O A N I F F U M H S I L G N E L  
 M I T R E O K A S M E F O P E H O E A M  
 T I E D A P C E K U K A K C G T U R Y O  
 H S R O L M K D T B T F S M E N P F K R  
 A M A D S A B E V M G E H Y S A U C K N  
 S B F F C E S L E W O T G V H S T M M I  
 H A R N K L P A E T A U I A Y S H S Y N  
 T P A U I A L E A D T F P R Y I D T C G  
 R P D K N V E T R K R H F G O O G A W E  
 U A C B F C O R B C T V C L T R N R G E  
 V L Y Y L P H O B B A N K P E C D G R D  
 S F W B U B I G D R E T T U B S S B I K

- BAGEL
- CEREAL
- FRENCH TOAST
- MORNING MUFFINS
- POTATOES
- BISCUITS
- CREPES
- FRIED
- SCRAMBLED
- BREAKFAST
- CROISSANT
- GRAVY
- TOAST
- BRUNCH
- EGGS
- GRITS
- PANCAKES
- WAFFLES
- BUTTER
- ENGLISH MUFFIN
- HASH
- POACHED

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**SUDOKU**

Solutions → 23

**How to Play**

Each block is divided by its own matrix of nine cells. The rule for solving Sudoku puzzles are very simple. Each row, column and block, must contain one of the numbers from "1" to "9". No number may appear more than once in any row, column, or block. When you've filled the entire grid the puzzle is solved.

**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

Solutions → 23

**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. One point south of due east
- 4. Coagulated blood
- 8. Fortifying ditch
- 10. Devotee of Hinduism
- 11. Trunk of a tree
- 12. Bank note
- 13. Capital of Guam
- 15. Study again
- 16. Covered with hoarfrost
- 17. Opening
- 18. Legendary Rolling Stone
- 21. Stray
- 22. Computer storing system
- 23. Signal
- 24. Pitching statistic
- 25. Human being
- 26. Malaysian isthmus
- 27. The "Blonde Bombshell"
- 34. A gland
- 35. Bluish greens

- 36. Endangered
- 37. Three-dimensional
- 38. In a way, precipitated
- 39. God associated with dissolution
- 40. Blemished
- 41. Flow or leak slowly
- 42. Disco legends The Bee \_\_\_\_\_
- 43. Midway between south and southeast

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. A way to board
- 2. Get down
- 3. Highly seasoned sausage
- 4. First day of month
- 5. Eurasian shrubs
- 6. The organ that bears the ovules of a flower
- 7. Small lake
- 9. Belief
- 10. Sunrooms
- 12. Metric weight unit
- 14. Vasopressin

1	2	3				4	5	6	7		
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	34						35				
36							37				
38								39			
40								41			
42									43		

- 15. Bravo! Bravo! Bravo!
- 25. Military men
- 32. Martini ingredients
- 17. One-time family room staple
- 26. Kilo yard (abbr.)
- 33. Get away
- 19. Got back together
- 27. Found in the sea
- 34. Lack of disunity
- 20. Anger
- 28. Protects from weather
- 36. One-time European Commission officer
- 23. Sang merrily
- 30. City along the Rhine
- 24. Sea eagle
- 31. Animal disease

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		5				3			
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							5		
1	9					8			
		7		1	4				

Level: Intermediate

*Guess Who?*

I am an actor born in California on February 9, 1987. I made my first TV appearance in an episode of "The Sopranos." I rose to prominence on "Friday Night Lights" and I was propelled to fame after a string of high-profile roles, including the antagonist in Marvel's "Black Panther."

*Answer: Michael B. Jordan*

## WEDNESDAY

2/7

**Housing Development Fund Informational Meeting**

8:30-10 a.m. The Hub CoWorks, 67 Merchants Row, Rutland. Learn about new funding opportunities available from Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) for small and emerging developers through the Rental Revolving Loan Fund and other resources. Fund details can be found at: [vhfa.org/rentalhousing/developers/rfff](http://vhfa.org/rentalhousing/developers/rfff)

**Book Discussion Group: Literary Pairs**

1 p.m. In person & via Zoom. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green Woodstock. Free. Librarians Kathy Beard and Lori Mitchell host this quarterly group to discuss books that complement each other. The topic will be "A single spark can start a huge fire." We will discuss "When the Emperor Was Divine" by Julie Otsuka and "Our Missing Hearts" by Celeste Ng. Dessert will be provided. Email [programs@normanwilliams.org](mailto:programs@normanwilliams.org) for info and to register.

**Public Skating**

Wednesdays, Jan.-Feb. Union Arena, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock. Ages 13+ \$6; ages 4-12 \$5; ages 3 and under, free.  
2-3 p.m. Seniors, parents with toddlers.  
3-4:10 p.m. All ages. Rental skates available, \$6/pair. [unionarena.org/public-skate-sessions/](http://unionarena.org/public-skate-sessions/)

**Silent Reading Group**

4 p.m. Wednesdays. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Join us for an hour of silent reading in front of the fireplace. Foster your reading habit in a structured environment. Optional post-reading discussion. Tea, coffee, and cookies provided. [normanwilliams.org](http://normanwilliams.org), 802-457-2295

**Cribbage for Adults**

3-5 p.m. Wednesdays. Hartland Public Library, 153 Route 5, Hartland. Free. Join a gathering of adult cribbage players at the library's meeting room. [hartlandlibraryvt.org/calendar/](http://hartlandlibraryvt.org/calendar/) or 802-436-2473

**Bone Builders**

3:30-4:30 p.m. Wednesdays. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. Improve balance and enhance energy and wellbeing. [chaffeeartcenter.org](http://chaffeeartcenter.org) or 802-775-0356

**Pet portrait mosaics - 3 session workshop**

5 p.m. Wednesdays through Feb. 24. The MINT, 112 Quality Lane, Rutland. \$180 for members, \$225 for not-yet members. Create a mosaic representation of your favorite pet. Learn how to prepare an appropriate substrate, transfer an image to a substrate, cut glass and other tesserae, and grout and finish the project. Instructor: Jennifer Judkins. [rutlandmint.org](http://rutlandmint.org)

**Adult Open Gym: Coed Pickleball**

7-9 p.m. Wednesdays, Jan. 8-Mar. 17. Killington Elementary School, 686 School House Road, Killington. Buy a 10-visit punch card for \$20 or pay \$5 for every time you come. Partially punched cards from last year are still valid. Enjoy coed team sports in a low-key environment for ages 16 & up. This is a drop-in program, no preregistration and no leagues. For questions please contact Griffin Van Niel at [recadmin@killingtontown.com](mailto:recadmin@killingtontown.com)

## THURSDAY

2/8

**Mendon Seniors Brunch**

2nd Thursdays. Sugar and Spice, 2563 US-4, Mendon. \$8. Reservation required. For time and reservations, call 775-3957.

**Killington Bone Builders**

10 a.m. Thursdays. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Weights are provided. [sherburnelibrary.org](http://sherburnelibrary.org) or 802-422-4323.

**Ukulele Group**

Noon-1 p.m. Thursdays. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. Ages 12+. Pre-register by Wednesday beforehand at 802-775-0356 or at [chaffeeartcenter.square.site](http://chaffeeartcenter.square.site)

**At the Chaffee**

Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland  
10:30 a.m.-noon: Thursdays. Artery. Weekly adult group for connection and inspiration. Painting in all mediums welcome. No set topic or instructor, attendees will work on their individual artwork. Fee varies.  
Noon-1 p.m.: Lunch 'n' Learn discussion: Heartheart. Discover the ART in "eARTh." May be paired with Art Lab.  
1-2 p.m.: Art Lab: Heartheart. Hands-on activity to explore participants' expressions of the topic presented in Lunch 'n' Learn. All materials will be provided.  
For fees, details visit: [chaffeeartcenter.org/adult-classes-coming-soon/](http://chaffeeartcenter.org/adult-classes-coming-soon/) or call 802-775-0356

**"Historic Figures & Nature" Art Exhibit**

Noon-6 p.m. VTSU Castleton Bank Gallery, 104 Merchants Row, Rutland. Free. Dodji Koudakpo's art reflects his experiences, people, places, and imagination. His paintings serve as a bridge between worlds, inspiring and sparking curiosity. [djallstarart.com](http://djallstarart.com). [vermontartscouncil.org](http://vermontartscouncil.org)

**Magic of Watercolor Workshop with Maurie****Harrington**

11:30 a.m. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. [sherburnelibrary.org](http://sherburnelibrary.org)

**Michelob Ultra Race World**

1-3 p.m. Thursdays, to March 14. Pico Mountain: Lower Pike or Exhibition. \$50 per individual. Weekly race series at Pico featuring 8 races, where participants can race as individuals or form a team of up to 5 racers. Each race is followed by a party at the Last Run Lounge from 4-6 p.m. Register for the race series: [tfaforms.com/5031843](http://tfaforms.com/5031843). [picomountain.com](http://picomountain.com)

**Play Bridge!**

2 p.m. Thursdays. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Beginners are welcome to observe. [normanwilliams.org](http://normanwilliams.org), 802-457-2295

**Ballroom Dance with Patti Panebianco**

Thursdays. 1 Brennan Circle, Poultney. Sponsored by Stone Valley Arts Center, Poultney.  
5-5:50 p.m. Tango & cha-cha for kids  
6-6:50 p.m. Foxtrot for adults  
7-7:50 p.m. Salsa for adults.  
For details and cost, contact Patti Panebianco at 516-909-1686 or email her at [pattidance@gmail.com](mailto:pattidance@gmail.com)

**Adult Open Gym: Basketball**

7-9 p.m. Thursdays, Jan. 8-Mar. 17. Killington Elementary School, 686 School House Road, Killington. Buy a 10-visit punch card for \$20 or pay \$5 each time. Partially punched cards from last year are still valid. Enjoy coed team sports in a low-key environment for ages 16 & up. This is a drop-in program, no preregistration and no leagues. For questions please contact Griffin Van Niel at [recadmin@killingtontown.com](mailto:recadmin@killingtontown.com)

## FRIDAY

2/9

**Library Book Sale**

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. The Friends of the Rutland Free Library welcome the public to shop their large selection of donated books, books on tape, CDs, puzzles, and rare and antique books. All proceeds go to support library activities and collections. [rutlandfree.org](http://rutlandfree.org)

**Story Time at the Library**

10:30-11:30 a.m. Fridays. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. [sherburnelibrary.org](http://sherburnelibrary.org), 802-422-9765 or 802-422-4251.

**Bone Builders**

11 a.m. Fridays. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. 802-775-0356

**At the Chaffee**

Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland.  
1-3 p.m. Relaxing with the Arts: Zentangle. \$35 per class session. Ends Feb. 16.  
6-8 p.m. Sip 'N' Dip. Monthly. Color in a Valentine's banner with acrylics. \$40/person; \$75/couple. All supplies included. Chocolates and cocoa bar. Preregistration is required for all classes. [chaffeeartcenter.org/adult-classes-coming-soon/](http://chaffeeartcenter.org/adult-classes-coming-soon/) or call 802-775-0356

**Owl Prowl**

5:30 p.m. VINS Nature Center, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. \$20 general public; \$17.50 VINS members. Celebrate winter in Vermont with a nighttime hike to explore the secret life of owls. Snowshoes available. Reservations required. Ages 13+ only. Contact [info@vinsweb.org](mailto:info@vinsweb.org) for more information.

**Wobbly Barn: Steal The Sky**

Doors open at 6 p.m. Wobbly Barn, 2229 Killington Road, Killington. Cover charge may be required. Steal the Sky is a Philadelphia-based band mixing pop, rock and dance music in an eclectic but accessible blend. [wobblybarn.com](http://wobblybarn.com)

**Blue Cat Music Series: Scott Forest**

6-9 p.m. Fridays through March 22. Blue Cat Bistro, 575 Main St., Castleton. No cover. Scott Forest performs an eclectic repertoire of pop, jazz, originals, country, Brazilian and more. 802-468-2791

**Lettering Love: A Valentine's Calligraphy Workshop**

6 p.m. Harpoon Brewery Taproom and Beer Garden, 336 Ruth Carney Drive, Windsor. \$30. Join us for a Valentine-themed calligraphy class using professional calligraphy tools. Your ticket includes all supplies and a beverage. Instructor Laura Di Piazza will demonstrate pointed pen calligraphy strokes and provide a complimentary copy of her "Copperplate Calligraphy" workbook. [vermontartscouncil.org](http://vermontartscouncil.org)

**Dance Your Heart Out in The Hayloft**

7 p.m. The Hayloft at ArtisTree, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. \$15. Join us in The Hayloft at ArtisTree for a Valentine dance! We'll have a DJ in the barn to provide a stomping good time. [artistreevt.org](http://artistreevt.org)

**'The Importance of Being Earnest'**

7:30 p.m. Barnard Town Hall, 115 North Road, Barnard. Adults \$20; students \$15. School group rates are available. Email [info@barnarts.org](mailto:info@barnarts.org) to arrange. This rom-com-drama, directed by Oliver Parker in 2002, is an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's timeless 1895 comedy of manners with the same title. Reserve tickets: [barnarts.org](http://barnarts.ludus.com/200447578)

## SATURDAY

2/10

**Snow Devil Snowshoe Ultra Race, Day 1**

2-day event. Sponsored by Peak Races, 105 Tweed River Dr., Pittsfield. \$65-\$145.

**100 miler: 6 a.m. - Packet pickup 5:30 a.m.**

100K: Noon - Packet pickup 11:30 a.m.  
Course description, event schedule, gear list and registration: [ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=102325](http://ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=102325)

**Clay Leprechaun Houses**

9:30-11:30 a.m. The MINT, 112 Quality Lane, Rutland. \$50 for members, \$75 for not-yet members. Kids and families are invited to join a pottery workshop to create their own leprechaun houses. [rutlandmint.org](http://rutlandmint.org)

**Library Book Sale**

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. The Friends of the Rutland Free Library welcome the public to shop their large selection of donated books, books on tape, CDs, puzzles, and rare and antique books. All proceeds go to support library activities and collections. [rutlandfree.org](http://rutlandfree.org)

**Winter Hike or Snowshoe in Plymouth**

10 a.m. Farm & Wilderness SAM Trail, Dublin Road, Plymouth. Free but registration is required. Guided snowshoe/hike open to all ages. Open to all ages with little elevation gain. Specific directions to the trail head will be sent via email upon registration. Dress for winter weather and bring a snack and water. Snowshoes may be recommended; we will update registered participants via email on up-to-date trail conditions and directions. Please carpool if you can. For a map and other info, go to [tinyurl.com/yymkx39t](http://tinyurl.com/yymkx39t)

**The Vermont Winter Farmers' Market**

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Howe Center, Suite 92, 1 Scale Ave. (off Strongs Avenue), Rutland. Free. The Vermont Farmers' Market is one of the largest farmers' markets in the state and the first to operate year round. Find seasonal harvest, winter veggies, handcrafted gifts and more. [vtfarmersmarket.org](http://vtfarmersmarket.org)

**Jingle Bells! Sleighing Day at GMHA**

10 a.m.-3 p.m. at Green Mountain Horse Association, 52 Pleasant St. (Route 106), Woodstock. Free. Join us for a day of dashing through the snow on the historic GMHA grounds (weather permitting). Call ahead 802-457-1509 to confirm due to weather conditions.

**Party in the Peace Park with Danny Davis**

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Peace Park at Killington Ski Resort. Sponsored by Mountain Dew. Free. Lunch burritos & skewers, autographs & pictures with Danny, live music from Nick Bredice. Grab a free meal and Mountain Dew merchandise. [killington.com](http://killington.com)

**Make & Take Saturday Kids' Class**

10:30-11:30 a.m. Saturdays. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Ages: 6-12. Weekly fun activity featuring arts and crafts. \$15. Min 5 students. Must pre-register. [chaffeeartcenter.square.site](http://chaffeeartcenter.square.site) or 802-775-0356

**Honoring Killington Resort founder Preston Smith**

11 a.m. Sherburne Memorial Library, River Road, Killington. A special event will honor Killington Resort founder Preston Smith. A new display in the meeting room will include a sign he made for the Sherburne Fire Department and many photos of the SVFD from many years ago. Pres Smith himself will attend via zoom and all are invited to attend. [sherburnelibrary.org](http://sherburnelibrary.org)

**Teacup Auction**

11 a.m. St. Raphael Parish Hall, 21 E. Main St., Poultney. A sheet of 25 tickets for \$2. Join St. John, Our Lady of Seven Dolours and St. Raphael churches for a teacup auction featuring knick-knacks, dishes, jewelry, toys, books, puzzles, household items, baked goods, and more. Enjoy lunch from the kitchen. For more information call Claudia Stacey, 802-265-8049.

**Rutland Railway Museum & Model Club**

11 a.m.-3 p.m. Weekly. 79 Depot Lane, Center Rutland. Free. Maintained by the Rutland Railway Association, Inc., the historic depot is now a museum that houses an operating HO scale model railroad setup and displays hundreds of rare or antique model trains, photographs, signs and memorabilia saved from an earlier time, including the former Rutland Railroad Caboose #45. [rutlandrailway.org](http://rutlandrailway.org)



**Intro to Stained Glass**

Noon-2 p.m. The MINT, 112 Quality Lane, Rutland. \$35 for members, \$55 for not-yet members. Maker Lisa Steckler will teach how to cut and shape glass, use soldering irons, and add an eye loop to a piece. Safety procedures will be covered. Materials included. rutlandmint.org

**Classes at the Chaffee**

Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland.

Noon-2 p.m.: Drop 'N' Paint, all ages

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m.: Special workshop with Robert Black: "Observing & Capturing the World."

\$25, or may be combined with next week's workshop for \$45.

Discussion of what we see around us, followed by taking photos with cellphone cameras. Must pre-register at: chaffeeartcenter.square.site or 802-775-0356

**Kenny Mehler acoustic performance.**

2:30-5:30 p.m. Snowshed Lodge, 3861 Killington Road, Killington. killington.com or 802-422-3333

**Handel's 'Water Music' and Other Works**

3 p.m. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71 N. Main St., Randolph. \$15-\$45.

This upbeat orchestral program features Handel's popular and regal "Water Music" (composed in 1717), paired with three shorter Handel works. The Upper Valley Baroque Orchestra and soprano Mary Bonhag perform. Tix at uppervalleyvermont.org

**Catholic Mass at Our Lady of the Mountains**

4:30 p.m. Saturdays. The "little white church," 4173 US-4, Killington. Free. 802-457-2322 or info@vermontcatholic.org

**Thursday Night Rumney Sessions**

5:30 p.m., music begins at 6 p.m. Weekly, Fable Farm, 1525 Royalton Turnpike, Barnard. Sliding scale tickets. Enjoy big fires, pizza, soup, wine, cider, and beer while grooving to Drumstick, a trio of reggae masters who produce danceable reggae with elements of hip hop and funk, both innovative and deeply rooted in tradition. See the month's lineup and get tix at feast-field-at-fable-farm.square.site/

**The Wandering Paintbrush & Valentine Blossoms****Paint & Sip**

6 p.m. The Main Street Museum, 58 Bridge St., White River Junction. \$30 includes materials, instructions & snacks. Christine Travers, instructor. mainstreetmuseum.org

**Killington Mountain School Turns 50!**

6-10 p.m. Killington Grand Hotel, 2708 Killington Road, Killington. Free. Food, music, dancing, drinks, silent & live auction. Killington Mountain School's annual auction, fundraising event and celebration of KMS turning 50 years old. Open to the public. Register: kms.ejoinme.org/register

**Wobbly Barn: Steal The Sky**

Doors open at 6 p.m. Wobbly Barn, 2229 Killington Road, Killington. Cover charge may be required. Steal the Sky is a Philadelphia-based band mixing pop, rock and dance music in an eclectic but accessible blend. wobblybarn.com

**Cupid Shuffle Dance Party with Rust and Ruin**

6-10 p.m. Rutland Country Club, 275 Grove St., Rutland. \$40. Join us for a night of music, dancing, and fun. Rust and Ruin's debut performance. RSVP at 802-773-7061.

**Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre Presents: 'An Evening of Improv; or, Wing It'**

7 p.m. West Rutland Town Hall Theatre, 35 Marble St., West Rutland. \$10. Valentine themed comedy show featuring improvisations performed by Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre. The audience suggests topics, words, or situations for the improv troupe to create scenes. paramountvt.org

**VSO Jukebox: Hammer & Glass**

7 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$15-\$35. The Vermont Symphony Orchestra swaps string players with percussionists for a unique musical experience. Onstage seating with the musicians. Program includes works by Philip Glass, Andy Akiho, Caroline Shaw, and more. paramountvt.org

**The Junction Dance Festival, Shake the Cabin Fever****Fundraiser**

7-8:30 p.m. Briggs Opera House, 5 So. Main St., Hartford (White River Jct.) \$25; free for children under 12. Support The Junction Dance Festival and enjoy a night of unique dance performances by Vermont and New Hampshire dance artists. Sponsored by the Vermont Arts Council. thejunctiondancefestival.org/event

**A Winter Music Showcase**

7:30-10 p.m. Little Theater, 54 River St., Woodstock. \$15. Enjoy a night of local music with performances by Laurie Goldsmith, The Subniveans Soul Review with the Eastside Horns, and The Freeze Brothers. The event opens with a Japanese iaido sword demonstration. Hickory the Drunk, M.C. tinyurl.com/2p7krh8m

**'The Importance of Being Earnest'**

7:30 p.m. Barnard Town Hall, 115 North Road, Barnard. Adults \$20; students \$15. School group rates are available. Email info@barnarts.org to arrange. This rom-com-drama, directed by Oliver Parker in 2002, is an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's timeless 1895 comedy of manners with the same title. Reserve tickets: barnarts.ludus.com/200447578. barnarts.org

**Stand Up Comedy with Headliner Simeon Goodson**

8-9:30 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club, U.S. 4, Bridgewater. \$25. Join headliner Simeon Goodson for a night of laughter. Eventbrite.com.

**SUNDAY**

2/11

**Snow Devil Snowshoe Ultra Race, Day 2**

2-day event. Sponsored by Peak Races, 105 Tweed River Dr., Pittsfield. \$65-\$145.

**Marathon, Half-Marathon & 10K: 8 a.m. - Packet****pickup 7-7:45 a.m.**

Course description, event schedule, gear list and registration: ultrasignup.com/register.aspx?did=102325

**Adult Open Gym: Pickleball**

7-9 p.m. Runs Jan. 8-Mar. 17. Killington Elementary School, 686 School House Road, Killington. Buy a 10-visit punch card for \$20 or pay \$5 for every time you come. Punch cards from last year with holes not yet punched, are still valid. Enjoy coed team sports in a low-key environment for ages 16 & up. This is a drop-in program, no preregistration or leagues. For questions please contact Griffin Van Niel at recadmin@killingtontown.com

**Stained Glass Mountain Suncatcher**

10 a.m.-noon. The MINT, 112 Quality Lane, Rutland. Members \$135; non-members \$160. Make your own stained glass sun-catcher to hang in a sunny spot, or to give as a gift! rutlandmint.org

**Woodstock Nordic BKL Sweetheart Race**

Start times 1 p.m.-2:30 p.m. Woodstock Inn & Resort Nordic Center, 76 South St., Woodstock. \$25. Race classes from Kindergarten-Grades 7/8 to Community Citizens Race. Details and times for registration and bib pickup will be posted. Register at skireg.com/woodstock-nordic-sweetheart-race or call the Nordic Center, 802-457-6601. Online registration deadline is Friday, Feb. 9.

**The Junction Dance Festival, Shake the Cabin Fever Fundraiser**

7-8:30 p.m. Briggs Opera House, 5 So. Main St., Hartford (White River Jct.) \$25; free for children under 12. Support The Junction Dance Festival and enjoy a night of unique dance performances by Vermont and New Hampshire dance artists. Sponsored by the Vermont Arts Council. thejunctiondancefestival.org/event

**'The Importance of Being Earnest'**

7:30 p.m. Barnard Town Hall, 115 North Road, Barnard. Adults \$20; students \$15. School group rates are available. Email info@barnarts.org to arrange. This rom-com-drama, directed by Oliver Parker in 2002, is an adaptation of Oscar Wilde's timeless 1895 comedy of manners with the same title. Reserve tickets: barnarts.ludus.com/200447578. barnarts.org

**Writers' Group**

3:30 p.m. Shrewsbury Library, 9823 Cold River Road, Cuttingsville. Free. Join the writers' group for a creative writing session. 802-492-3410

**CelloGayageum at Chandler Center for the Arts**

4 p.m. Chandler Center for the Arts, 71 N. Main St., Randolph. Where classical music meets Korean tradition, CelloGayageum's presentation of the traditional music culture of South Korea. \$10 - \$45. chandler-arts.org

**MONDAY**

2/12

**CEDRR Legislative Breakfast**

7:30 a.m. Southside Steakhouse, 170 So. Main St., Rutland. \$20 per person. Join Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region for a legislative breakfast with Vermont State Treasurer Mike Pieciak. Enjoy a breakfast buffet and support the Legislative Series. Register: rutlandvermont.com

**Killington Bone Builders**

10 a.m. Weekly. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Weights are provided. sherburnelibrary.org or 802-422-4323

**Okemo Innkeepers Race Series**

10 a.m. Mondays, Jan. 8 - Mar. 11 Okemo Ski Resort. A Ludlow tradition. Teams and individual skiers and snowboarders compete in 8 age categories. There is an après race gathering hosted by a local bar from 5-7 p.m. okemoracing@gmail.com.

**Monday Movie**

1 p.m. The Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Please call the library for the title of the film. sherburnelibrary.org, 802-422-9765

**Poetry Group**

4-5:30 p.m. 1st and 3rd Mondays. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Join the poetry group at NWPL for sharing and critique in a workshop format, focusing on different elements of poetry such as theme, language, sound and rhythm, structure, and context. This group is open to all interested in poetry and offers feedback on poems. RSVP: normanwilliams.org, 802-457-2295

**Adult Open Gym: Indoor Soccer**

7-9 p.m. Runs Jan. 8-Mar. 17. Killington Elementary School, 686 School House Road, Killington. Buy a 10-visit punch card for \$20 or pay \$5 for every time you come. Punch cards from last year with holes not yet punched, are still valid. Enjoy coed team sports in a low-key environment for ages 16 & up. This is a drop-in program, no preregistration or leagues. For questions please contact Griffin Van Niel at recadmin@killingtontown.com

**TUESDAY**

2/13

**What's on Your Nightstand? The Not-A-Book-Club****Book Club**

10:30 a.m.-noon. Monthly, 2nd Tuesdays. In person or online via Zoom. Norman Williams Library, Woodstock. Free. This is a unique book club where participants discuss books they are reading, books they love, and books they want to read. The discussions cover various topics related to books and writing. Join by emailing programs@normanwilliams.org.

**Met Opera: 'X: The Life and Times of Malcolm X'**

1 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$20. Anthony Davis's groundbreaking opera explores the life of Malcolm X through a new staging directed by Robert O'Hara. The cast includes talented breakout artists and young Met stars, with Will Liverman as Malcolm, Leah Hawkins as his mother, and Raehann Bryce-Davis as his sister. The opera features a jazz-inflected score by Thulani Davis. paramountvt.org

**Play Chess & Backgammon!**

5 p.m. Tuesdays. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Join us for chess and/or backgammon on Tuesday evenings. All skill levels are welcome, and coaching is available. Bring your own set or use one of ours. normanwilliams.org, 802-457-2295

**CEDRR Mixer**

5 p.m. Rutland County Pride Center, 106 West Street, Suite 1, Rutland. Food, drinks, 50/50 Raffle and door prizes. rutlandvermont.com.

**Recite! Poetry Sharing Evening**

5:30 p.m. In person & via Zoom. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. An open mic poetry event where professional poets, amateurs, and first-timers can share their original or favorite works. Join in person at the library or virtually via Zoom. RSVP or get the link by emailing programs@normanwilliams.org

**Paint 'N' Sip in Killington**

6-9 p.m. Tuesdays. North Star Lodge & Resort, 78 Weathervane Drive, Killington. \$40 if you register and pay in advance on Eventbrite. Join us for a paint and sip party at the cozy Star Lounge in North Star Inn. We will be painting two abstract 8x10" pictures while learning various techniques. Food and cash bar available. Register: tinyurl.com/ms7d84s6. Visit Arty Party Vermont on Facebook.

**Adult Open Gym: Indoor Soccer**

7-9 p.m. Runs Jan. 8-Mar. 17. Killington Elementary School, 686 School House Road, Killington. Buy a 10-visit punch card for \$20 or pay \$5 for every time you come. Punch cards from last year with holes not yet punched, are still valid. Enjoy coed team sports in a low-key environment for ages 16 & up. This is a drop-in program, no preregistration or leagues. For questions please contact Griffin Van Niel at recadmin@killingtontown.com



# Shred, sign and savor: 'Party in the Peace Park' with Pro Snowboarder Danny Davis

Saturday, Feb. 10 at 10 a.m.—KILLINGTON—There will be plenty to gear up for at Killington's Peace Park on Saturday, where legendary pro snowboarder Danny Davis will kick off the "Party in the Peace Park" festivities in style. Join us for an epic celebration featuring smooth transitions, autographs, live music, and complimentary burritos, courtesy of Mountain Dew.

**Schedule:**

- Park laps with Danny Davis—10 a.m.-12 p.m.—Peace Park
- Lunch burritos & skewers —12 p.m.-2 p.m.—Peace Park (rider's left)
- Autographs & pictures w/ Danny—12-1 p.m.—Peace Park (rider's left)
- Live music from Nick Bredice—Noon—2 p.m.—Peace Park (rider's left)

For more information, visit: [killington.com](http://killington.com)



Courtesy Killington Resort



# [MUSIC Scene]

By DJ Dave Hoffenberg  
Have a music scene coming up? Email [djdavehoff@gmail.com](mailto:djdavehoff@gmail.com)

**WED**  
2/7

**KILLINGTON**

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Sammy B

6 p.m. Rivershed – Sammy B & Nick Bredice

7 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Moe.stly

8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Nick Bredice

**LUDLOW**

6 p.m. Off the Rails – Learn to Line Dance

**QUECHEE**

6 p.m. Public House Pub – Chris Pallutto

**THUR**  
2/8

**BARNARD**

5:30 Fable Farm – Reggae in the Barn with Drumstick

**BRANDON**

5:30 p.m. Red Clover Ale Company – Open Mic hosted by Emily Nelson

**BRIDGEWATER**

6 p.m. Ramunto's Brick and Brew Pizza – Woodstock Boys Hockey Fundraiser with music by Acoustik Ruckus

**KILLINGTON**

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto

2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Daniel Brown

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Duane Carleton

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Open Mic hosted by Grateful Gary

6 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Duane Carleton

6 p.m. The Freerider – Nick Bredice

6 p.m. Rivershed – Chris Pallutto

6 p.m. The Foundry – Liz Reedy

7 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Neighbor

8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Jenny & Friends

**LONDONDERRY**

7 p.m. New American Grill – Open Mic Night hosted by DJ Jazzy Joel & Catnip John

**LUDLOW**

6:30 p.m. The Killarney – Irish Sessions with Gypsy Reel

**QUECHEE**

6:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Trivia with Questionable Company

**RUTLAND**

8 p.m. Angler Pub – A Sound Space Open Mic hosted by Krishna Guthrie

8 p.m. Center Street Alley – Karaoke 101 hosted by Tenacious

**FRI**  
2/9

**BARNARD**

7:30 p.m. Town Hall - The Importance of Being Earnest

**BOMOSEEN**

5:30 p.m. Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Aaron Audet

**CASTLETON**

6 p.m. Blue Cat Bistro – Scott Forrest

**KILLINGTON**

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Duane Carleton

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto Duo

2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Rhys Chalmers

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Daniel Brown & Chazz Canney

4 p.m. The Foundry – Jamie's Junk Show

6 p.m. Rivershed – James Joel

6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Ray Boston

7 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Donal O'Shaughnessy

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Diva & The Playboys

9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Jamie's Junk Show

9 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Last Chair Band

9:30 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Steal the Sky

**QUECHEE**

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Jake Geppert

**RANDOLPH**

7 p.m. Underground Listening Room – Jaded Ravins (full band) w/ Bow Thayer & Krishna Guthrie

**SOUTH POMFRET**

7 p.m. The Hayloft at Artistree – Valentine Dance Party

**SAT**  
2/10

**BARNARD**

7:30 p.m. Town Hall - The Importance of Being Earnest

**BRIDGEWATER**

8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – Comedy Night with Headliner Simeon Goodson

**KILLINGTON**

12 p.m. Killington Resort Peace Park – Nick Bredice

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto Duo

2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Rhys Chalmers

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Kenny Mehler

5 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Jamie's Junk Show

6 p.m. Grand Hotel - KMS/KSC Annual Auction & Celebration

6 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Duane Carleton

6 p.m. O'Dwyers Pub – County Down

6 p.m. Preston's at the Grand Hotel – James Joel

6 p.m. Rivershed – Red Daisy Revival

6 p.m. Wobbly Barn - KGB

6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Nick Bredice

7 p.m. Casey's Caboose – Ruby Street

7 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Donal O'Shaughnessy

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Diva & The Playboys

9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Aaron Audet Band

9:30 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Steal the Sky

10 p.m. Pickle Barrel Crows Nest – Jamie's Junk Show

**LUDLOW**

9 a.m. Okemo's Sunburst Six Bubble – Lift Party with DJ Dave

2 p.m. Apres Afternoons at Clock Tower – DJ Dave

2 p.m. Apres Afternoon at Jackson Gore – Jim Yeager

**PROCTORSVILLE**

5 p.m. Outer Limits Brewing – Sammy B

**QUECHEE**

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Brooks Hubbard

**STOCKBRIDGE**

7:30 p.m. Wild Fern – Rick Redington & Tuff Luv

**SUN**  
2/11

**BARNARD**

2 p.m. Town Hall - The Importance of Being Earnest

**BRIDGEWATER CORNERS**

3 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Nick Bredice

**KILLINGTON**

12 p.m. Rivershed – Brunch with Red Daisy Revival

1 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Duane Carleton

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Rhys Chalmers

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Chris Pallutto

5 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Open Mic hosted by Indigenous Entertainment

5 p.m. The Foundry – Jazz Night with the Summit Pond Quartet

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tee Boneicus Jones

6 p.m. Rivershed – Trivia

9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Jenny Porter

**RUTLAND**

4 p.m. American Legion – Ryan Fuller

**STOCKBRIDGE**

7:30 p.m. Wild Fern – Rick Redington's Looping Mayhem

**MON**  
2/12

**KILLINGTON**

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Chris Pallutto

5:30 p.m. Mary Lou's – BAK'n

6 p.m. Rivershed – Mandatory Mondays on Lundi Gras with Mardi Gras/Valentine's Bingo by DJ Dave

8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – On Tone Music

**LUDLOW**

8:30 p.m. The Killarney – Open Mic Night with Indigenous Entertainment

**TUES**  
2/13

**KILLINGTON**

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Sammy B

5:30 p.m. Mary Lou's – Bow Thayer & Krishna Guthrie

8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Taco Tuesday with Rick Webb

**LONDONDERRY**

6:30 p.m. New American Grill – Trivia hosted by Zach Yakaitis

**LUDLOW**

6 p.m. The Killarney – Trivia with Rick Davis

**PITTSFIELD**

6:30 p.m. Town Hall – Acoustic Jam

**QUECHEE**

5 p.m. The Public House – Jim Yeager

**RUTLAND**

8:30 p.m. Center Street Alley – Acoustic Open Mic hosted by Josh LaFave



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Courtesy Barn Arts

Jack (Kevin Donohue) considers how to tell the truth to his beloved Gwendolen (Kyle Huck) and his ward Cecily (Dory Psomas).



Courtesy Barn Arts

Lady Bracknell (Michael Halloran) firmly confronts her daughter Gwendolen (Kyle Huck) and new fiancé Jack (Kevin Donohue).

## 'The Importance of Being Earnest' presented at Barn Arts in Barnard

Fri., Feb. 9-Sat., Feb. 18—BARNARD—Barn Arts will present "The Importance of Being Earnest" at Barnard Town Hall, 115 North Road, in Barnard. The stage is set for laughter, love, and absurd situations as Oscar Wilde's beloved satire takes center stage this week. The performances are scheduled for Feb. 9-10 and 15-17 at 7:30 p.m., with matinee shows on Feb. 11 and 18 at 2 p.m.

### Ticket Information:

- Adults: \$20
- Students: \$15

In this delightful production, two gentlemen navigate the complexities of multiple identities while navigating the pitfalls of love in an age of ideals, all while contending with intrusive family members at every turn. Oscar Wilde's wit and whimsy promise to surprise and delight both new and seasoned fans of this classic comedy.

### Meet the Cast:

- John Worthing: Kevin Donohue
- Algernon Moncrieff: Olivia Piepmeier
- Gwendolen Fairfax: Kyle Huck
- Cecily Cardew: Dory Psomas
- Lady Bracknell: Michael Halloran
- Miss Prism: Killian White
- Dr. Chasuble: Casey Parles
- Lane/Merriman: Kaetlyn Collins

For more information, visit: [barnarts.org](http://barnarts.org).

# Cobra gymnasts shine in Saratoga's Winterfest competition

The 49 member team of Cobra Gymnastics in Rutland, wrapped up a successful weekend in New York at the well-attended Saratoga Winterfest competition.

The start of their season included traveled to Albany, New York, Saco, Maine, Williston and Essex, Vermont. The teams found success at all events; highlights include two first place team wins at the American Flyers Cup in Saco from the Bronze and Gold teams.

Cobra is hosting six levels of competitors this year, under the umbrella of USA Gymnastics.

Representing Vermont for the first year at the Saratoga Winterfest, the girls made quite an impact. With over 673 gymnasts competing over a three-day event, Cobra found itself atop the podium multiple times.

Bailey Wilbur of Whiting, a second year Bronze team member, continued to shine by capturing first place on balance beam (9.425) and all-around (37.625). Teammates Lorelie Shackett of Cornwall (9.65 vault) and Domenica Gagiardi of Rutland Town (9.70 vault) also captured first place individual wins. The Bronze team captured second place with a 113.15 total score.

Charli Fahoury of Wallingford, a first year Silver team

member, showcased her talents by capturing first place on vault (9.75), bars (9.675) and the all-around (37.65). Her teammates Lucie Goelz of Rutland (9.10 vault) and Madelyn McPhee of Wallingford (9.50 vault) also captured first place individual wins. The Silver team captured third place with a 113.35 total score.

Wilbur, Fahoury, and Emory Mishoe (37.50) of Benson all landed in the top 25 all-around scores of the entire weekend.

The 12 member Gold team shied away from first by just 0.50, taking home a third place award with a total score of 110.65. London Febbie of Londonderry captured first on bars (9.675) while her teammate Karsyn Kootz of Jamaica placed first on floor (9.4) with a fun-filled cowgirl themed routine.

"Our teams are some of the strongest we've ever had. We look forward to the remaining competitions and witnessing the girls rise into their fullest potential... This is my favorite time of the season, when meets provide constant opportunity and goals are easily in sight," said Coach Shelby Barsalou.

The teams will stay in Vermont for the remainder of

their season, finishing with the state championships to be held in Rutland on March 16-17.

Silver Medalists include:

Bailey Wilbur (9.400 vault), Izzy Skuro (9.500 bars), Emory Mishoe (37.500 all-around) and (9.475 vault), Catherine Welch (9.400 floor), Hannah Beach (36.875 all-around), (9.050 vault) and (9.475 bars), Lily Crowningshield (9.400 bars), Alexa Kojak (9.200 vault), Amelia Gibbs (9.800 bars), London Febbie (36.350 all-around) and (8.825 vault), Alivia Cerina (9.000 beam), Bay Sparks (9.550 bars).

Bronze Medalists include:

Bailey Wilbur (9.425 bars) and (9.375 floor), Lorelei Shackett (9.475 bars), Izzy Skuro (9.350 beam) and (9.500 floor), Domenica Gagiardi (9.150 beam), Emory Mishoe (9.700 bars), Catherine Welch (9.100 vault), Hannah Beach (9.200 beam), Lily Crowningshield (9.000 vault), Erin Taylor (36.525 all-around) and (9.050 vault), Maddison Larson (9.350 floor), Alexa Kojak (9.400 bars), Amelia Gibbs (9.000 beam), Karsyn Kootz (36.325 all-around) and (9.525 bars), Ella Lamson (9.225 floor), Hazel Mabey (9.000 vault), Eda Mae Fioretti (9.000 vault).

Photos Courtesy Team Photo



Karsyn Kootz, Gold team member



Grace Mical of Middlebury dismounting beam



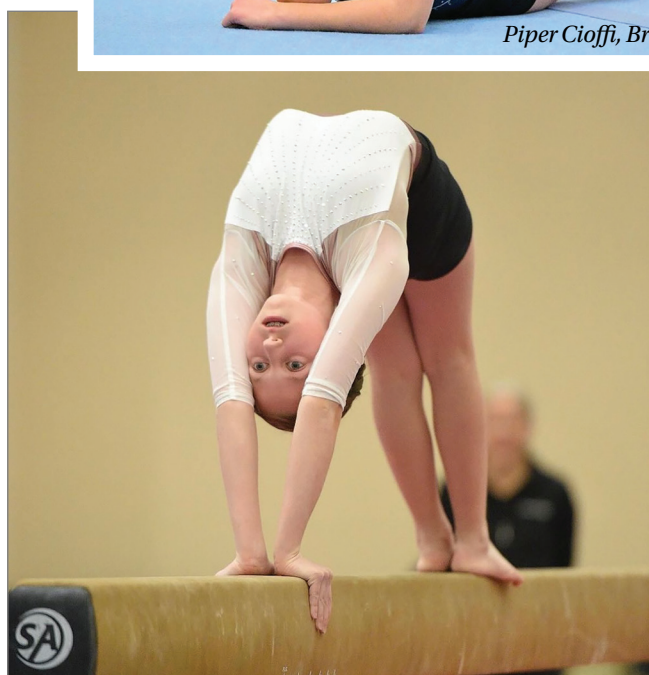
Izzy Skuro- Bronze Team



Piper Cioffi, Bronze team



Madelyn McPhee, Charli Fahoury, Lucie Goelz- Silver Team Members-



Grace Mical of Middlebury on beam



Lorelie Shackett, Izzy Skuro, Bailey Wilbur, Domenica Gagiardi- Bronze Team Members

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## Weekend Festival to raise funds for Briggs Opera House

Sat., Feb. 10 and Sun., Feb. 11—WHITE RIVER JUNCTION—The Junction Dance Festival holds its annual fundraiser at the Briggs Opera House in White River Junction this weekend. The festival is a nonprofit organization dedicated to increase the visibility of the art of dance in the Upper Valley. For three years it has created the events featuring a wide range of dance artists, choreographers, performers, instructors, in a variety of performance spaces, in films, and through classes and workshops.

### "Shell"

Ellen Smith Ahern is a dance artist and social worker/community organizer living with her family on Abenaki lands in N' Dakinna/New Hampshire. As a Creative Community Fellow with National Art Strategies, her dances explore the intersection of movement, storytelling and nature, creating performance projects that include a wider array of people than might otherwise feel welcomed into traditional dance spaces.

### "Shhh!"

Created and directed by Elizabeth Kurylo. Poem by Calvin Walker. Choreographed by Elizabeth Kurylo and Calvin Walker. Sounds engineering by Edward Childs. Music excerpt from "For All We Have Destroyed" by Stacy Fahrion performed by the Bergamot String Quartet. Costume design by Janna Genereaux.

### "Uncertain Wind"

Created and directed by Michael Bodel. Sound Design by Finn Campman. Choreography by Michael Bodel, Jessica Trout-Haney and Reina Hitotoki. Performed by Michael Bodel, Jessica Trout-Haney, Finn Campman.

### "Artist Bios"

Michael Bodel makes interdisciplinary dance works. Some of these projects are place based and many integrate puppetry, object theater or sensorial stuff. His process involves research into disparate areas and play. Past works have included dances choreographed to oral histories of immigration, a pageant set in an apple orchard, and a puppet opera unpeeling Bellini's "La Sonnambula". He is currently developing a project about the beginnings and ends of science, constructed from text, movement and twenty sheets of cardboard. As a dance scholar, Michael fancies writing about historical pageantry and embodied cognition. He works at the Hopkins Center for the Arts at Dartmouth and lives with his family in Putney.

Finn Campman is a Putney School alum and studied printmaking, poetry, and literature at Sarah Lawrence College. In 1991 he joined Sandglass Theater, and founded Company of Strangers, whose production "Moth and Moon" won an UNIMA Citation of Excellence, in 1999. He has toured much of the world performing his theater work, and for four years was an artist-in-residence at The Hall Farm Center for the Arts and Education. Recently, he has been focusing his creative energy on painting and electronic music with his band The Brothers Chorizo. He has taught English and art at Hilltop Montessori School for 21 years.

Jessica Trout-Haney is an aquatic ecologist and a postdoctoral researcher in the biology department at Dartmouth. She has always loved merging science with the arts. She received her BS and BA at the University of New Hampshire, majoring in zoology and German with minors in dance and music. Jessica received her MS at Villanova University and her PhD in biology at Dartmouth, while studying Arctic lakes in Greenland. As a dance artist, Jessica focuses on tap, contemporary and aerial dance forms. She has been a member of the Dartmouth Dance Ensemble since 2016 and teaches dance at The Dance Collective in West Lebanon, New Hampshire.

Ellen Smith Ahern has performed and taught throughout Mexico, Cuba, Qatar, Europe and the U.S., collaborating with many artists, including Jane Comfort & Company, Lida Winfield, Kate Elias, Rebecca Pappas, Hannah Dennison, Pauline Jennings, Polly Motley, El Circo Contemporaneo, Amy Chavasse, David Appel and Tiffany Rhynard's Big APE. She shares her work through film, installation and live performance in a diverse array of venues, including the National Gallery of Art, Dance on Camera Festival/Film at Lincoln Center, Middlefield Community Center, Bates Dance Festival, AVA Gallery, Dixon Place, Artistree Community Arts Center, Flynn Theater, Ionian Center of Kefalonia and Rococo Theatre in Prague. As a Creative Community Fellow with National Art Strategies, Ellen creates performance projects that include a wider array of people than might otherwise feel welcomed into traditional dance spaces.

Elizabeth Kurylo's choreographies encompass elements of physical theatre as well as stylistic dance. She develops choreographic themes in close collaboration with her performers, respecting their unique dance framework. She is especially fascinated by ethnic and street dance. She produced and directed two short films with grant support from the Vermont Arts Council. She is the founder of The Junction Dance Festival. The organization sponsors a seed program, called ChoreoLab, encouraging dance artists to create and develop their own choreographic projects in her dance studio in Corinth.

Calvin Walker is a writer and dance performer. He began dancing in his early teens under the guidance of Cheri Skurdall and the NCUHS dance program. Writer by day, break-dancer by night, he continues to train and compete in a balanced capacity with his crew/band of brothers, the Rhythm Riderz. He recently danced with Paula Higa Dance for the production of "The Migrant Body." He has taught at studios across Vermont and has a passion for all forms of movement.

For more information on the event and artists, visit: [thejunctiondancefestival.org/event](http://thejunctiondancefestival.org/event).



Submitted

The Sherburne Memorial Library in Killington is showcasing the history of the Sherburne Volunteer Fire Department (SVFD) through the preservation and display of a sign made by its founder, Preston Leete Smith.

## Sherburne Memorial Library celebrates history of volunteer fire department

Firehouse sign, crafted by Killington founder Preston Smith, is on display along with video about its making

By Karen D. Lorentz

Saturday, Feb. 10 at 11 a.m. — KILLINGTON— While change often brings major improvements, it sometimes comes at the expense of losing a connection with the past and/or a sense of community.

That's not the case in the town of Killington where on Saturday, Feb. 10 at 11 a.m. the Sherburne Memorial Library will present a program celebrating the history of the Sherburne Volunteer Fire Department (SVFD) through the preservation and display of the sign that graced their first firehouse.

Steve Finer, past fire chief and a volunteer SVFD member for 40 years, had been concerned about the sign's safekeeping when the town's new Public Safety Building was construct-

ed. Coincidentally, he learned from Leslie Smith that her father, Killington Resort founder Preston Leete Smith, had made the sign.

"It was like a light bulb going off. I asked her if she could video her father telling the story of how the sign came about," Finer said, adding that because Smith had made it, "it became even more important to save the sign and display it somewhere that the public could see it and have access to the video."

"Steve Finer came to us at the library with the idea to move the sign from the public safety building to here because we are also the repository for the Sherburne Killington Historians," said Library Director Jane Ramos.

Agreeing, Ramos contacted Fire

Chief Paul Ginther and the fire department donated funds for the display and setup.

The sign was hung in the library meeting room along with a sign from Station 2. The library was also given photos from the SVFD, which were re-framed and hung in the meeting room.

"Several things came together to make this event possible. The recent revitalization of the Sherburne Killington Historians, the anniversary of the resort, and knowing that Pres was the one who made the original sign, we thought it was important to preserve the history," said Ramos, referring to Killington Resort turning 65 on Dec. 13. "We were gifted a video of Pres

History of fire dept. → 26

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Solutions From page 15

### Crossword

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### Sudoku

2	1	9	8	7	3	5	4	6
3	8	4	5	2	6	9	7	1
7	6	5	1	4	9	3	8	2
9	2	3	6	8	5	7	1	4
8	7	6	4	3	1	2	9	5
5	4	1	7	9	2	6	3	8
4	3	8	2	6	7	1	5	9
1	9	2	3	5	8	4	6	7
6	5	7	9	1	4	8	2	3

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# Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre presents: 'An Evening of Improvisation or Wing It'

Sat. Feb. 10 and Sun., Feb. 11—WEST RUTLAND—The Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre will host a return of its popular show, "An Evening of Improvisation or Wing It". The Valentine themed comedy show will be presented Feb. 10 at 7 p.m. and Feb. 11 at 2 p.m. The improv will be performed at the West Rutland Town Hall Theatre, 35 Marble St.

Improvisation, in theatre, is the playing of dramatic scenes without written dialogue and with minimal or no predetermined dramatic activity. The audience will suggest a topic, word or situation for the improv troupe to use to create a scene. The actors play off of each other until there is a sense that the scene is complete.

"An Evening of Improvisation or Wing It" promises an unforgettable experience filled with laughter, creativity, and community engagement. Don't miss the chance to be part of this unique theatrical event! Purchase your tickets now for \$10 plus fees and prepare for a night of unscripted hilarity.

Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre is a dedicated and passionate community of performers committed to bringing engaging and entertaining theatrical experiences to the audience. With a focus on inclusivity and creativity, the theatre continues to captivate audiences with a diverse range of productions.

For ticket information and reservations, visit: [paramountvt.org](http://paramountvt.org)



Submitted  
 Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre returns its Valentine-themed comedy show, "An Evening of Improvisation or Wing It," on Feb. 10 and 11, featuring improvised scenes and a commitment to inclusivity and creativity.

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Courtesy Vermont Symphony orchestra

The Vermont Symphony Orchestra will perform "VSO Jukebox: Hammer & Glass" at The Paramount Theatre on February 10 at 7 p.m., featuring two percussionists for an immersive musical experience.

## Unique presentation of Vermont Symphony Orchestra's 'Hammer & Glass' at the Paramount

Feb. 10 at 7 p.m.—RUTLAND—The Vermont Symphony Orchestra (VSO) will present an extraordinary musical journey with "VSO Jukebox: Hammer & Glass."

This innovative concert experience breaks the mold as the VSO shakes things up by exchanging two string players for two percussionists, creating a whirlwind take on the popular Jukebox series. The audience will have a unique opportunity to sit onstage at The Paramount Theatre alongside the musicians, fostering an intimate and immersive musical connection.

Tickets for this one-of-a-kind event are available at a Pay-What-You-Can pricing structure: \$15, \$25, \$35, plus tax/fees. All tickets are General Admission and will be allocated on a first-come, first-served basis.

### Program Highlights:

- Opening from "Glassworks" by Philip Glass, arr. LaRocca
- "Hammers" by Andy Akiho
- "Boris Kerner" by Caroline Shaw
- "Bawa" (traditional) arr. Sowah Mensah
- "Duo for Violin and Cello," Mvmt. III by Jessie Montgomery
- "Head To Toe" by Molly Joyce
- "Slide Rule" by Jeanne Woodbury and Josh Gottry
- Closing from "Glassworks" by Philip Glass, arr. LaRocca

The Vermont Symphony Orchestra is dedicated to enriching lives through music, presenting engaging and diverse performances that inspire and connect communities. The VSO remains committed to fostering a love for music and pushing the boundaries of traditional orchestral experiences.

For more information, visit: [paramountvt.org](http://paramountvt.org)

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← History of fire dept.:

from page 23

talking about the creation of the sign and have purchased a museum quality kiosk to house a tablet that will allow visitors to the library to hear Pres in his own words. The kiosk will also house a video of opening day at the resort in honor of its recent anniversary," she said.

**Artistic avocation**

In the 6-minute video, Smith relates that he had previously made some trail signs for the Killington Ski Area. "I chose redwood because it routed very easily. I routed the letters on the trail signs so that they could be repainted by anybody who was not particularly skilled, and therefore, they would last for years, as redwood lasts forever."

He further explained his own innate graphic design ability and enjoyment of art and artistic expression, noting, "Lettering is not just spacing the letters a half inch apart or some specific number. It has to do with the size of the letter in relation to the size of the next letter, and the space in between. To create a properly reading sign, those spatial relationships between letters have to be assessed by an eye that can judge the quality of the space between the lettering, and I happen to be able to do that."

(This artistic side of the ski area entrepreneur is not so well known, but it might resonate with anyone who remembers Killington's futuristic looking "Stealth Cats," which sported glow-in-the-dark graphics on all black re-contoured grooming machines or the Dec. 9, 1994 debut of the Skyeship with its cabins featuring colorful designs for an "art gallery in the sky" effect.)

Smith also was a volunteer member of the Sherburne Volunteer Fire Dept. but was not able to actively participate as he was busy operating the ski area, which was growing by 60% a year, he said.

"All the local people who had been work-

ing to build this new firehouse were nearing bringing it to completion, and I decided I needed to do something in support of the fire department," Smith explained of his motivation to make a sign for the building.

He located a 16-foot long piece of clear pine and proceeded to use his drawing tools to set out the lettering. Speaking from his Florida home, Smith acknowledged that "Sherburne Volunteer Fire Department is quite a long series of words and the challenge was to have it look right. I had eyeballed it to make sure the spatial relationships were correct, and then I got out my router and I routed all the lettering."

He painted the board plank white and used red paint for the lettering. With the paint barely dry, he drove the sign to the firehouse where volunteers installed it.

Pleased that the sign fit perfectly and that he had been able to contribute, Smith was surprised when inquiries came in from other volunteer fire departments wanting signs. He had to decline due to being busy operating Killington, he remembered.

While Smith will always be remembered for his legacy of developing the East's largest—and one of the nation's most successful—ski resorts, thanks to the work of history-minded volunteers, the story of the sign and an early piece of Sherburne Volunteer Fire Dept. history will live on at the library.

That is a source of satisfaction for Smith, who fondly remembers the many individuals who made the fire department an important part of a growing community. Expressing his gratitude for Finer's efforts to preserve the sign, Smith also appreciates having been able to be part of a "great community."

Ramos said several old photo albums/memorabilia will also be on display and the public is welcome to attend the event on Saturday.



Submitted

The Sherburne Memorial Library in Killington is currently exhibiting the legacy of the Sherburne Volunteer Fire Department (SVFD) by preserving and presenting a sign crafted by its founder, Preston Leete Smith. This sign, originally housed at the public safety building, has been relocated to the library meeting room, where it joins the Sherburne Killington Historians' collection. Supported by the fire department, the event included a 6-minute video highlighting Smith's artistic talents.



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*Mary Lou's*

"Mary Lou's is your perfect place to warm up and enjoy wood fired pizza, drinks and live music. Sit by the fireplace by the lower bar! Please check our updates by hitting the Update tab. See you here!" (802) 422-9885.

maryloukillington.com



*Sushi Yoshi*

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and dinner. Delivery or take away option available. Now open year round. www.vermontsushi.com 802-422-4241.



*Back Country Café*

The Back Country Café is a hot spot for delicious breakfast foods. Choose from farm fresh eggs, multiple kinds of pancakes and waffles, omelets or

daily specials to make your breakfast one of a kind. Just the right heat Bloody Marys, Mimosas, Bellini, VT Craft Brews, Coffee and hot chocolate drinks. Maple Syrup and VT products for sale. Check Facebook for daily specials. 802-422-4411.



*Choices Restaurant & Rotisserie*

Choices Restaurant and Rotisserie was named 2012 "Ski" magazines' favorite restaurant. Choices may be the name of the restaurant but it is also what you get. Soup of the day, shrimp cocktail, steak, hamburgers, a variety of salads and pastas, scallops, monkfish, lamb and more await you. An extensive wine list and in house made desserts are also available. choicesrestaurantkillington.com (802) 422-4030.



*Lookout Tavern*

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*Killington Market*

Take breakfast, lunch or dinner on the go at Killington Market, Killington's on-mountain grocery store for the last 30 years. Choose from breakfast sandwiches, hand carved dinners,

pizza, daily fresh hot panini, roast chicken, salad and specialty sandwiches. Vermont products, maple syrup, fresh meat and produce along with wine and beer are also for sale. killingtonmarket.com 802-422-7736 or 802-422-7594.



*Moguls*

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Free shuttle and take away and delivery options are available. mogulssportspub.com 802-422-4777.



*Soup Dog*

With a focus on soups and hotdogs, this restaurant offers a delicious and comforting menu for visitors and locals alike. Opening in the winter of 2023, Soup Dog invites guests to stop by and enjoy their tasty offerings.

The menu features a wide variety of soups, paired with delicious bread, as well as specialty hotdog toppings. Guests also have the option to create their own hotdog combinations. (802) 353-9277. Visit us on Facebook.



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Looking for something a little different? Hit up McGrath's Irish Pub for a perfectly poured pint of Guinness, live music on the weekends and delicious food. Casual dining at Rosemary's Restaurant. Visit innatlongtrail.com, 802-775-7181.



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 \*Open by appointment only. [spfldhumane.org](http://spfldhumane.org)



## GREY

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**Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society**  
 4832 VT-44, Windsor, VT • (802) 484-5829  
 \*(By appointment only at this time.)  
 Tues. - Sat. 12-4 p.m. & Thurs. 12-7 p.m. • [lucymac.org](http://lucymac.org)



Odin—2-3-year-old.  
 Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Tobias—1-1/2-year-old.  
 Neutered male. Pitt-mix.



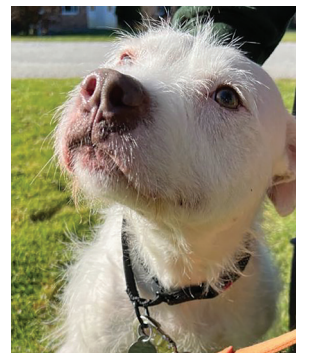
Boone—1-year-old. Neutered male. Hound mix.



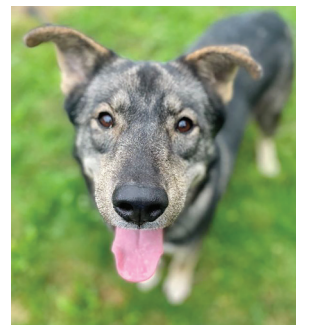
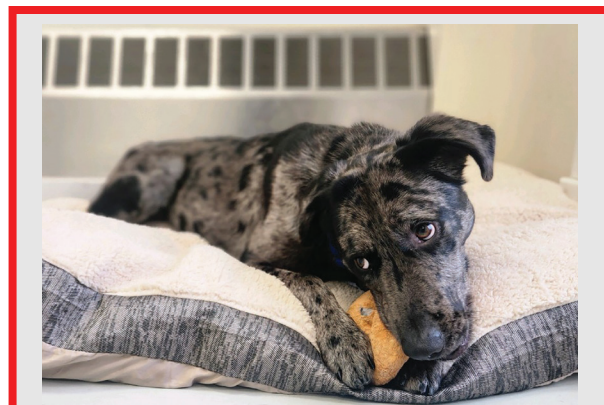
Whiskers—1-year-old.  
 Spayed female. Domestic longhair.



Ham—2-year-old.  
 Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Blu—3 1/2-year-old. Spayed female. Terrier mix.

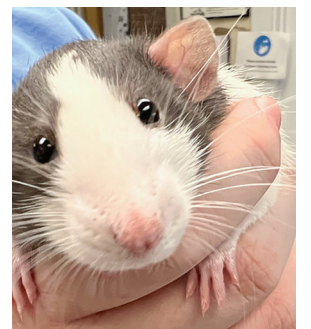


Raven—1-year-old. Spayed female. Mixed breed.

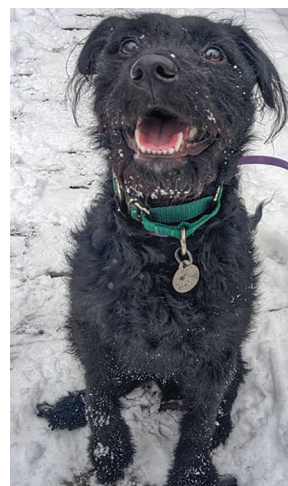
## JOHNNY CASH

Johnny Cash—2-year-old. Neutered male. Catahoula mix.

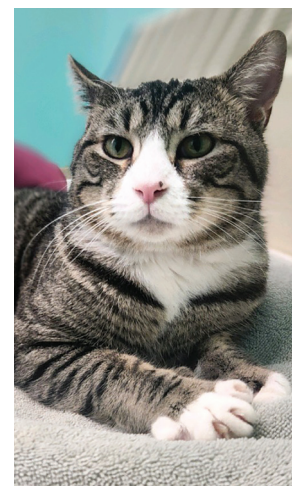
All of these pets are available for adoption at  
**Rutland County Humane Society**  
 765 Stevens Road, Pittsford, VT • (802) 483-6700  
 Tues. - Sat. 11 a.m. -4 p.m.  
 Closed Sun. & Mon. • [www.rchsvt.org](http://www.rchsvt.org)



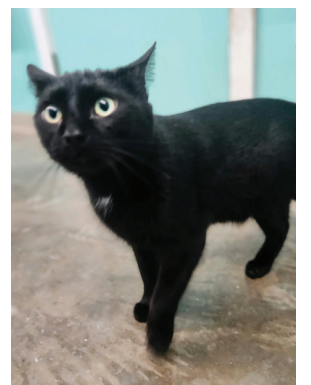
Scone—Adult. Hooded rat. Small.



Gizmo—1-year-old.  
 Spayed female. Wirehaired terrier.



Chase—2 year-old.  
 Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Midnight—1.5y/o.  
 Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.

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# Cosmic Catalogue



**Aries**  
March 21 - April 20

Friendships, groups, and communities are changing thanks to Pluto. This week, you'll get the chance to have an honest conversation with someone in your social circle. Will you see them from their point of view, or will you project yours onto them? You love authenticity and are not afraid of a little bit of conflict when required. Don't let a differing point of view drive wedges that don't need to be there. Honesty counts, even if you cannot agree.

**Leo**  
July 21 - August 20

Bright new beginnings are possible within a professional or personal partnership. This isn't all about sunshine and roses and hoping for the best. You may have to get brutally honest in the process, and it may hurt. Honesty really counts, though, and it's the first step to closeness. Be sure to lead from the heart, regardless of which direction it leads you, even if that's not the direction you think you want.

**Sagittarius**  
November 21 - December 20

Can you ever truly be understood by someone else? This is a question for all ages! Are you even meant to be understood? Maybe, maybe not. What you can do, though, is learn to understand yourself. This is the key to everything. When you know who you are, it does not matter who understands you. If someone does, then great. If not, then you've not lost yourself either. You either win or you learn, but you never lose.

**Taurus**  
April 21 - May 20

The world may be your oyster now in terms of your professional life or the big life direction choices you've been considering. This week, it may be time to begin executing on some of the changes that you feel are necessary to make. Ask yourself some questions. Understanding your "why" is more powerful than figuring out the "how." Start thinking outside the box if you no longer want to be stuck inside it!

**Virgo**  
August 21 - September 20

There's no escaping the fact that you're going to be insanely busy. There will be issues to face and problems to solve, whether you want to or not. So in order to prepare for this, start doing the things you know will support you. Better health and exercise routines. Tweaking your time management strategies. Life is just going to be a grind for a while, so the sooner you settle into that fact, the easier it will be.

**Capricorn**  
December 21 - January 20

January may not have worked out quite like you hoped in terms of getting your finances in order. This doesn't matter. It's now February, and the time to start over is more cosmically aligned for you. Focus forward rather than looking back with a negative attitude. In fact, your attitude is everything now. The fortune you seek is in your future, not in the past. Keep your eyes forward and not in your rearview mirror. Dare to think differently, and different is what you'll get.

**Gemini**  
May 21 - June 20

When it comes to travel and adventure, as well as philosophy and spirituality, some deep and meaningful questions may need to be explored. What do you want out of life? Are you prepared to embark on a deep and meaningful journey of profound transformation? Are you willing to go to places—literal and/or metaphorical—that you've never been to before? The deeper the questions you ask yourself this week, the quicker the answers will arrive.

**Libra**  
September 21 - October 20

At some point this week, take out your calendar and arrange to have some fun. A night out, indulging in a hobby, or a romantic pursuit are likely. Treat this exercise as important as you would a work meeting or a medical appointment. It's easy to overlook joy and frivolity in your life or rank them low in your priorities. However, if you want to change your life for the better, you do truly need to transform your perspective on this.

**Aquarius**  
January 21 - February 20

Denial only gets you so far until it catches up with you. Then you have to face the reality of things, whether you like them or not. Facts are facts, and feelings are feelings. Your feelings aren't facts, but you do need to explore the difference. Ask yourself some difficult questions now, and the entire process will only get easier. Keep your head in the sand, and I promise, things will only get harder. You always get to choose.

**Cancer**  
June 21 - July 20

To be truly happy in a relationship, it comes down to generosity. To be generous is a great virtue. This could be with your time, your money, or your effort. Your words count too. If you can be generous and loving with your tone, you'll be amazed by how receptive and generous others will be in return. If you can practice this without counting the cost, you won't be able to count the ways in which your generosity will be reciprocated.

**Scorpio**  
October 21 - November 20

You can think about your career or other outer-worldly areas of your life, but if things aren't right at home, nothing will be right. This week, you need to ask yourself some hard questions in terms of your home and family situation. Family relationship dynamics may be an issue. It could also be your location. In either case, take a good look at what home means to you. It should mean everything.

**Pisces**  
February 21 - March 20

If your mind has been twisted like a pretzel and you need to chill out, then this week, be sure to do that. With so much activity in your private zone, the less time you spend with others and the more time you spend alone in quiet contemplation, the better off you'll be. Explore your thoughts. Why do you think about the things you do? What does it all mean? The answers always lie within you. Finding stillness will help reveal them.

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**Empowering you to lead a divinely inspired life.**  
Cassandra has studied astrology for about 20 years. She is an international teacher of astrology who has been published all over the globe.

## Words at face value

Some words, once spoken, can't be taken back. However, words these days seem to mean whatever people want them to mean. Don't like a word? Then change the meaning of it. Don't like its definition? Then take it out of context and manipulate it. Doesn't fit with feelings? Then demand that others affirm it, even when it means denying reality.

Whether you want to hear it or not, people are going to tell you who they are this week. Believe them! Even if this means it scathes your heart. That is what truth is. And it hurts. To deny hearing what is spoken

and manipulate it into your own narrative is narcissism. To think that others want the same outcomes that you want for them is delusional.

When you can face the truth of facts, rather than feelings, then bridges can be built and pain can heal. As long as we continue dancing around ideals rather than reality, we'll never reach said ideal.

Some hard facts will come into the light this week that will challenge perspectives and beliefs. It won't feel nice, but the sooner

decisions are made with brains, rather than feelings, the sooner this gets better.



Cosmic Catalogue  
By Cassandra Tyndall

## The song of the birds



Poetry Is Power  
By Bree Sarandrea



That one little bird might decide to perch on your hand,  
And sing you its little song,  
And maybe,  
Just maybe,  
You can join in with it.  
The song of the birds,  
A sweet little tune that makes you feel happy and loved,  
The birds are giving you this song,  
They are giving it to you,  
Specifically you.  
They think that you can make the world a better place,  
And I know you can,  
We all know you can,  
So let's try to give the whole world love,  
Just like the birds told us to.

Birds,  
They flutter around,  
Their tiny little wings beating so fast,  
You can barely see them,  
They are just a blur flying past you,  
Then they fly up to the nearest tree,  
And they sing.  
They sing their happy little songs of love and joy,  
Maybe if you sit there watching them,  
One curious little bird might come over,

## What season is it today? Snowbathing season



The Funologist  
By Sandra Dee Owens

Winter has arrived. In fits and starts as the pattern is now. It came in an all-day snowstorm, covering every surface in deep, furry pillows of white. All wildlife went silent, hidden and still. They will return when the storm passes. Hungry.

Cold constricts and heat expands. Sick with Covid and the unhelpful gremlins Gripe, Grumble, and Impatience, I needed some playful healing. As I view all unwellness (in mind, body, and spirit) as inflammation, winter is ripe with "out the door" healing.

In vision snow, cold air, and cold water (for snow swimming) as giant ice packs. Ice packs for healing every type of booboo. Snowstorms are a healing gift that falls from the sky.

I cannot wait to go outside and play in the snow. I strip off my jammies and pull on winter boots, hat, and my beloved, hand-me-down, fur coat. I pocket a lighter and the smudge stick I made of winter herbs and head outside. The snow is coming in fast as I head into the woods up to SheCamp.

The clearing is a snow globe. Untouched by wing, paw, or foot. Every snowflake lies where it landed. Undisturbed.

I walk the perimeter and stand under an old pine tree. I tip my head back, close my eyes, and listen to the wind whisper through the top. A windsong.

I light my smudge stick and circle the smoke of sage, rosemary, spearmint, thyme, lemon balm, lavender, and parsley, around my head, body, and bottoms of my feet. The smoke and falling snow mix in a gray-white trail as I compose a tiny prayer.

"To all negativity, unwellness, and sickness of every kind; down-down-down you go into the

Funologist →35

## Red velvet mites in winter

Bright red, soft, and velvety ... no, I'm not describing a Valentine's Day decoration, but a red velvet mite. Built like eight-legged, scarlet Beanie Babies, red velvet mites are hard to miss, even though most of them are no bigger than an eighth of an inch long. They are arachnids in the family Tombidiidae, so their relatives include spiders and ticks.

One researcher has described this diminutive arachnid as "an under-researched enigma," and the exact number of red velvet mite species is unknown — but may be in the thousands. When I see these tiny vermilion specks, they're most often crawling across sunny rocks as adults during summertime. But these mites have a complicated life history — including the ability, for some, to thaw out, seemingly unscathed, after freezing solid.

The life stage that's easiest to find are the plushie-like adults, who hunt even smaller invertebrates. During the warm months, males will initiate courtship by building what one researcher dubbed a "love garden" of lollipop-shaped sperm packages, or spermatophores. To encourage female visitors, the garden-builder adds a path of delicately woven silk. (Builder beware: if another male finds the "garden" he will trash it to squash mating competition.) If a passing female is impressed, she will follow the silk trail and join in a mating dance where both mites move in circles, tapping each other with their front legs.

After a successful mating dance, the female will accept a spermatophore and lay dozens to tens of thousands of eggs in the soil, depending on her size and species. These eggs will hatch into an inactive pre-larval form, before becoming larvae that are parasites of insects or spiders. They then go through three successive nymphal stages before molting into adulthood.

In temperate regions, such as ours, these mites' lives are further complicated by winter. Scientists once assumed that all tiny arthropods, mites included, could prevent their body fluids from turning to ice, even at subzero temperatures. Since organisms have small particles, including sugars and proteins, in their body fluids, their tissues don't freeze at the same temperature as pure water. An animal's metabolism, responding to seasonal signals, can adjust how many and what kinds of small particles are present in their bodies, changing the freezing point of their tissues to colder temperatures. The snow fleas that pepper the snow surface on sunny winter days use this freeze-avoidant

strategy.

But some red velvet mites are untroubled by a temporary freeze. Researcher Susan Anthony, while working on her PhD thesis at Western University in Ontario, Canada, between 2016 and 2017, found active adult red velvet mites (in the genus *Allothrombium*) at one of her pre-snowfall winter collection locations. "I wasn't expecting them to be freeze tolerant," she said. She exposed the mites to low temperatures in a routine test to see how cold their bodies could get before freezing.

By putting the mites in tiny tubes and tracking their internal temperature with a thermocouple, she found that her red velvet mites would freeze at temperatures between roughly 15 and 25 degrees. "I took them

out and put them on the counter," said Anthony. "They would be curled in a fuzzy, velvet ball and I could tap them and hear 'tic-tic-tic.'"

To her amazement, within 24 hours, all the frozen mites thawed out and began crawling around. Further testing showed that the majority of mites could survive freezing for seven days and temperatures as low as minus 4 degrees.

Red velvet mites appear to manage their freezing abilities in sync with the seasons. Anthony collected mites in the fall and housed them in outdoor containers so she could test them as the seasons progressed. She found that they were less able to survive a period of freezing in fall and spring. With the approach of warm weather, they presumably dropped their freeze-tolerance, just as mammals shed their winter coats.

And what about red velvet mites' festive red attire? It appears to be a warning to would be predators. A few observations suggest that these mites taste really, really bad. Researchers have observed that few potential predators will eat red velvet mites; those that do eat them generally only do so once. One researcher tasted mites and wrote, "A velvet mite produced an exceedingly bitter, astringent, and spicy taste that endured in the mouth for about an hour."

Red velvet mites may look like festive Valentine decorations, but they won't replace your box of chocolates.

*Rachel Sargent Mirus is a teaching artist and writer. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org.*



The Outside Story  
By Rachel Sargent Mirus

## Tripping the light fantastic

I had landed in Paris after an overnight flight, found my hotel room in the city center, and was now ready to begin my adventure. I had been planning this trip for years, and now the events were finally unfolding.

Looking back, it may have been a bit of a midlife crisis. I was in my mid-40s and starting to wonder, “Is this all there is?” To combat the dark thoughts, I’d decided that I needed to go on an adventure and immerse myself in life’s grandeur. And what better place to do that than Paris, France.

For as long as I could remember, the city of Paris had captivated me. There was something about the history, art, and architecture, that appealed to all my senses. I had been there once in my early 30s as a stopover, but never got to see much. But that quick experience secured in me a commitment that I would one day return to truly give the city the attention that it deserved.

When I finally got back there (over a decade later), I was prepared for every step, having plotted my course through the city and its most valuable sites.

I wanted to start things off with something awe-inspiring, so I made my way over the Seine to stand directly in front of Notre Dame Cathedral. I was immediately captivated by the sheer grandeur of the iconic Gothic masterpiece. I stood outside analyzing the façade trying to imagine how Middle Age masons constructed such intricate designs and statues with rudimentary tools.

Once I walked inside, a profound sense of awe washed over me as I entered the soaring nave, its majestic columns reaching skyward. The sheer height and intricate design of the vaulted ceiling was captivating.

I wandered slowly at first, just to take in everything I could see, but then started to focus on more specific areas, most notably, the stained glass windows. Each pane told a story, a testament to the artistic mastery and devotion of those who had crafted the celestial narratives.

I wandered around the church for two hours before finally making my way out into the street again.

I then meandered along the Seine, the Eiffel Tower looming in the distance. I made my way to its base and strolled around with the thousands of other tourists. I didn’t feel compelled to make my way upward while fighting the crowds, so after a short time, I moved on.

The next day I meandered through the

intricate streets of Montmartre, I ascended the steps to Sacré-Cœur, perched high above the city. Paris was sprawled out below, a patchwork of rooftops and landmarks. I did my best to avoid the scammy street vendors so I could take in the vista.

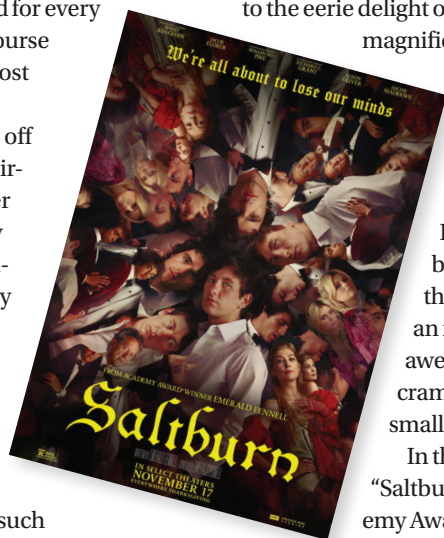


The Movie Diary  
By Dom Cioffi

I then ambled over to where the street artists congregated. I spent the afternoon looking at the painters at work before finally settling in at a café where I had lunch and people-watched. (It should be noted that the food in Paris is as exquisite as the sightseeing.)

I spent the next several days on a trek through Paris’ greatest museums. I strolled through the halls of the Louvre for two entire days finding myself face-to-face with masterpieces that I had only seen in textbooks, on screens, or printed on mousepads (which were readily available to purchase).

Even the darker exhibits of Paris, like the catacomb tours (where hundreds of thousands of human bones are displayed to the eerie delight of onlookers), were magnificent in their own way.



So, if you’re ever feeling the need to have the spark of your life reignited, I suggest a trip to Paris. I have never been anywhere else in the world that had such an immense amount of awe-inspiring content crammed into such a small space.

In this week’s feature, “Saltburn” starring Academy Award nominee Barry Keoghan (“The Banshees of Erin”), we meet a young man who also finds himself on an awe-inspiring tour when he spends the summer at a classmate’s estate in the countryside of England. What transpires is a tale of desire and privilege wrapped in a complex web of twisted relationships.

This is the film everyone is talking about, mostly because of the morbid sexuality displayed in several of the scenes. I won’t go into detail, but if you are easily offended, you may want to shy away from this one. With that said, the film still offers an insidiously entertaining storyline.

Check this one out if you want to be part of the water cooler chat. “Saltburn” encompasses some fantastic acting intertwined with a perverse scenario. But even if you think you see the conclusion coming, you’re in for some surprises.

A distorted “B-” for “Saltburn,” now available to stream on Netflix.

Got a question or comment for Dom? You can email him at [moviediary@att.net](mailto:moviediary@att.net).

## Perfecting the life of a ‘ski bum’

When I first moved to Killington in the early 2000s, I was able to skin right out my door and into the woods. I mean, literally. On a snowy day, I could put my skis on the walkway, make a couple strides through the parking area and then climb a plowed berm into the woods where I could just explore for hours. A decade later, I had to walk maybe a quarter mile to the trailhead and could skin up the mountain from there. Another decade, and now I had to walk 1/2 mile with my skis over my shoulder to make the same trailhead. And now, I have to actually get in my car if I don’t want to start my skin with a 30 degree ascent.

Is it weird that my life has moved away from the resort as I have gotten older? When I first moved here in my early 20s, I was involved in everything the resort had to offer. In the beginning, I taught skiing. I was on snow everyday, all day and it was glorious. We started Telemarking and snowboarding just so that we weren’t skiing. We bought skins to get out on the mountain at night, after Happy Hour, of course.

Then I got promoted. That sucked. It was amazing at first. I was managing a program that taught thousands of 4-to-6-year-olds how to ski over the course of a season. I removed the toys and television from the room and declared that all we needed were skis to have fun. I was making a difference but it quickly became my life. Instead of on-snow, I spent my time indoors

working on making skiing the best experience ever. I was so focused on helping others to ski, that I forgot to ski myself.

To live that close to the resort, to literally work at the resort and see my day count dwindle to less than if I had been driving four hours each way every weekend with the rest of my family. I was here, but I couldn’t get out of my own way enough to actually commit to the skiing. I was worried that I would fail, that I wasn’t going to make it as a ski bum, so I forgot to be one.

It was devastating. Here I was, having made the decision to become a ski bum and I was still petrified of becoming one. It actually took me a few years to overcome the financial fears and just step into the abyss of becoming a bum. I quit teaching skiing and took a restaurant job so I could do my own skiing all day. And I never felt so free in my entire life.

I’m not sure when we actually started counting days ourselves. As a kid, my mom had kept a record, writing our first initial in the top right corner of each square on the calendar. Dad started going to PSIA events just so he could have an excuse for some midweek days here and there. As the next generation, we were anti-PSIA, so we found ourselves with skins exploring the backcountry in ways that would make me cringe now.

It wasn’t long before we were pulling 200-day seasons, hiking up in September and June to make the ends work. It wasn’t



Living the Dream  
By Merisa Sherman

Living the Dream → 36

## Growing up in Queens versus Rutland

A column that I wrote awhile back compared growing up in the city to growing up in the country. Reading that column caused a friend of mine to take her own trip back in time and she shared her memories with me.



Looking Back  
By Mary Ellen Shaw

As I was reading her email I realized that my early years in the city of Rutland actually seemed like “country living” in comparison to her life in Queens, New York.

The friend I am referring to is Diana Fellows. She and her husband, Bill, were our long time neighbors until they moved to Massachusetts a little over a year ago. Diana reads my column and tells me that she did many of the same things I have written about, only they were done differently.

Diana grew up in Queens, New York, in the ‘40s and ‘50s. Her family lived on the third floor of a walkup. If you wanted your laundry to dry in the fresh air you hung the clothes on the roof of the building. That same roof was also a spot to sunbathe for Diana and her sisters. In my family the wash was hung on a large clothes line in our backyard. There were four lines of cloth rope and each one was 8 feet long. Sunbathing for me was done on the grass of our back lawn. However, roof sunbathing did occur in my college days on the roof of Trinity College. We folded record album covers and lined them with aluminum foil to tan our faces. No wonder many of us “senior citizens” need regular visits to a dermatologist!

Diana went to Girl Scout Camp in Bear Mountain and loved being outside among the trees and grass. I was also a Girl Scout and our troop spent one overnight each summer at the scout camp on Notch Road in Mendon. Even though it was just a short distance from Rutland it gave us the experience of being in the woods. We had bunk beds and I remember being in the top bunk and spilling hot chocolate on the head of the girl under me.

Looking back → 37

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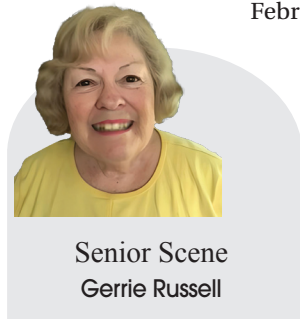
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## February, the month of love

“Carry out a random act of kindness with no expectation of reward, safe in the knowledge that one day someone might do the same for you,” said Princess Diana.



Senior Scene  
Gerrie Russell

February is the month of love, and hopefully, we are surrounded from all directions: family, friends and pets. Love and kindness all make a difference and are never wasted. Please add a random act of kindness to the many other resolutions you are trying to keep.

### Senior lunches

Our senior lunches continue on Wednesdays at The Lookout, starting at 11:30 a.m. It’s a good time to relax and see friends and maybe meet new people. We don’t order from the menu but the staff always has a nice surprise planned for us and the cost is \$5. Our local group is diverse so one never knows where conversations will lead. It is always good to let me know you are coming so I can give The Lookout a general idea of numbers. Please remember that The Lookout is a busy restaurant and don’t ask for special food or special service. It is also only respectful to arrive on time. The Lookout has given us a home for many years and we are very appreciative. Each month I send a report to the state (the state contributes \$0.85 to each lunch) and the town of Killington (which contributes \$3.15 to each lunch). When our \$5 is added, the total is \$9. So The Lookout is losing money but still welcomes us with a smile every week. The entire staff makes us feel valued so let’s be sure to show them the consideration they deserve.

### Sherburne Library events

As usual, the library is offering lots of choices in February. Movies, a book discussion, a painting class, a discussion group, an American sign language class and a special event.

The movies are held on Mondays and start at 1 p.m. There is popcorn or you can bring your lunch. The selections for February are as follows.

- Feb. 5: “The Boys in the Boat”
- Feb. 12: “The Color Purple”
- Feb. 19: “A Million Miles Away”
- Feb. 26: “Maestro”

Book Ends Book Club will meet on Wednesday, Feb. 28 at 1 p.m. The selection for this month is “Once There Were Wolves” by Charlotte McConaghy. A story of a woman desperate to save the creatures she loves. She also must care for her sister as they both are trying to heal from terrible secrets that drove them from Alaska. Set in the remote Highlands of Scotland, it is an unforgettable tale.

Every Friday from 11:15 a.m.-12-noon there is an American sign language class. This has been going on for sometime so there are difference levels of expertise in the class. Maybe you just want to brush up on your skills or maybe you are starting from scratch. All are welcome.

The third Wednesday of every month we have a discussion group called Thoughts on Aging. It starts at 1 p.m. and we talk and talk. You would be surprised at the various conversations we have had. One thing for sure,

if you have a problem so does someone else and it helps to talk about it. This month’s theme is: draw a line in the sand. There are only two rules: everyone’s opinion is valid and what we discuss does not leave the room.

On Saturday, Feb. 10 at 11 a.m., a very special event will honor Killington Resort founder Preston Smith. A new display in the meeting room will include a sign he made for the Sherburne Fire Dept. and many photos of the department from many years ago. Pres Smith himself will attend via Zoom and all are invited to attend.

### TMD information, dinner

A public information meeting before Town Meeting Day is Monday, March 4 and the Little White Church will be providing a takeout dinner from the public safety building on the Killington Road. The dinner will be lasagna, salad, bread and a dessert, all for a suggested donation of \$5. Serving will be 4:30-6 p.m. All proceeds will benefit the Little White Church.

### Breathing, etc.

Breathe deeply, choose your thoughts wisely, live in the moment, open your heart and accept yourself as the beautiful being that you are. These directions were sent to me by a dear friend that I had not heard from in years. She is on a spiritual journey and part of that journey was connecting with old friends to share the new philosophy that she is trying to embrace. With her permission, I am going to share some of what she told me.

Breathing deeply is key for good health. We can all learn to do this. Choosing thoughts wisely impacts our body, mind and soul. We can all learn to choose our thoughts. Living in the moment gives us the power of choice. We can all learn to live in the moment. Open your heart to loving and being loved.

heart to loving and being loved. This will set you free from stress. We can all learn to open our heart. Accepting yourself as you are lets go of anxiety and most of our fears. We can all learn to accept ourselves.

Can we all learn these things at our age? I don’t know. With my friend’s encouragement I am going to try. But this is not the end of the story.

I think I shared with all of you that I had received a little book for Christmas called “Daily Sunshine” by Clare Josa. As my friend and I chatted about her present life and also what I had been doing all these years, we realized that we were both reading the same book!

She was reading every page over and over. Unfortunately, I had barely glanced at it. However, I am reading it now and will share other tidbits throughout the year.

### Focused yet serene

Green tea....one of my favorites and thankfully, the more I read about green tea, the more I learn about its value. It is known for its health benefits but it can also make you happier. Who doesn’t want to be happy? Scientifically, there are bioactives in green tea that keep the mind focused yet serene. It is not a stretch to think they contribute to the overall wellbeing experienced in Okinawa, where locals often drink jasmine infused green tea. You have often heard me mention the Blue Zones, known for their longevity, and Okinawa is one of those zones. Okinawans also have lower rates of cancer, heart disease and dementia. Plus, and this is important, women live longer there than in any place on earth. Three cups

Senior Scene→39



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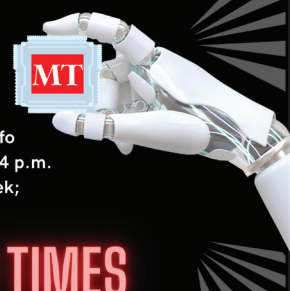


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Courtesy Killington Resort

*Pink sun shines off the western slopes of Killington Resort and Pico Mountain — the last light of the day warming the south-western sides while leaving the north-eastern to cool off over night.*

## Building our Killington dream lodge, Part 1: Vermont or bust

*Forward: I've decided to share my family's adventures of building our ski house since I was a girl.*

For several weeks, I'll recount in my column early memories of our Killington years.

Isn't it strange while living our lives, we often lose sight of what is special—of people, places, and all that helps to form us which is unforgettable? While reminiscing about my childhood and writing down memories that I treasure, (some of which I'd forgotten), I'm realizing how unique and amazing building our ski lodge in Killington was. To follow Dad's dream and commute each weekend from Montclair, New Jersey, was a formidable life journey. Now that we live in it half the year, (with running water and flushing jons), I treasure the years that we spent here, roughing it and building our lodge. It makes me appreciate more than I realized the gift my parents bestowed on me.

### Vermont or bust

We began our weekly Vermont pilgrimage from Upper Montclair, New Jersey, where we lived. I was 7 when Killington first opened in 1958. Dad had just bought two acres of land near the beginning of Roaring Brook Road off the Killington access road. We forged the stream, for there was no bridge, (where later the first firehouse was built), turned the bend, headed up the hill, then ascended our driveway (as steep as Mount Everest). Ours was the first homesite on the left. The Ayers Family was a little farther up and Preston Smith's house, one mile at the end.

Dad was a mechanical engineer at Foster Wheeler Corporation and Mom, a piano teacher/poet/writer. My wonderful brothers, Jack and Bill, were 10 and



**Mountain Meditation**  
By Marguerite  
Jill Dye

seven years my elders, respectively. They joined us on weekends whenever they could between their other commitments. Jack studied forestry at the University of New Hampshire while Billy played football at Montclair High and later attended Bates College in Maine.

As a proper young lady in Upper Montclair, heading north to Vermont was my great escape. It was the opposite

of our New Jersey life where we enjoyed luxuries and comforts. I donned tomboy clothes and grabbed my gear, ready for adventures in the great outdoors. Our life in Vermont was challenging and tough, but I relished the freedom it provided me.

Friday evenings we left New Jersey as soon as Dad got off work. Sometimes we fetched him in New York City then took the Taconic or Merritt Parkway, past the iconic Taconic Diner. When Dad's office moved to Summit, New Jersey, we drove north on the Garden State Parkway to Route 17 for the cheapest gas, then passed the Motel on the Mountain near the beginning of the New York State Thruway. Every week Mom told the story of the Japanese architect who camped out there to find the best views of the sunrise and sunset. He positioned the motel based on aesthetics and the *feng shui* of that spot. (I'm sure it inspired Mom to make sure our views were of sunsets,

Pico and Killington.) We continued north to the Northway and east on Route 4 to Rutland and Killington.

Our Labrador Retriever, Black Star of Highland, remained on duty throughout the night, panting over Dad's shoulder and ear, watching for squirrels, groundhogs and deer and anything else in view that moved. Mom sipped hot coffee she poured from her Thermos. Dad drank Postum. I savored hot chocolate. We munched on bologna or tuna fish sandwiches as we looked for our favorite landmarks.

Hours into the six hour drive, we stopped for a midnight snack at an eatery like the Silver Dollar Diner in Whitehall, New York, or the Coffee Cup in Castleton. Mom adored clam strips and onion rings at Howard Johnson's until the day McDonalds opened

in at the Albany exit off the Northway. Then hot coffee, a burger and fries were the fare that she craved every weekend. Dad liked burgers but preferred a Western sandwich, which reminded him of his boyhood years when his father served as American Consul General in Juárez, Mexico. (I still choose Western sandwiches when I can.)

Stopping for a bite was a dreamy experience because I'd already fallen asleep. It was well worth waking up for the food, camaraderie, tradition and excitement of being on our way to further adventures in the Green Mountain State. To be continued next week...

*Marguerite Jill Dye is an artist and writer who divides her time between Killington and Bradenton, Florida.*

Hours into the six hour drive, we stopped for a midnight snack at an eatery like the Silver Dollar Diner in Whitehall, New York, or the Coffee Cup in Castleton, Vermont. Mom adored clam strips and onion rings at Howard Johnson's until the day McDonalds opened in at the Albany exit off the Northway.

## ← Funologist:

from page 30

snow, letting you go." I smile. And say thank you out loud for my ears and everything hidden to hear.

I open my eyes and watch snowflakes land on the glowing, orange end of the smudge stick. With a spit and sizzle, the fire goes out.

I hang my coat on a low branch, step out of my boots, and stuff my hat in one. I sink to the ground and lie in the snow on my back. I know it will be cold, so I embrace it. Expect it. I slow my breathing and remind myself that discomfort is simply a stone wall I need to climb over to reach the magic on the other side.

I scoop tall handfuls of snow on my head and scrub. I feel the delicate but sharp snow crystals across my scalp, hair, and face, then scrub behind my ears. My breath sharpens as the snow warms and waters against my skin, sliding down my back in clumps. I imagine all unwellness exiting through my skin, sliding down down down with the snow. To the ground.

I reach for fresh handfuls of snow and scrub my neck, shoulders, armpits, stomach, and chest. I sit up, scooping all the snow I can reach onto my lap, and second-scrub the landscape of my skin.

I stand, move to a fresh patch of snow, and lie on my stomach.

I lower my face and gently compress the airy snowflakes into a face mask.

The warmth from my breath melts the snow, bathing my face in cold, clean, snow water. I am taking the waters. Once again, I imagine all negativity, unwellness, and sickness, sliding down down down to the snow, letting it go.

I stand, and using the palms of my hands, shuff the clinging snow clumps off my bright pink skin and redress. I smile, say thank you and head down the hill to breakfast.

After breakfast, I gather the toys and gear I need to ski out my door and into the farmers' fields that gave me permission to ski on their land.

In the last hour of daylight, as the storm is tapering down, I head to my nearby lake for a swim. This late arriving winter has left the lake surface free of ice. But the snow is cooling the water and floats in great bergs of slush on the surface.

I swim straight for the slushy bergs and laugh out loud as I imagine myself an olive in a giant martini. A snowmantini.

By nightfall, I head home, having wrung every drop of fun and wellness from the season it was—today.

In the Funology calendar. There are 365 seasons a year.

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What season is it where you are today?

*For more information about the author, visit: [sandradeeowens.com](http://sandradeeowens.com).*

I swim straight for the slushy bergs and laugh out loud as I imagine myself an olive in a giant martini. A snowmantini.

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### Living the Dream: from page 31

long before the sport became an addiction, rather than a pastime, and I would get the shakes if we hadn't left to ski by 1p.m. It wasn't long before I was engulfed in every type of skiing — downhill, uphill and sideways — and all the gear that went with it. It wasn't long before I needed a ski shop job to afford the gear to do all the skiing I wanted — until I realized that once again I had placed myself indoors during the day. Again.

It wasn't long before I had to reinvent myself again, this time as a real estate agent. Having grown up in the industry, the move made sense. But it felt like giving over to the Dark Side of The Force as it was something that I could have done in my past life. But I was doing it here. Which

means blocking out two hours a day to ski and Saturdays for coaching at KMS. And I have never felt so free in my entire life.

So many people define being a ski bum as someone who runs a dishwasher at night, has a car full of beer and or sleeps in a van down by the river. But that is only one version of the lifestyle. A ski bum can be anyone willing to live a mountain-centric lifestyle. Being a ski bum is more about the flexibility and willingness to go with the flow if only for one reason: so you can spend more time in the mountains.

*Merisa Sherman is a long time Killington resident, Realtor, bartender, KMS coach and committed ski bum. She can be reached at Merisa.Sherman@FourSeasonsSIR.com.*



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Submitted

## ← Looking Back:.....

from page 31

Unfortunately, she stuck her head out of the lower bunk as my mishap was occurring!

Diana won a scholarship to a Catholic high school in Brooklyn and had to take first a bus and then a train to get to school.

She told me, "The train from Queens to Brooklyn was like the school bus in Vermont. Every stop we made was for another school so we saw the same kids everyday on the way to our individual schools."

I also went to a Catholic high school, Mount Saint Joseph Academy. We either walked to school or got a ride from our parents. There was no bus and we certainly didn't need a train to get us there. It was about a 2-mile walk

from my house. Going to school in the morning was an easy walk but carrying all of our textbooks uphill over River Street Bridge on the way home was quite strenuous at times. Nobody used backpacks. We carried all our books in front of us.

The manner in which Diana met her future husband sounds like something that belongs in a movie. They met while riding on the Brooklyn-Queens subway every day to get to school. Although they attended different high schools their time on the train as well as studying together at the local library was enough to spark a romance. They attended different colleges after high school and eight years from the first time they met on the train they were married. The year was 1962 and they had their wedding reception at Tavern on the Green in Central Park. Diana said it was a small restaurant back then and not "glitzy"

compared to later years.

I met my husband, Peter, the old fashioned way. Someone played matchmaker and introduced us. My late relative, Loyola McDonough and her husband, John,

would sometimes go to The Carriage Room for a drink after work. Peter was often seated near them and Loyola always chatted with him and thought he was a really nice guy. So she told him there was someone she would like him to meet — me! The rest is history. We were late bloomers compared to Diana and Bill as we were in our 30s when we met. Our wedding reception was held at the Pico Base Lodge on the mountain. Pico

was Peter's home away from home back in the day! Not quite Tavern on the Green but locally it was considered a great place for a reception.

So how did Diana and Bill end up in Rutland? They were ready for a change from city living and since Diana had a sister and cousins who lived in Rutland it seemed like the perfect place to call home. Bill purchased Jim Muscatello's accounting business and Diana taught in the Rutland City school system. They called Rutland their "home" for over 50 years before moving to Massachusetts.

Good neighbors are always missed when they move but thanks to emails keeping in touch is easy. Plus, Diana and Bill come to Rutland in the summer to visit friends and Diana and I can catch up over lunch or coffee. You can bet that we will take a look back when we do!

However, roof sunbathing did occur in my college days on the roof of Trinity College. We folded record album covers and lined them with aluminum foil to tan our faces. No wonder many of us "senior citizens" need regular visits to a dermatologist!

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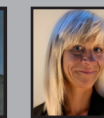
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### Senior Scene:

from page 33

a day is about right. Supposedly, same day and long lasting elevation of mental health and mood as well as potential anti-inflammatory effects will be your reward.

The wall sit, a simple body weight exercise that can be done virtually anywhere, isn't just for body strength. It can also help lower your blood pressure. The British Journal of Sports Medicine recently reported that wall sits, also known as wall squats, have been proven to lower systolic (the top number) and the diastolic (the bottom number) of your blood pressure reading. Find a wall you can lean up against. Take a couple of steps forward, keeping your feet hip width apart and slide your back down the wall until you appear to be in a seated position. Go only as far as your knees will allow you. If you hold a wall sit for two minutes and

then rest for two minutes and repeat four times, it takes only 16 minutes to complete a set. Actually this exercise engages a lot of muscles, helps build strength and improves balance and range of motion.

After completing the above you can have a piece of cake! I haven't shared a recipe in a while so thought I'd share one of my favorites.

- 2 cups applesauce
- 1 box spice cake mix
- 1 chopped apple

Mix all together and bake for 40-45 minutes at 350 degrees.

This tastes good but smells absolutely wonderful while baking on a cold winter day.

Please reach out to each other and always be grateful. Love who you can. Help where you can and give what you can.

Best regards, Gerrie



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- Open living concept
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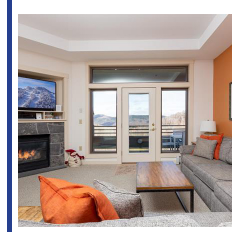
Upper level 2BR+LOFT, 2BA, 1,342 Sq.Ft.



- Great rental history
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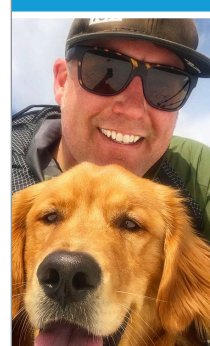
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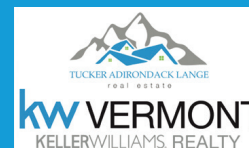


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