



100 DAYS

Saturday, Feb. 10, Killington Resort notched its 100th day open for the 2023/24 season. Also this past week, area public school students celebrated their 100th day in school.



BOUCHARD IS BACK

While physically the former executive director of the Paramount Theatre is back in Rutland, his spirit may still be in the Riviere Maya from where he brings readers a new five-part series!

Page 34



WINTERFEST KICKS OFF FRIDAY, FEB. 16

The downtown Rutland week-long festival is packed full of fun activities for all ages.

Page 18, 21

Lawmakers move to replace controversial property tax cap with targeted 'discount'

Late change affects formulas for all school district budgets, rates

By Habib Sabet/VTDigger

Lawmakers are fast-tracking a bill that would replace a controversial 5% cap on homestead property tax rates with a new tax "discount" on those rates for certain school districts.

The bill, H.850, would scrap the blanket 5% property tax cap originally included in Act 127 and instead give districts a 1 cent discount on homestead property for every percent decrease in their "tax capacity" resulting from Act 127. The discount, only available to districts whose tax rates are adversely affected by that law, would be phased out over five years.

Legislators in the House Ways and Means Committee, where the bill was written, voted unanimously on Friday, Feb. 9, to sponsor the measure, which now heads to the House Committee on Appropriations for review. An unusual Monday committee meeting is scheduled for a possible vote, so the bill may see a floor vote early this week.

Act 127 was meant to direct education funding toward

schools with students who often require more resources to teach, such as English language learners and low-income students. Lawmakers hoped the shift in pupil weighting would result in a more equitable funding structure. But, seeking to soften the blow on other districts, lawmakers also included a cap limiting increases to the homestead property tax rate for

any district to 5% for the next five years.

The push to replace the cap comes amid concerns that it has had unintended consequences that have added to other inflationary pressures that increased proposed education spending statewide

by almost 15% this year. Those increases are in turn expected to cause skyrocketing property taxes, which latest estimates indicate could go up by 20% on average next year.

"By doing this we will be able to make further action toward lowering property taxes this year," Rep. Emilie Kornheiser,

Act 127 → 8

To allow school districts time to make changes, the bill would let districts delay their budget votes, which traditionally occur on or before Town Meeting Day in March, until no later than April 15.

70+ Club: Keeping seniors active

By Karen D. Lorentz

Lloyd Lambert (1901-1997) was a successful businessman, eminent ski journalist, and passionate skier who founded the 70+ Ski Club in 1977.

"This club for seniors, which continues to thrive today, is really a culmination of a life spent promoting a sport my grandfather loved," Richard Lambert, Jr. told the Mountain Times.

Today the club sports over 3,500 members from the U.S. and Canada. The oldest two active members are over 100 and there are about 125 members in their 90s and over a thousand in their 80s!

The 70+ Club 2024 calendar began with a Vermont ski fest held in January at Okemo Mountain.

Passion leads to club founding

Lloyd Lambert bought his first pair of skis in 1915 at a local hardware store for \$1.98. He was among the first to ride the ski trains from Schenectady to North Creek, New York, in the 1930s. Although he had a fulltime job as a display manager for a department store chain in Schenectady, he followed his passion and became president of the local Alpine Ski Club and joined the National Ski Patrol. During World War II he volunteered to conduct search and rescue operations for any downed planes in the area

70+ Club → 5



By Victoria Gaither

Killington ladies celebrate National Women's and Girls' Day

Instructors gave free ski and snowboard lessons on National Women's and Girls' Sports Day last Wednesday. See story page 5.

Bill eliminating smart devices in Vt schools aims to improve student health — but education leaders uncertain

By Holly Sullivan/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.

Laura Derriendinger wants to protect Vermont children from social media, or as she defined it to Senate Education Committee members Jan.

26, "a toxic rabbit hole." "There are class-action lawsuits against social media companies on behalf of parents whose children have died because of direct product exposure to these different social medias," said Derriendinger, a mother and nurse who serves as a planning commissioner and town

health officer in Middletown Springs. "While these products have become a norm, what the science is telling us now is that it's not a safe or a healthy norm, especially for our children."

Derriendinger, along with other Rutland-area citizens, recently approached Sen. Terry Williams, R-Rutland, asking for a bill limiting

digital technology in schools.

The result: Williams and other legislators introduced S.284, which would dramatically limit the use of electronic devices, digital platforms and more in all Vermont schools. The bill has drawn testimony across several committee meetings in recent

Tech ban → 9



Submitted

On Tuesday, Feb. 6 Carris Reels and the Carris Reels charitable giving committee presented a \$10,000 check to the American Cancer Society (ACS) and Relay For Life (RFL) of Rutland County. Carris Reels has supported ACS and RFL of Rutland for over 18 years—as a corporate sponsor and through team participation at the event. However, this was the largest sponsorship check they've given. Pictured (l-r): ELT members Francis Davis, Lisa Tracy; ACS development manager Kay Corio, ELT co-chair Ken Shattuck, ELT member Angela Rivers, ELT Chair Richard Vitagliano; Carris Reels employees and team Carris Reeler members: Tina Bell (team captain), Casey Mattison (West Rutland Assembly), and Hunter McCaleb (representing the plastics facility). Not pictured, but also in attendance, Jessica Utter, Carris Reels charitable giving committee leader.

Carris Reels Inc. awards the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life of Rutland County with \$10,000 sponsorship

With just four months until the American Cancer Society Relay For Life of Rutland County, local business Carris Reels is already stepping up to support the cause and help end cancer as we know it, for everyone.

The Relay for Life of Rutland County will celebrate 35 years on Saturday, June 1, and for the past 14 years, Carris Reels has been a sponsor. This donation is the largest financial contribution in its tenured history in supporting Relay For Life.

The donation is the result of long-time walkers Tina Bell, team captain of Carris Reel Walkers, who nominated the event for the award. Bell will participate in her 18th Relay For Life this June.

"Deciding to take an extra step this year and present our story to the committee for special consideration was a no-brainer. I'm so grateful we did," said Bell. "It was an emotional moment for all in attendance since it was unknown what the donation amount would be."

Since 1991, Relay For Life events have helped the American Cancer Society invest \$3.1 billion into cancer research, contributing to 3.8 million fewer cancer deaths and provide support programs for people with cancer and their caregivers, including a home away from home at our Hope Lodge communities when they need to travel for

treatment and free access to cancer information via our 24-hour helpline, which responds to 300,000 calls and chats annually.

"In Rutland, Relays come together because of a shared passion for ending cancer as we know it. No matter how cancer has impacted your life and how you want to get involved, you have a team here ready to welcome you," said Kay Corio, development manager for the American Cancer Society.

"We share a passion for saving lives," stated Richard Vitagliano, event leadership team chair of Relay For Life Rutland County. "In 2023, more than 1.9 million new cancer cases were expected to be diagnosed in the United States, and more than 600,000 Americans were expected to die from cancer. This year, we are committed to raising \$165,000 for the American Cancer Society's mission, and with corporate sponsors such as Carris Reels, we will not only reach our goal but exceed it."

There are many ways to get involved.

- Join: Create a team and join the event on Saturday, June 1, at the Vermont State Fairgrounds.
- Donate: Your donation fuels the American Cancer Society's fight against cancer.

For more information, visit: relayforlife.org/rutlandvt.

13 asthma-friendly Vermont schools are recognized

Doty Memorial School in Rutland County and Cavendish Town Elementary School in Windsor County both earn Gold status

Thirteen schools from around the state have been recognized by the Vermont Dept. of Health's "asthma-friendly school" initiative on Feb. 12 for their commitment to asthma-control strategies to support the lung health of their students.

Asthma is a potentially serious condition that includes clogging and swelling of the airways that can lead to difficulty breathing, wheezing and coughing. Nearly 9,000 (1 in 12) children in Vermont have asthma, and of those, 61% of have uncontrolled asthma.

Health Commissioner Mark Levine, MD said the number of new schools participating shows a growing understanding about the impact of asthma on children's health and ability to learn. "Asthma can be a dangerous condition for many children. Asthma symptoms can disrupt sleep, make it difficult to concentrate, and can lead to missed school days," said Dr. Levine. "Schools that have asthma-control policies in place help create a healthy environment where children spend much of their day."

Vermont has one of the nation's highest asthma rates, with significant contributors being high rates of tobacco use and vaping, exposure to secondhand smoke, and poor air quality among older and poorly ventilated homes. In addition, people who rent their housing, and those with incomes less than 125% of the federal poverty level, have disproportionately high rates of uncontrolled asthma.

Dr. Levine also noted the impact asthma can have on children's activities and social growth. "One in two children with asthma experience limitations on their ability to fully participate in school sports and other activities that foster social, physical, creative and emotional development. This is why I'm pleased to see more schools joining families in making asthma management a priority for our children's health," he said.

Through the asthma-friendly schools initiative, schools are supported in developing policies and strategies that are low-cost and easy to implement.

Successful efforts include:

- Collecting up-to-date asthma action plans for students
- Use of only Green Seal certified cleaning products
- Training school staff and faculty in asthma management and emergency response
- Reviewing self-care and the correct use of asthma medications with students

The 13 schools recognized for the 2022-2023 school year are:

Gold:

1. Robinson Elementary School, Addison County
2. Brewster Pierce Memorial School, Chittenden County
3. Winooski School District, Chittenden County
4. Doty Memorial School, Rutland County
5. Cavendish Town Elementary School, Windsor County

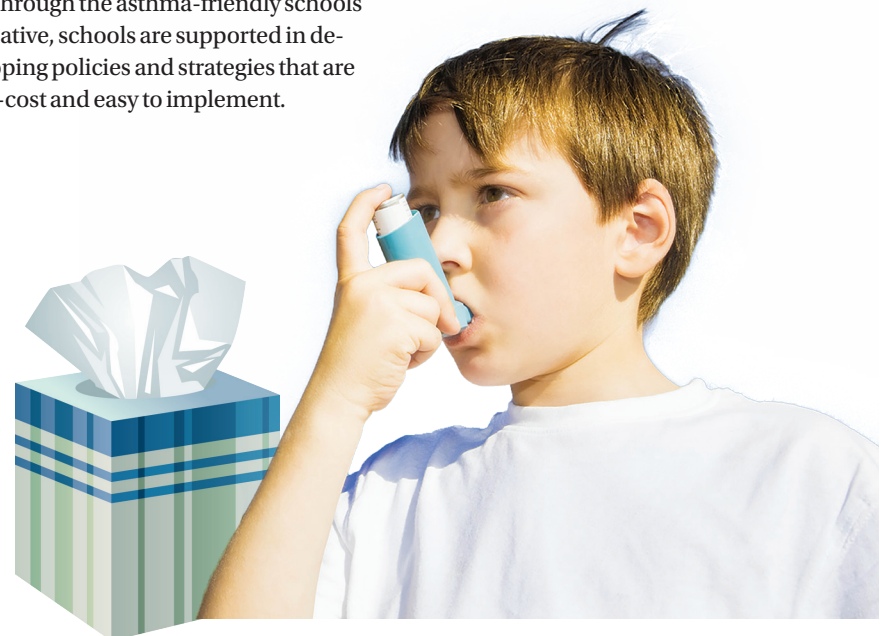
Silver:

6. Newark Street School, Caledonia County
7. Currier Memorial School, Rutland County
8. Guilford Central School, Windham County
9. Townshend Elementary School, Windham County
10. Union Street School, Windsor County

Bronze:

11. East Burke School, Caledonia County
12. Alburgh Community Education Center, Grand Isle County
13. Brattleboro Area Middle School, Windham County

For more information, visit HealthVermont.gov/Asthma-Friendly-Schools.



Submitted

White River Junction VA housed over 127 Veterans experiencing homelessness in 2023

As part of VA's nationwide homelessness goals for 2023, the White River Junction VA Healthcare System and its partner agencies have permanently housed 127 homeless veterans.

These placements, along with placements provided by other VA health care systems across America, led to VA housing 46,552 veterans nationwide, meeting and exceeding its national goal by more than 22.5%.

Brett Rusch, MD, executive director of White River Junction VA, credits the White River Junction VA Homeless Services Program team and outstanding community partnerships throughout the region, noting that White River Junction has exceeded the national goal by over 140%.

"This goal was achieved through the hard work and dedication of our homeless programs staff, our grantees and contractors and our valued community partners," said Rusch. "The progress we're seeing with veteran homelessness in our Vermont and New Hampshire catchment areas shows

that we have the right solutions to end homelessness for all Veterans we care for."

Meghan Snitkin, White River Junction VA Homeless Services Program manager added, "We couldn't be more pleased with these results. We share this success with our partner agencies within the Vermont Veterans Committee on Homelessness, including Supportive Services for Veteran Families at the University of Vermont, Veterans Inc., and The Veterans Place. We have found that working with our community partners, using the one team approach, has been instrumental in exceeding our 2023 calendar year goals."

Ending veteran homelessness is a top priority of VA and President Biden, who has made supporting veterans a key pillar of his Unity Agenda for the nation. We all have a part to play in ending veteran homelessness.

If you are a veteran who is experiencing homelessness or at risk for homelessness, call the National Call Center for Homeless Veterans at 877-4AID-VET (877-424-3838).

VINS appoints next executive director Alden Smith

QUECHEE—The Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) Board of Trustees named Alden Smith the next executive director of the Quechee-based environmental education nonprofit, Feb. 6.

Smith will serve as chief strategist, fundraiser, educational leader, and operational manager of the organization.

"After a comprehensive search, we chose Alden Smith from a slate of strong candidates. We are delighted to welcome Alden as VINS' new executive director and are confident that he will maintain the organization's excellent reputation in the Upper Valley and beyond while also expanding our reach and impact," said Jack Lee, chair of the VINS Board of Trustees.

Smith will report to the Board of Trustees and will lead a staff that includes 24 full-time and eight part-time, seasonal employees and



Submitted

Alden Smith

volunteers.

From 2002 to 2022, Smith served as the director of the Mountain School of Milton Academy, a semester school for high school juniors located on a farm in Vershire, Vermont. During his tenure there, Smith successfully stewarded and implemented several strategic

plans, built an endowment, increased alumni engagement, and expanded the campus to 420 acres, turning it into a model of energy efficiency and outdoor education.

A graduate of Davidson College in North Carolina and Middlebury College's Bread Loaf School of English in Vermont, Smith taught high school English for five years at Choate Rosemary Hall in Connecticut before moving in 1999 to Vermont. While managing the Mountain School for two decades, he continued to teach English and take students on animal tracking and foraging expeditions.

Smith succeeds current Executive Director Charles (Charlie) F. Rattigan, who assumed the role in 2014 and led VINS through a period of extraordinary growth, including the recent addition of the Forest Canopy Walk to

VINS → 14

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← **70+ Club:**

from page 1

while on ski patrol.

Lambert also began writing a weekly ski column which ran in the Schenectady Gazette for 27 years. In 1948, he began broadcasting ski reports and did interviews on radio and organized the New York Capital District Ski Council. He served on the board of directors of the U.S. Eastern Amateur Ski Association and was a charter member of the Eastern Ski Writers Association. In the 1970s, he produced a half-hour ski program for public television. He also developed a ski museum at Hunter Mountain with early ski equipment that included a pair of skis dating to 1750!

“It was his radio audience that inspired him to start the 70+ Ski Club. He was dismayed that fellow seniors were giving up skiing because they could no longer afford it on fixed incomes or simply had no one to ski with. He hated to see folks wasting away in rocking chairs. Like the seniors who join the club today, he knew keeping active was the key to staying healthy,” Lambert, Jr. said.

He hated to see folks wasting away in rocking chairs.

Contacting the ski resort owners he had built relationships with, Lloyd persuaded them to offer free skiing for “70+” members. Membership

skyrocketed, earning him and the club national acclaim, Lambert, Jr. recalls, noting his grandfather skied “well into his 90s and was active right up until his death at age 96.

“My father continued his father’s efforts and now I’m the third generation to lead the club. I have tried to follow my father in promoting the social aspects skiing with the club offers. Many people associate the club with free skiing, but that was not the motivation for starting the club. Free skiing was the tool my grandfather used to accomplish his real goal to keep seniors active,” Lambert, Jr. noted.

Today, many resorts that don’t offer free skiing to “70+” members offer them discounted skiing or free skiing to members of a higher age.

In 1988, Lloyd Lambert was awarded the U.S. Ski Writers Golden Quill for his contributions to skiing. “I think he relished recognition by his peers, but getting his audience out on the slopes was what motivated him,” Lambert Jr. said. “I remember he used to tell members how important it was to wear their 70+ jacket patches to show all those 50-year-olds that skiing was a lifetime sport. Today, those 50-years-olds are old enough to join the club. They say before seeing all the 70- and 80-plussers on the slopes they never imagined they would still be skiing now. They ski with three and even four generations of their families but say the most fun is skiing with their peers!”

Today’s fun

That fun includes opportunities to ski all over the world with fellow members. Okemo has hosted the event in January for over 10 years, attracting participants from all over to enjoy slope-side accommodations, good food, skiing/riding, a ski race, and camaraderie. They bring family members and enjoy reviving friendships or making friends with fellow skiers with whom they can ski, Lambert said.

Other January activities included a Mid West Ski Fest and a week at Les Trois Vallées in France. Trips to Big Sky, Blackcomb Whistler, Utah, Aspen Snowmass, Mammoth, and Chile are also offered this year.



Submitted

For more information, visit 70plusskiclub.org. Lloyd Lambert, founder of 70+ Ski Club pictured in 1966 at age 95.



Courtesy Killington Ski Resort

Female team leaders take part in National Girls and Women in Sports Day.

National Girls and Women in Sports Day celebrated with camaraderie, bonding and volunteering

By Victoria Gaither

The women of Killington Ski Resort participated in National Girls and Women in Sports Day last Wednesday, Feb. 7. It was a day to celebrate the accomplishments of female athletes and recognize their influence in sports.

Kristel Killary, brand marketing and communications manager at Killington, said: “The goal is to get the amazing women working at Killington out for a casual get-together.”

Mother Nature delivered blue skies, sunshine, and terrific snow conditions, but for Sophia Clements, it was more than just the outdoors. It was bonding at its best. “It’s awesome to meet new women that I would have never met before ‘cause we are all in different departments,” she said.

Clements, food and beverage boutique supervisor at the Grand Hotel, continued: “It gives you the opportunity to do some networking, and be social and have fun outside of the office. So it proves we have fun while working at the ski resort.”

Clements shared time on the mountain with Halley Riley-Elliott, a snowboarder. Riley-Elliott is a vehicle maintenance manager at Killington and started her position at the mountain a year ago.

“This is my first time riding with Sophia. We know each other, but it’s our first being on the slopes,” she said.

This real-time meetup for the team leaders is what National Girls and Women in Sports Day is about: a chance to build relationships, learn, and make memories.

After skiing and riding for two hours, the group of about 15

women spent time together at the K-1 Lodge, sharing stories about their day on the mountain.

Over at Snowshed, another group of ladies who are ski and snowboard instructors shared lunch, laughs and lessons.

They spent the morning helping celebrate by giving women free ski and snowboarding lessons.

Leslie Guth, private lesson team lead, said: “The clinic is open to anybody at any level; all of us can teach beginners.”

It’s their way of giving back and encouraging women to come out and build confidence.

Rosemary Czaeor, a ski instructor at Killington for 30 years, attended the event to support the cause and said, “It’s good to have these women’s programs that encourage women to come back out and participate and have the camaraderie.”

Camaraderie was a word used by many that day because, as Colleen Burritt, team lead for adult snowboard school, said: “It’s good to get women all together to go out and ride and to reach out to other women in the community. It gives the women a chance for camaraderie, just riding and having fun.”

Guth, who has been at Killington for over 40 years, has seen changes with more women in management and ski technology changes, but one thing that never changes is her love for the mountain. “There is nothing like standing on top of Superstar on a day like today with trees covered crystally, or just standing on top of Snowshed even with people around you; you are still in your own world,” she said.



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HOURS: MONDAY - SATURDAY 10-5
SUNDAY 11-4 (SEASONAL CALL AHEAD)

Second thoughts

Recognizing that previous legislative action has had unintended consequences on education spending, the House Ways



By Rep. Jim Harrison

& Means Committee advanced a bill (H.850) on Friday, Feb. 9, to allow school districts more time to redo their budgets (and potentially make cuts) to the proposals they make to voters. The bill, advanced by the committee on a strong 12-0 vote, includes

some funding to help towns with the costs of rescheduling school votes.

The legislation removes the 5% cap (the cap initially applied to residential property taxes if a school budget increased 10% or less) on the equalized homestead rate as it is believed that caused some districts to further increase their spending, thinking it was “free” money.

The cap was included in the new pupil weighting bill, Act 127, passed two years ago. However, the new bill does offer some transitional help to districts that got hurt under the changes in Act 127, including two towns in our legislative

district. Under the latest proposal, Barstow (Chittenden and Mendon) would receive no reduction in the equalized homestead rate; Mountain Views (Killington) would receive a 1-cent per hundred reduction and Pittsfield an 8-cent reduction. Tax rates will still increase by double digits if proposed spending increases are approved by voters.

More changes are likely as the committee considers potential new taxes to help lower rates, but until the state has a better idea of what total spending will be like, it is very hard to determine how much money will be needed (or can pass, politically). Currently, proposed school budgets (before any bonds for new schools) are up an estimated \$243 million (up 14.8%), which is a record increase in collective school budgets statewide. And without new revenue, statewide education property tax rates will be up over 20%.

Perhaps another area for second thought involves the annual mid-year budget adjustment bill. The House spent the entire one-time surplus in revenue (\$29 million) when it approved the bill a few weeks ago. The Senate, recognizing that the extra funds were already accounted for in the governor’s proposed budget for the new fiscal year, removed much of the extra spending in its version of the bill. They appropriately realized you can’t spend the same money twice without creating a hole in next year’s budget. The spending plan will now need to be negotiated with the House before it heads to the governor.

Other issues of interest:

- At his weekly press conference last week, Governor Scott reiterated his call for the Legislature to prioritize regulatory reform to make it easier, less expensive, and faster to build the housing we desperately need. He indicated that some legislative committees were moving in the opposite direction that he believes will make it harder to proceed with new housing. Scott contends that H.687, under consideration by the House Energy & Environment Committee, dramatically increases projects where Act 250 would be automatically triggered. (See related story, on this page.)
- The future of a bill to ban flavored tobacco, S.18, is a bit uncertain as it may lower state revenues by as much as \$15 million. Given the tight budget year coming up, passage

Under the latest proposal, Barstow (Chittenden and Mendon) would receive no reduction in the equalized homestead rate; Mountain Views (Killington) would receive a 1-cent per hundred reduction and Pittsfield an 8-cent reduction.

could mean either cuts to other programs or increases in another tax.

- Legislation to further increase legislative pay now appears to be on the back burner in a Senate committee given the tighter budget year ahead.
- A bill to require 100% renewable energy for Vermont’s electric power needs by 2030, was advanced by the House Energy & Environment Committee. It is unclear how much the legislation will increase electric rates, although the Dept. of Public Service has estimated close to \$1 billion if you include the new electric infrastructure necessary for local renewable sources.
- The Senate Judiciary Committee appears ready to resume increasing the age of offenders (from 19 to 20) who are referred to family court instead of criminal court, despite objections raised by Governor Scott.
- The House Judiciary Committee advanced legislation, H.563, which would make entering another’s auto without the owner’s permission a crime. Under current law, it is not illegal to enter an unlocked vehicle unless you remove materials or steal the vehicle.

Last Tuesday I had the distinct privilege of welcoming Stewart Ledbetter

Harrison → 14

Governor Scott pushes regulatory reform to make it easier, cheaper and faster to build housing

At the governor’s weekly press conference last Wednesday, Feb. 7, Gov. Phil Scott reiterated his call for the Legislature to prioritize regulatory reform to make it easier, less expensive, and faster to build housing the state desperately needs.

“On January 10, I stood here with a tripartisan group of lawmakers and stakeholders to outline good, solid proposals that had wide support, and I felt good about the odds of passing something meaningful. But one month into the session I’m not as confident as I was that day,” said Governor Scott. “It appears, in some committees, they’re moving in the opposite direction. Instead of prioritizing how to produce more homes, which would address all kinds of issues like workforce, healthcare, property taxes, education and more, some are looking to add to the regulatory burden and put us further behind.”

The governor called on lawmakers in both parties who know regulatory reform is needed to address our housing crisis to make their voices heard and cited some specific examples:

“For example, House Energy and Environment is currently moving forward with a bill that in my opinion would be an economic disaster. And Senate Natural’s S.213 looks similar, creating new definitions, significantly expanding requirements, and shifting responsibilities for certain types of land use regulation from Vermont municipalities to ANR that will put Vermonters in jeopardy of violating laws they don’t even know exist.”

“As proposed, H.687 would also dramatically expand Act 250 jurisdiction statewide,” he continued. “While it does include some Act 250 exemptions, they’re narrow, stringent, and geographically limited, making nearly the entire state subject to Act 250... As most of us know, we have a housing crisis in all of Vermont, not

just in our cities,” Gov. Scott said. “Leaving rural Vermont out of our housing strategy is far from strategic, fair, or acceptable. And to be clear, I’m not proposing we build on our mountaintops, develop forest land, or create sprawl. Our housing package focuses on designated areas within rural communities.”

To make his point, the governor showed the Legislature a couple of maps. The first showed a map of the state with color-coded areas for what currently triggers automatic Act 250 jurisdiction. Next he showed what would happen under the House proposal. Most of the state was highlighted.

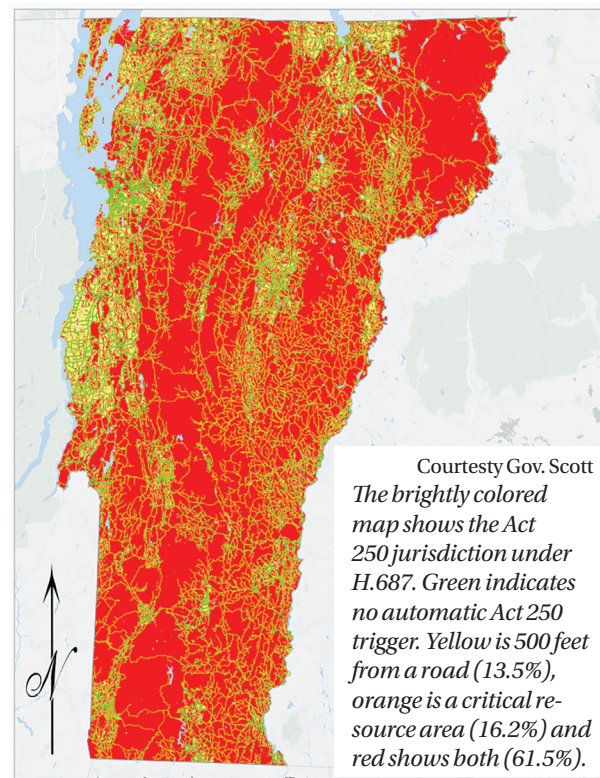
“As you can see by the areas indicated in red, orange, and yellow, Act 250 would be automatically extended to over 90% of the state’s land area which would now be considered ‘critical resource areas,’ he said. “That means if you want to build a single-family home, or maybe even a garden shed, you’ll need to go through Act 250,

which we know adds costs and time. Under the House proposal, Act 250 jurisdiction would also be triggered if a proposed project was set back more than 500 feet from an existing road or was part of a 4+ unit subdivision.

“Put another way, as currently drafted, H.687 would render more than 90% of the state subject to automatic Act 250 jurisdiction,” the governor said. For perspective, currently, less than 15% of the Vermont landscape falls under automatic Act 250 jurisdiction, he added.

“I want to be clear, I won’t accept a housing bill that fails to meet the moment. Taking one step forward and one step back won’t cut it. Taking two steps forwards and one back won’t cut it. We must jumpstart housing in all communities. Period... And I’m confident the vast majority of Vermonters agree with me. But I also think most legislators of both parties do, too. The folks back home elected you to solve problems, not create them.”

“As currently drafted, H.687 would render more than 90% of the state subject to automatic Act 250 jurisdiction,” the governor said.



Courtesy Gov. Scott
The brightly colored map shows the Act 250 jurisdiction under H.687. Green indicates no automatic Act 250 trigger. Yellow is 500 feet from a road (13.5%), orange is a critical resource area (16.2%) and red shows both (61.5%).

← **Act 127:**
from page 1

D-Brattleboro, chair of the House Ways and Means Committee, said before Friday's vote. "Without doing this, we really have no levers in place to continue to support districts in making tax rates more reasonable this year."

The repeal of the cap at this point of the year could have unintended consequences of its own. School districts have already crafted their budgets based on the original 5% cap, and some would likely have to scramble to revise their budgets accordingly.

Acknowledging that the measure would amount to "changing the rules of the game mid-session," Kornheiser said it's "definitely not a great situation, but better than the alternatives."

Speaking before the committee Thursday, representatives from the Vermont Superintendents Association and the Vermont School Board Association said that both organizations were "not in a position to either support or oppose" the legislation.

"This work is happening fast with varying levels of understanding on the part of everyone involved," said Amy Minor, president of the Vermont Superintendents Association. "And among our members, there are concerns about the pace and the process associated with that work."

To allow school districts time to make changes, the bill would let districts delay their budget votes, which traditionally occur on or before Town Meeting Day in March, until no later than April 15.

In addition, the measure would appropriate \$500,000 from the general fund for the purpose of offsetting election costs incurred by districts that may have to revise their budgets and reschedule their votes.

With all of the uncertainty, it remains unclear just how many districts will choose to reopen budgeting and how many may have to delay their annual meetings. For those that do, the process may also require initiating layoffs for the next fiscal year, which generally requires a notice date built into union contracts that, for some districts, occurs in March.

"Our budgets are 90% people, right?" Flor Diaz-Smith, president of the Vermont School Board Association, told lawmakers Thursday. "So the only way to reduce our budget is to reduce staff."

Diaz-Smith implored lawmakers to adequately communicate with districts about changes under consideration and to do everything in their power to find alternative revenue sources for the education fund to soften the blow for individual districts.

"Once we sort of make this mechanism change, we can do more to face the unprecedented pressures this year, and then really begin the constructive work to think about next year ... and the years out in partnership with all of you," Kornheiser said. "I know that you have great ideas for what we can do going forward."

After Friday's vote, the committee turned to talking about additional non-property tax revenue sources that could add resources to the education fund this budget cycle and what longer-term funding and spending changes need to be made in future years.

"Everything that's happening this year in the education fund will likely happen next year, too, unless we do something," Kornheiser told her committee. "So I'd rather not be in a crisis every year. And I think we know that Vermonters, that level of property taxes is not sustainable for most Vermonters."

"Without doing this, we really have no levers in place to continue to support districts in making tax rates more reasonable this year,"

Rep. Emilie Kornheiser said.

State announces launch of rural industry and development program

Governor Phil Scott and the Vermont Dept. of Economic Development (DED), Feb. 2, announced the launch of the Rural Industry and Development Program

(RIDP) to increase the amount of move-in ready industrial space, in an effort to shorten the timeline for the permitting and building of sites that businesses can confront when moving to, or relocating within, Vermont.

"Expanding Vermont businesses and recruiting new employers from out of state is an important priority for my administration," said Governor Scott. "Having industrial space ready for occupation increases Vermont's competitiveness and will help us overcome a challenge we've heard from prospective businesses."

In 2022, DED received a dozen inquiries from companies headquartered in Canada and Germany looking for move-in ready industrial sites. Those potential employers were from the aerospace, manufacturing, construction, and tech sectors. Collectively, they could have brought 284 jobs to Vermont, but they never came because they could not find suitable industrial capacity.

RIDP has \$5 million in grants to allocate to regional and local development corporations located in areas that can accommodate business growth. Eligible uses for a RIDP grant include the purchase, demolition, building, or

renovation of a property for industrial use, as well as permitting and installing infrastructure including, but not limited to, electricity, parking, and driveways,

Potential employers were from the aerospace, manufacturing, construction, and tech sectors. Collectively, they could have brought 284 jobs to Vermont, but they never came because they could not find suitable industrial capacity.

according to the DED.

"Our regional partners know which assets in their area could benefit from RIDP," said Vt. Economic Development Commissioner Joan Goldstein. "We're excited to work with them to increase economic opportunity and vitality in their regions by using RIDP to make them more attractive to businesses and employers."

RIDP requires the formation of a Rural Industry and Development Fund (RIDF). DED intends to manage RIDF as a revolving fund. That means if an industrial property that benefited from RIDP is later sold, the awardee will return the amount of the total principal of the grant plus 2.5% compounded annually, not to exceed \$250,000. That money will then be used to make more RIDP grants possible.

The application portal is open now and will close on March 15, 2024.

For more information, visit: accd.vermont.gov/economic-development.

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← **Tech ban:**
from page 1

weeks, including from high-profile voices such as Vermont Attorney General Charity Clark.

If passed, the bill would require schools to create policies banning student use of personal smart devices and cellphones, prohibit teachers and school officials from using social media in lessons or for announcements and allow students to opt out of using electronic devices, the internet and more.

The latter policies would be developed by districts and require schools to provide students alternative activities or instruction methods.

“They’re an amazing group of young women,” Williams explained in an interview. “Basically, one of them homeschools her children. And I said, ‘So, what’s your ask? Why do you want me to do this?’ She said: ‘Because I’m homeschooling my children. I’d really like to get them back in the school, but I’m concerned about the presence of electronic devices in school!’”

The legislation, Williams said, “aims to improve the environments of schools, to promote mental health and wellness.”

S.284 would require all Vermont schools to create policies prohibiting students from accessing their

electronic devices during the school day. A policy might prohibit students from bringing those devices entirely, require students to keep them in a designated spot or involve putting the devices in lockers or a sealed pouch, legislative counsel Beth St. James told Senate Education Committee members Jan. 26.

“It’s not appropriate to allow students to simply opt out of learning how to use technology in today’s world,” said Jay Nichols, executive director of the Vermont Principals’ Association, who does not support the bill.

Sen. David Weeks, R-Rutland, another of the bill’s sponsors, clarified that S.284 has exemptions for students who use their smart devices for medical purposes. “One example of a medical exemption, a student may have a diabetes monitoring app on their phone,” Weeks said via email.

S.284 also gives the option to opt out of technology use in school entirely.

The bill would require all classrooms to have non-digital learning options for their students. If a school failed to provide those accommodations — even if it would mean trying

to replicate a YouTube video on paper — the school could be sued under the legislation.

Several of the proposed restrictions spurred debate, though most people testifying in committee meetings agreed with the bill’s focus on better protecting children’s data privacy.

Speaking before the committee Feb. 2, Clark, the state Attorney General, said she is “supportive of the work on this bill and this bill generally.”

Clark, who said she is well-informed on social media from her office’s investigative work, detailed components of social media that can distort young people’s mental health, such as the “infinite scroll” of app feeds, “excessive push notifications” and “Like’ counts.”

To illustrate her concerns regarding social media’s impact on wellness, Clark outlined a hypothetical: a child struggling with an eating

disorder seeking out content that exacerbates their illness.

The algorithm “doesn’t pass a moral judgment or a health judgment on [the question of], ‘This might not be good for you,’” she told committee members. “It just keeps showing that person the very thing that they probably shouldn’t be looking at because that’s the thing they keep obsessively looking at.”

Jay Nichols, executive director of the Vermont Principals’ Association, says he understands the negative impact of social media on young minds. As he put it Feb. 2, the association is “on the front line of the negative impacts of digital addiction to social media.” However, he said it does not support S.284.

“Already, most schools have social media and cell phone access completely or significantly restricted during the school day,” he said. “Providing the mental health resources that students need when they need them is probably a better approach to addressing mental health needs in students than banning cell phones and social media from schools from our perspective.”

Nichols called the opt-out element of the bill unreasonable. He told committee members that providing paper copies of digital

materials is “a huge burden to schools and is not necessary,” saying later that “it’s not appropriate to allow students to simply opt out of learning how to use technology in today’s world.”

Though the Principals’ Association supports the protection of children’s data and privacy, Nichols does not believe that this is the bill to do it, he said.

“To ban [online resources] would only hurt the progress of students who will be looking for jobs and pursuing higher education in our increasingly digital world,” he said.



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GUEST EDITORIAL

Making affordable housing investments that last

By Helen Head

Editor's note: Helen Head, South Burlington, is a board member of the Champlain Housing Trust. She also served as a state representative (2003-2018), where she chaired the Vermont House Committee on General, Housing and Military Affairs.

Vermont families are facing a housing crisis. Sky-high rents, high interest rates and home prices that resemble a lottery winning are not affordable for most Vermont families. There is little, if any, housing stock available, further driving up costs and competition when units or homes do come on the market.

Today's successful buyers are paying cash, waiving inspections and forgoing contingencies, making it even harder for low- and moderate-income Vermonters to stand a chance.

Something must change, and fast.

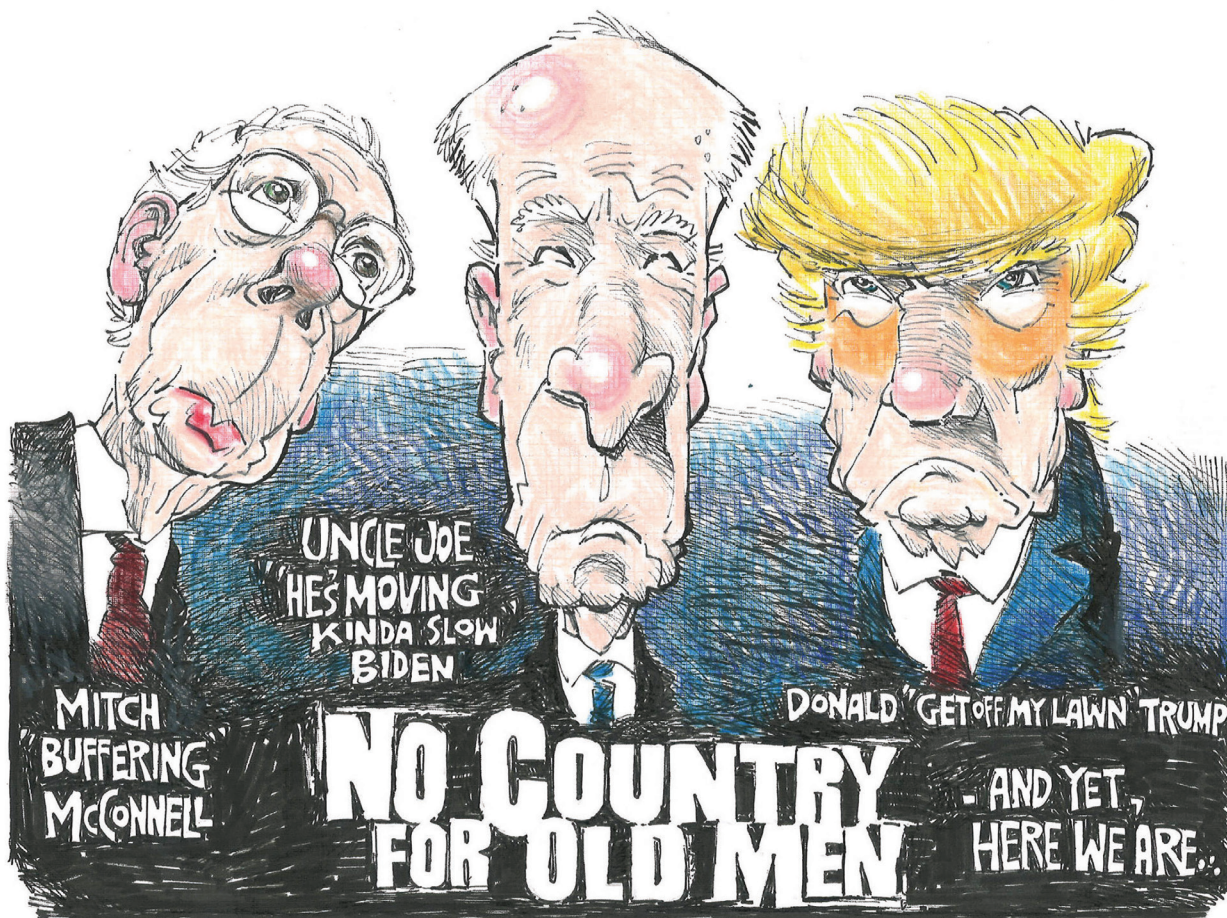
If we want to improve the economy of our state and the potential for our neighbors and friends to access a safe, affordable home and the opportunity home-ownership provides to create modest personal wealth, there is no better way than to continue to invest in permanently affordable housing.

This approach has been a cornerstone of Vermont's housing policy for over 35 years because of the benefits a forever investment brings to families, communities, and taxpayers.

Rental units and owned units are both offered at prices that are affordable to lower-income Vermonters and always well below market value, in perpetuity. This means Vermonters access housing that is affordable, and they will never be displaced by gentrification. The taxpayer's investment is a lasting one, ensuring that future generations have access to decent, safe, and affordable housing for every investment of public dollars.

Always affordable → 12

The bottom line is that as the price of renting, purchasing or building single family homes and condominiums rises, Vermonters are finding themselves locked out of every aspect of the housing market.



No country for old men by John Darkow, Columbia Missourian

LETTERS

Wasteful SB spending proves a need for a change

Dear Editor,

Last week I introduced myself as a candidate for Select Board and outlined some of the ways in which the current board is not serving the community as well as it deserves to be served. The treatment of former search and rescue volunteers and their current blacklist from the department, which I detailed last week, is a good example, but there are more.

Another issue is the increase in town spending. Lack of experience and the mistakes made by this current board have caused this town lots of money and is a waste of our tax dollars. Below are a couple examples of wasteful spending:

New fire house

Why did we break ground for the new fire house in October as winter was coming? By breaking ground in October, we (the taxpayers) had to pay more money (more than \$60K) on heating the slab because concrete takes almost 30 days to cure. The wasteful expense came from covering the foundation and heating the foundation

so that the concrete would cure properly. When I heard about this, I started to pay attention to how this town was being run, and by who. This waste happened on the current Select Board's watch. If I win, I will make sure things like that won't happen again.

CV Oil

This is an issue that has been really bothering me and many of the locals are talking about it.

The town of Killington, without warning or conversation, decided to switch oil companies from CV Oil to Irving. Charlie and Steve from CV service many of our businesses and local residents.

They have donated their time and money to helping our community in some of our local fundraisers, and have always been there for us when we needed them.

When the concrete was poured for the new firehouse, Charlie carried diesel almost three times per day rain or shine to assure that the heaters

Gieda → 12

Protect and strengthen the Green Mountain Care Board, say "No" to Bill S.211

Dear Editor,

Editor's note: The following was originally written as an open letter to lawmakers.

Senate bill S.211 is an attempt by the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems to free hospitals from appropriate and thoughtful budgetary regulation by the Green Mountain Care Board.

The bill, if enacted, will be an enormous benefit to the Hospital Association's dominant member, the UVM Health Network. But it will impose greater medical and financial hardships on Vermonters.

Over the past decade, the UVM Health Network has acquired smaller hospitals and practices under the guise of improving care coordination and pirated community-based primary care providers. At the same time, health insurance costs have skyrocketed, primary care doctors, mental health counselors, nurses, and other community-based caregivers have suffered, and the number of Vermonters who cannot afford medical care

or prescriptions without the risk of incurring debt has increased substantially.

The UVM Health Network leverages its increased market dominance to demand exorbitant price hikes. In fact, UVM's price increases are among the highest in the U.S. Consequently, commercial insurers charge higher premiums to all Vermonters, regardless of whether they receive care at a UVM facility.

The Green Mountain Care Board, composed of five healthcare experts and regulators appointed by the governor after a bipartisan vetting process, is charged with serving Vermonters transparently and fairly while adhering to strict open-meeting laws. The board's regulatory mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of Vermonters in accordance with three core measures: affordability, access, and quality. It is also committed to making sure hospitals and providers have the financial support

'No' to S.211 → 14

WRITE TO US:

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CAPITOL QUOTES

The U.S. Senate has successfully passed a substantial \$95.3 billion aid package aimed at supporting Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan, marking a significant step forward after prolonged negotiations that lasted until 5 a.m. Tuesday, Feb. 13. This bipartisan effort saw Democrats and a faction of Republicans come together to push through the bill, which not only aims to bolster Ukraine's defense against Russian aggression with \$60.06 billion but also provides \$14.1 billion in security assistance for Israel.

“With this bill, the Senate declares that American leadership will not waiver, will not falter, will not fail ... History settles every account. And today, on the value of American leadership and strength, history will record that the Senate did not blink.”

said Senate Majority Leader **Chuck Schumer**.

“You know, they need to get over it. They need to stand up and be tough. We need to secure our own border first. We need to take care of things here at home first. When we secure our own border, when we take care of home, great. Let's help other people as well,”

said Sen. **Roger Marshall** of Kansas.

“For us in Ukraine, continued U.S. assistance helps to save human lives from Russian terror... It means that life will continue in our cities and will triumph over war.”

Ukrainian President **Volodymyr Zelenskyy** posted on social media.

“We cannot afford to wait any longer. The costs of inaction are rising every day, especially in Ukraine.”

said President **Joe Biden**.

COMMENTARY

The answer to Vermont's 'underwater' property market

By Peter G de Krassel

Editor's note: Peter G de Krassel is the founder of Breaking Housing Matters, and author of the newly released book “Custom Maid Housing for New World Disorder.”

Vermont's housing has priced itself beyond the reach of most buyers and renters — and is making people more house insecure after July's record-breaking rainfall and historic flooding that drowned downtown Montpelier and which continued into August. A cataclysmic replay of the late winter flood of 1992, and Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 that has disproportionately impacted low-income areas, and many of Vermont's 234 mobile home parks, that are built in floodplains.

Manufactured housing, traditionally referred to as mobile homes, account for about 7% of Vermont's housing. A third of those homes, or about 6,700 are in mobile home parks. The rest on private lots. Some 5,000 Vermonters have reported their residences were damaged, with more than 750 saying their homes are uninhabitable. A disproportionate number is manufactured homes.

Climate change, heavy rains, and rising waters are not only destroying homes in their wake, but building material yards, construction companies and their equipment, further contributing and compounding the growing shortage of housing. In a state with some of the lowest rental vacancy rates in the country — and highest rates of homelessness — the floods had a devastating percent impact on the state's housing crunch.

The Vermont Housing Financing Agency says Vermont needs to build 40,000 new housing units by 2030 to meet demand — a large number for a state with only 645,000 residents. Vermont's baby-boom population is rapidly aging. More than 20% of Vermonters are 65 or older, and more than 35% are over 54, the age at which Americans typically begin to leave the work force. Vermont has the smallest share of residents in their prime working years.

A prolonged labor shortage is looming. Vermont's unemployment rate was 1.9% in September, among the lowest in the country, and the labor force is still thousands of people smaller than before the pandemic. Getting workers to move to Vermont is virtually impossible because of the lack of affordable housing.

Cabot Creamery has contracted with a local college to use unoccupied dormitories to house temporary workers brought in from other states and — on guest-worker visas — from overseas.

Sugarbush Resort has applied for permits to build a “workforce” four-story apartment building and three single-family homes.

Vermont needs more affordable housing. Smart flood-proof affordable housing like the Taylor Street Apartments complex built atop the Montpelier Transit Center on the banks of the Winooski River — built profitably

is what Vermont, like the rest of the country, desperately needs. The Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone (HOME) Act, signed into law by Governor Phil Scott in early June 2023, a month before Vermont's deluge and flood, with the required zoning changes and streamlined permit process, eliminating costly duplicative state and local permit review, are steps in the right direction.

Decisive and imaginative action needs to be taken to address Vermont's underwater properties and housing shortage.

One “affordability solution” for the government and private sector to consider is what I call the Housing Subsidy Solution (HSS), a subsidized housing model to build affordable housing profitably.

It would involve a partnership between the private sector and government, managed by the private sector. In short, this solution could make housing affordable to homeowners and renters while also giving the developer-landlord a reasonable return on investment.

For this proposal, we should work on the basis that nobody ought to pay more than a quarter of their income for either a mortgage or rent. At the same time, the developer, landlord and seller should be able to make a reasonable return on their investment. So a subsidy fund would make up the difference between the actual cost and what the renter or buyer would pay.

This would involve five sets of stakeholders.

First, city councils, state legislatures and government agencies would work with the federal government to determine how to streamline and funnel existing and new grants and benefits to HSS.

Second, public or private foundations, philanthropic organizations and other private stakeholders would contribute.

Third, developers and landlords would contribute a percentage of their profits and make donations from their charities to HSS.

Fourth, financial institutions, especially those offering mortgages, construction loans, and underwriters of public housing and infrastructure bonds, would allocate a few basis points of every loan. They could also offer reverse mortgages to new buyers and have their charities donate to HSS.

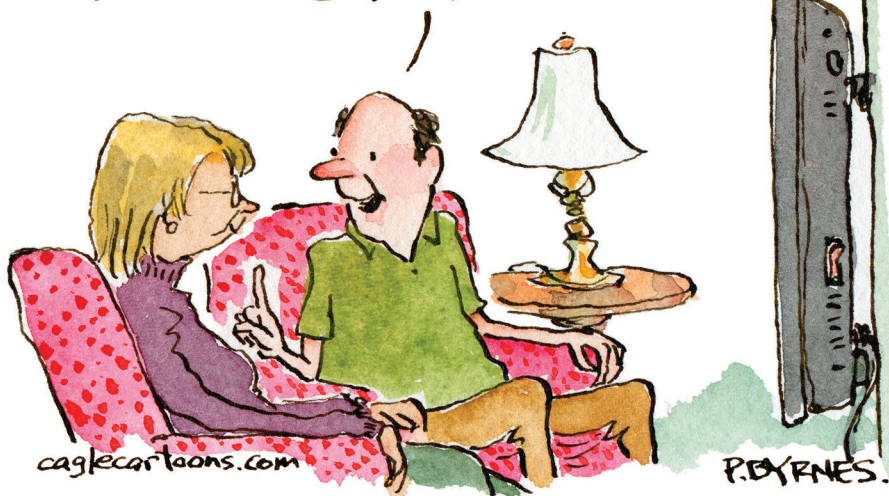
Finally, houses of worship and their charities that enjoy tax-exempt status could allocate up to 50% of the donations they receive to HSS.

It is past time that we built affordable housing for buyers and renters, and housing that is also profitable for landlords and developers.

An alternative housing paradigm — actually a sea-change — is needed to solve the current housing crisis. Vermont, starting in the repeatedly flooded city of Montpelier, can start building affordable housing profitably today through a collective initiative that could become a national model.

CARTOONS

IF TRUMP MIXES UP HIS WORDS, HE HAS A HUGE ADVANTAGE. PEOPLE SIMPLY ASSUME HE'S LYING.



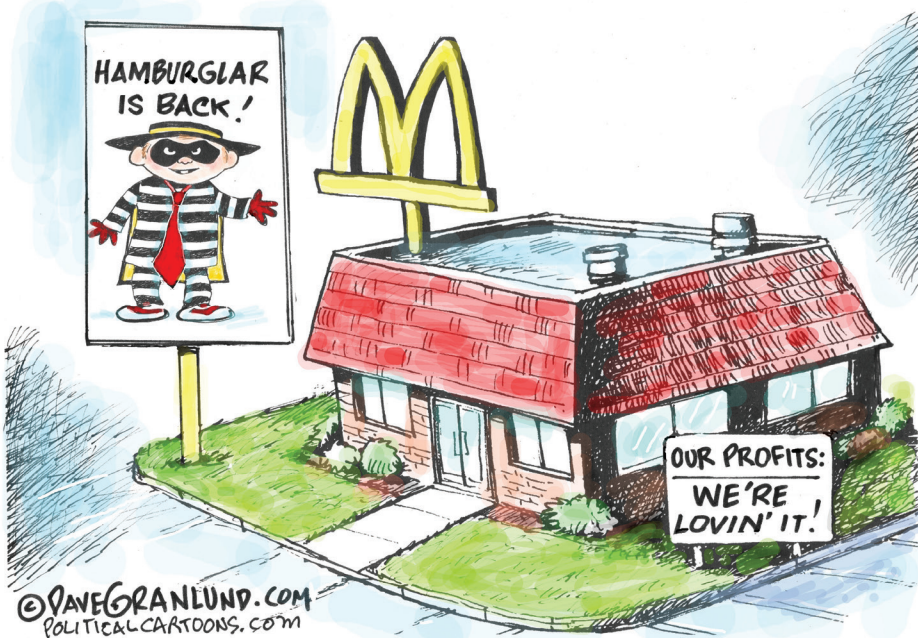
The Advantage of Lying by Pat Byrnes, PoliticalCartoons

60th Anniversary of Beatles invasion



Beatles USA invasion 60th by Dave Granlund, PoliticalCartoons

McDonald's accused of price gouging...



McDonald's Price gouging by Dave Granlund, PoliticalCartoons.com

← Gieda:

from page 10

were working properly to keep the slab heated. He took pride in helping our town and not once did the Select Board ever thank him for his hard work and dedication. Then, without warning, the Select Board decided to switch from CV to Irving. At what cost? Yes, there are some savings per gallon, but what's the initial cost to bury their tanks (truck in sand and top soil, equipment use, man hours)? And all that for 15-20 cents savings? I was told by a town employee it took them almost three weeks to do that. Per my calculations we wasted over \$30K in switching companies for worse service and screwed the local company that has been helping Killington for a long time.

Per another town employee when the town garage boiler went down, instead of Irving coming to fix it, the town had to call an independent plumbing company which cost the town additional money. CV used to service their equipment all the time and follow through. To me

that dedication is worth something. The way I look at things is that our local businesses are part of this greater community. CV has always donated to Killington's charities, including 150 gallons of heating oil a year for decades to the firemen's 4th of July raffle and two full tanks for the barbecue grills. To me, I value that partnership. The town has put short term savings over the trusted local service. I think what we did to CV Oil is wrong. How can we as a town treat Steve and Charlie with such disrespect. In the end the switch didn't save any taxpayers dollars, but did quite the opposite.

Solar panels at the library and town offices

This is another example of wasteful spending. We've spent over \$200K on solar charging stations at the town offices and library, something that is covered in snow six months out of the year and is not convenient for local people in town to charge their cars. This seems like a complete waste to me. How much

energy are those panels actually producing? How many people are actually charging at those locations? Who approved this expense? Why wasn't it brought forward to the people of Killington to decide on? What happens when the town offices move to Route 4? Will those panels be taken down and brought over there?

All of these questions are clear indications of the lack of transparency on this board.

The entire point of this letter is to show that the current Select Board has some hidden agenda.

Instead we need more transparency, stronger leadership and less self interest.

I'll be out in the community introducing myself to those who might not know me. I am willing to answer any questions and I want to hear from you. I look forward to the conversations and I am humbly asking for your vote so we can get this town back on track.

Andrew Gieda, Killington

← Always affordable:

from page 10

Here's how it works: With homeownership programs, community land trusts like Champlain Housing Trust and others across the state hold subsidy covenants or ground leases with resale restrictions. Homeowners take all of their mortgage equity, but only can take 25% of the market appreciation with them when they sell their homes. The homes remain in the portfolio of permanently affordable units in the state, and the homeowners benefit from the wealth-building opportunities of home ownership.

They move into a new home, perhaps a larger one for their growing family, or a smaller one as they look to retire or move to single story living. This makes room for those Vermonters seeking to own, often for the first time, their very own home. The public dollars we invest benefit multiple generations of homeowners, and resale prices remain well below market value.

In rental programs, units are accessible at prices below market value, shielding them from skyrocketing rental rates and

low or no inventory in the highly competitive statewide housing market.

As renters move and as homeowners sell, their homes remain in the permanently affordable housing portfolio for the benefit of the next individual or family.

The bottom line is that as the price of renting, purchasing or building single

Income eligibility for the home ownership program goes up to \$79,600 for a single applicant and \$113,600 for a family of four.

family homes and condominiums rises, Vermonters are finding themselves locked out of every aspect of the housing mar-

ket. This is having a devastating impact on individuals, families and employers. Investing in permanent affordability is a cornerstone of the solution. And more Vermonters than you may think qualify for these excellent programs. Income eligibility for the home ownership program goes up to \$79,600 for a single applicant and \$113,600 for a family of four.

It's time to recommit to this investment policy. We need the policy and the public funding necessary to make it possible. The outcome will be healthier families and stronger communities across Vermont.

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.



← **'No' to S.211:**
from page 10

they need.
In 2023, the Green Mountain Care Board imposed reasonable limits on hospital charges during their upcoming budget cycle. In response, the UVM Health Network and the Hospital Association lobbied Senators to create S.211, which would, in effect, move many of the board's regulatory duties to the Agency of Human Services, where a single, politically appointed person, the director of health care reform, would handle regulatory work.

This change would diminish the Green Mountain Care Board's authority and sidestep Vermont's open meeting law.

The Hospital Association and the UVM Health Network could then direct all their lobbying efforts toward this single individual who could be replaced every two years.

Vermonters cannot let the UVM Health Network's monopoly power increase further with this proposed

change, nor allow it to weaken public regulation over hospital operations and costs.

Despite increasing prices, the UVM Health Network has failed to provide better care for the people of Vermont. Care coordination is still poor, access to care is even worse, and the quality of care is declining. Many Vermont families have a story of long waits for appointments, poor outcomes, poor services, and huge debt after receiving treatment at one of their facilities.

Legislators, business leaders, and all Vermonters must be aware of the risks if S.211 were to pass. It's a bill designed to ensure that UVM Health Network gets what it wants. It will further enrich its leadership while seriously undermining the health and finances of Vermonters.

Tell your legislators not to weaken the Green Mountain Care Board, but to protect and strengthen it. Tell them to say "No" to S.211.

Signatories:
Don Tinney, president of Vermont-NEA; Aimee Towne, president of Vermont State Employees Association; Cindy Chornyak, co-chairperson, VSEA Benefits Advisory Committee; Deb Snell, RN CCRN, president, Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals; Dan Drish, president, Brattleboro Federation of Nurses, AFT-VT Local 5064; Heather Bauman, president, UVM-MC Support Staff United, AFT-VT Local 5223; Patrick Flood, former deputy secretary of the Agency of Human Services; Julie Wasserman, MPH; Sarah Launderville, executive director, Vt Center for Independent Living; Tom Hamilton, executive director, Vermont Statewide Independent Living Council; Kirsten Murphy, executive director, Vermont Developmental Disabilities Council; Mollie Wills, director of grassroots organizing, Rural Vermont; Kate Kanelstein and Avery Book, executive director and president, Vermont Workers'

Center; Max Barrows, outreach director, Green Mountain Self-Advocates; Sue Racanelli, president, League of Women Voters of Vermont; Craig Jones, MD, Capitol Health Associates, and former executive director of the Vermont Blueprint for Health; Betty J. Keller, MD and president, Vermont Physicians for a National Health Program; Deborah Richter, MD, family physician; Jack Mayer, MD, MPH Rainbow Pediatrics (Ret.); David Schneider, DO, MS-Health Care Transformation, FAAP Pediatrician; Ellen Oxfeld, Vermont Health Care for All; Walter Carpenter, Vermont Health Care for All and Green Mountain Care Board Advisory Committee; Kathy Callaghan, former benefits director, state of Vermont; Ethan Parke, Universal Health Care advocate; William M. Young, former Commissioner of Department of Social and Rehabilitation Services; Laura Zakaras, PhD., RAND Corporation (Ret.)



Courtesy VINS

← **VINS:**
from page 3

the VINS Nature Center.

Alden Smith commented, "Charlie Rattigan, Mary Graham, and their team have done an amazing job preserving what is special about VINS and moving the organization forward. Raptors are still central, but VINS has become much more: a refuge for intergenerational visitors, a thriving center of place-based education, and an inspiration for all who want cleaner rivers, more diverse forests, and healthier wildlife. The world needs the mission of VINS more than ever, and my hope is to build it into an even more impactful force for good."

Smith will begin his work with VINS April 1.

← **Harrison:**
from page 7

to the House Chamber, after spearheading a House resolution to honor him for his 40 years at NBC5 and acknowledging his upcoming retirement.

And now that his schedule will be a bit more open, I couldn't resist the temptation in my remarks before the House, to publicly invite him to join us as one of our volunteers to help at the American Junior Golf Tour-

H.563... would make entering another's auto without the owner's permission a crime.

nement at Green Mountain National this coming June. Hopefully he won't have second thoughts...

Jim Harrison is the state representative for Chittenden, Killington, Mendon and Pittsfield. He can be reached at JHarrison@leg.state.vt.us or harrisonforvermont.com.



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WEDNESDAY

2/14

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/

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/ 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 or 802-775-0356

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, 802-457-2295

Pet portrait mosaics – Session 2 of 3

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/calendar

Woodshop Orientation

6-7:30 p.m. The MINT, 112 Quality Lane, Rutland. \$15 members. Get acquainted with the wood shop and learn basic safety operation of chop saw, table saw, jointer, planer, hand tools plus measuring techniques. Instructor: Morgan. rutlandmint.org/calendar

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

THURSDAY

2/15

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 or 802-422-4323.

Storytime -- Polar Animals!

10-11 a.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free.

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

Art at the Chaffee: Artery

10:30 a.m.-noon: Thursdays. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free varies. Weekly adult group for connection and inspiration. Painting in all mediums welcome. No set topic or instructor, attendees will work on their individual artwork.

Art at the Chaffee: seminar with Robert Black

Noon-1 p.m. Lunch 'n' Learn discussion: "The Porch Light's On But Is Anybody Really HOME?" What "Home" and "Homeless" means to human beings...how we identify so strongly with our individual and collective boundaries that we either include or exclude other humans based on our prejudices and biases. May be paired with Art Lab. 1-2 p.m.: Art Lab: "The Porch Light's On But Is Anybody Really HOME?" explores personal identity through exercises

Art at the Chaffee: Pour painting chain pull**technique**

6-8 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$40 includes all supplies. Instructor: Lorie Amerio Manieri. To preregister: 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. Dodi Koudakpo's art reflects his experiences, people, places, and imagination. His paintings serve as a bridge between worlds, inspiring and sparking curiosity. djallstarart.com. Final day.

Magic of Watercolor Workshop with Maurie**Harrington**

11:30 a.m. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. 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: tforms.com/5031843. picomountain.com

Play Bridge!

2 p.m. Thursdays. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Beginners are welcome to observe. 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

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

FRIDAY

2/16

Rutland Winterfest

Times vary. Through Feb. 25. Mostly free, some ticketed events. Night sledding on Center Street! Snow sculpting competition! The Real Rutland Feud! Human foosball, the chili cook-off and new events have been added to the wintry mix. Cabin fever? Visit comealiveoutside.com/winterfest/ to see the full list of events.

Story Time at the Library

10:30-11:30 a.m. Fridays. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. 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

Art at the Chaffee: Relaxing with the Arts

1-3 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Music-guided technique. \$35 per class session. Acrylics, pen & ink, markers. Instructor: Heather Wilson. Series ends today. Preregistration is required. chaffeeartcenter.org or call 802-775-0356

Great Backyard Bird Count 2024

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Vermont Institute of Natural Science Nature Center, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. Admission: \$20 general public, \$17.50 VINS members. If you enjoy watching birds at your feeders, visit us and learn to count birds for science. vinsweb.org/events/month/

Wobbly Barn: Pulse

Doors open at 6 p.m. Wobbly Barn, 2229 Killington Road, Killington. Cover charge may be required. wobblybarn.com

Blue Cat Music Series: Luminous Crush

6-9 p.m. Fridays through March 22. Blue Cat Bistro, 575 Main St., Castleton. No cover. Laura Molinelli & Bay Campbell combine to produce Dream Pop Hybrid Alt-Country post-folk punk. 802-468-2791

Open Mic Night

7-9 p.m. Alternating Thursdays. ArtisTree, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Free. artistreevt.org/artistree-events or 802-457-3500

'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

SATURDAY

2/17

Wintertastic Storytime and Bookmark Craft

2:30-4 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Ages 1 to 4. Hosted by the Rutland County Parent Child Center's parent advisory committee with a free storybook to take home for Winterfest 2024. rutlandfree.org/calendar-events/

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

Tell A Friend Tour (TAFT) with Andy Parry

10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Peace Park at Killington Ski Resort. Free. Traveling freeskiiing demo tour followed by a pizza party. Helmets are REQUIRED to participate. killington.com or tellafriendtour.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 or 802-775-0356

Art at the Chaffee: The Art of Collage

10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Workshop #2. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$25 unless purchased with Workshop #1. Imaginative re-assembly of various parts into a cohesive whole using images provided by participants. Must pre-register at chaffeeartcenter.org/adult-classes-coming-soon/

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

Art at the Chaffee: D.I.Y. Drop 'N' Paint

Noon-2 p.m. Weekly. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$25 per person, instructor fee optional. All ages. Supplies and images to paint are provided. Must pre-register by Friday noon. chaffeeartcenter.org/adult-classes-coming-soon/

Woodstock Film Series: 'It Ain't Over'

3-4:30 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum Theater, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. \$15 person; \$12 member. A study of the inimitable baseball legend Yogi ("deja-vue all over again." "If you see a fork in the road, take it") Berra. 90 min., PG-13. billingsfarm.org/events, 802-457-2355

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

Wobbly Barn: Pulse

Doors open at 6 p.m. Wobbly Barn, 2229 Killington Road, Killington. Cover charge may be required. wobblybarn.com



WINTERFEST

FEB. 16-25

'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

SUNDAY
2/18

Winter Hike or Snowshoe

10 a.m.-noon. Farm & Wilderness SAM Trail, Dublin Road, Plymouth. Free but registration is required. Guided snowshoe/hike open to all ages, with little elevation gain. Specific directions to the trailhead will be sent via email upon registration. Dress for winter weather and bring a snack and water. Snowshoes may be advised; 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 or register for free at eventbrite.com/e/community-hikesnowshoe-tickets-785303773727

Woodstock Film Series: 'It Ain't Over'

3-4:30 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum Theater, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. \$15 person; \$12 member. A study of the inimitable baseball legend Yogi ("deja-vue all over again," "If you see a fork in the road, take it") Berra. 90 min., PG-13. billingsfarm.org/events, 802-457-2355

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

'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

MONDAY
2/19

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
2/20

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

10:30 a.m.-noon. 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.

Wintertastic Storytime and Bookmark Craft

11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Ages 5 to 8. Hosted by the Rutland County Parent Child Center's parent advisory committee with a free storybook to take home for Winterfest 2024. rutlandfree.org/calendar-events/

All About Curling

2:30 p.m. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Free. The Rutland Rocks Curling Club will present "Throwing Stones at Houses: an Indoor Adventure" and demo an indoor curling set. 802-773-1853

Italian Film Series

4-6 p.m. Monthly. Norman Williams Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. "La leggenda del pianista sull'oceano" ("The Legend of 1900," 1998). A crew member of a cruise ship finds an abandoned baby on board and raises him on the ship to become a talented musician. 802-457-2295.

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

Woodshop: Make an End Table with Drawer

5-8 p.m. 4 sessions, Feb. 20-March 12. The MINT, 112 Quality Lane, Rutland. \$105 for members, \$130 for not-yet-members. Everything you need to know and do to build this table from pine, including safe practices. Bring safety glasses or borrow from us. Instructor: Dan. rutlandmint.org/event-5600053?CalendarViewType=1&SelectedDate=2/10/2024

Essentrics Strength & Stretch

5:30-6:30 p.m. Tuesdays. Waldron Gym, Green Mountain Community School, 1 Brennan Circle, Poultney. \$12. Created by a ballerina, this no-weights workout corrects imbalances, restores range of motion and tones muscles. Bring a mat and water.

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

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

Discount Skate Night

7:45-9:15 p.m. Weekly until March 12. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$2 admission, \$2 skate rental.

Rockin the Region with James Joel

After years in the making, James Joel is dropping his first single on Valentine's Day. It's appropriately titled "My Love." You can get it on all the streaming platforms. You can watch videos of his songs on his Facebook page "James Joel," and his Instagram, "James Joel Music." He'll be dropping singles every few weeks and hopes to release his first full album this summer, which he'll have available at his shows. That will be titled "All My Life."

I've known Joel since 2009 when he and Ryan Fuller had the Fuller 'n' The Hole duo. Joel has come a long way and I'm very proud of him on his progress. He sent me three tracks to preview: "My Love," his next release, "Remedy," and "Hold On." All three tracks are great and I can't wait for the full CD.

"Remedy" is my favorite of the bunch. It's a cool track that showcases the many instruments Joel plays. "My Love" is a slow, mellow song with sweet harmonica licks. Joel has kind of a Tom Waite story-teller vibe to me. "Hold On" has some cool harmonies which Joel is doing with himself and I really like the guitar and mandolin in this one.

What's unique about these songs is Joel did everything there is to do with them. He sings all the parts, plays all the music and produced it, meaning he mixed it and recorded it.

He said: "My Love" was an easy song to produce, it didn't have a lot of parts, these things kind of become monsters. You take a song like 'Remedy' which is full band, even though it's all me, the recording of things and subsequently the mixing of things is still an art but most people would have an engineer and go into a studio whereas I have a studio in my basement. I wanted to release 'Remedy' first but it was too much and wasn't ready."

Joel is a jack-of-all-trades. He has a full-time job with Royal Glass, plays music at various clubs and stays up all night in the studio. He also knows his way around a car, having fixed mine once. That's when I got to check out the studio, which is quite impressive. Besides the mixing board, he has an array of instruments down there.



Rockin' the Region
By Dave Hoffenberg

What's more impressive is besides his main instrument, the acoustic guitar, he taught himself everything else like mandolin, piano, harmonica, clarinet, violin and even flute (but he hasn't figured that one out yet). He also has a vibraslap, which you can find on every Cake song.

On top of all that, he had to teach himself how to mix and master. Joel said, "Bass and guitar are easy to me. I've also played drums my entire life. I'm fortunate that I can play just about anything."

He'll write a song, play it on guitar and if he felt it needed an instrument accompaniment, he'd search craigslist or Facebook Marketplace for one. The violin he picked up at a tag sale and added it to "Remedy." He added, "These songs spoke to me. The songs told me I needed some additional instruments."

He has many musician friends in and out of the area that could've played on it, like Brian Hobbs from Be Music who volunteered to play harmonica but Joel knew the scheduling would've been tricky. They wouldn't be able to meet Joel's demands to do it instantly. Brian is a monster on harmonica but his tutelage was valuable, too.

Joel said, "He's great and would've been down here in a heartbeat."

Joel has added his percussion array from Be Music, and then some. Jared Johnson has also helped him.

Joel started writing these songs in 2019 and these are the first songs he's ever written. He said, "They just came out of the blue. There's no rhyme or reason to it. I didn't have a desire."

The process is Joel will mix it once, review it, mix it again and listen to it again. Joel said, "Basically I'll listen to them over and over. I'll find what I need to fix, make a revision, sometimes I'll make four or five in a night and sometimes I won't touch it for a week or two. I have the advantage of having the studio in my basement. These ideas come and go so fast. If you don't get them down, they're gone."

Joel has two musician friends from home, Chris Smith and Joey DiMartino, who both have done this before and are helping him with this, but they both live in Connecti-

cut, so the help is via the internet. All three have played together back in the day. Joel said, "I'll send the tracks to them, wait for them to listen to it, they might make some suggestions. I'll think the song is great but Chris will say I have to change this or that. Every suggestion he makes, I just dive deeper down the rabbit hole. This has been one giant Alice in Wonderland type of thing."

Chris and Joey offer different opinions to Joel, kind of like the Angel and the Devil on Joel's shoulders. Joel said, "Joey is like put it out and Chris says I can't put it out yet. I know if I need to feed my ego, I send it to Joey but if I'm ready for criticism, Chris gets it. This is as close to a production staff as you could have. I sometimes send it to non-musician friends so I can get a real candid answer, strictly from a listener's standpoint. You get kind of pigeon holed when it's just you without a producer but Joey and Chris have both been pivotal in my process."

Joel said, "This is something that's been inside of me that I can create, without constraints or boundaries. Whatever I need, I go out and get. When you create these songs, it's an indescribable feeling you get when you share it with

"I have some songs that have 25,000 views but I get that one comment that the song helped someone through a difficult time, that's special. These songs become my babies. It's a vulnerability because I'm putting my heart and soul out to the world," said Joel.

someone and they tell you the song spoke to them. I have some songs that have 25,000 views but I get that one comment that the song helped someone through a difficult time, that's special. These songs become my babies. It's a vulnerability because I'm putting my heart and soul out to the world. It's very fulfilling to know your voice and something you created touched someone across the globe. It's a very cool thing."

As you can tell, Joel is a go-getter. He's been very determined to get this music out to the world. The process has been long, and sometimes tedious, but it will be rewarding to him, and to you. Please check out his music, go see him at a show and buy his music when available. You won't be disappointed.

Rutland Winterfest kicks off downtown, Saturday

Snow sculptures to display talents leading up to 2025 Vermont Snow Sculpturing competition

By Victoria Gaiher

Saturday, Feb. 17- Sunday, Feb. 25 —RUTLAND— Rutland Winterfest starts this Saturday, Feb 17 and runs until Sunday, Feb. 25 in downtown Rutland. The event features events from 10 a.m. until 10 p.m. from skating with Bigfoot, to sledding down Center Street, to snow sculpting, and there's always lots of food, drinks, and vendors.

There's always a lot of excitement, growth and celebration around Winterfest but recently a big announcement added even more to it: next year, Rutland will be hosting the 2025 Vermont Snow Sculpturing competition, and the winner will then qualify for the U.S. National Snow Sculpting Championship held at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.

Tony Perham, a snow sculptor who participates in Rutland Winterfest, was instrumental in pushing to get the competition held in Rutland.

He said, "I had an opportunity to reach out to some people that might be some possible candidates to want to take it over, and Russ Marsan was at the top of my list."

After a conversation with Marsan, he jumped at the chance to bring it to Rutland.

An event like this, he added, "It supports the local economy, and

it's huge in addition to the revenue it could bring in."

The Rutland Winterfest has been around for over 30 years, bringing all types of winter activities, including snow sculpting, to Merchant Street in Rutland's downtown.

Marsan, a snow sculptor and board chair at Come Alive Outside, a non-profit whose mission is to get kids and families outdoors, said it's one of the main attractions that draw spectators.

"People are excited to see it unfold if they happen to be there early in the morning and see a big block of white ice, and then they come back at the end of the day, and it's completely transformed. It's fun to see," said Marsan.

Some of the biggest state competitors show up at Rutland Winterfest, which makes for excellent snow sculpting.

When Marsan was asked if he is good at chiseling the snow, he laughed and said "Yes, until Perham shows up with his saw tooth."

"When Tony isn't there, we have taken first place in the past. A few others from Rutland have stepped up the quality," said Marsan.

Perham was on the winning team, The Pour Saps, which won at nationals in 2020 at Lake Geneva, Wisconsin.



By Victoria Gaiher
Tony Perham (left) and Russ Marsan (right) show off tools used in snow sculpture.

[MUSIC Scene]

By DJ Dave Hoffenberg
Have a music scene coming up? Email djdavehoff@gmail.com

WED.
2/14

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Daniel Brown
6 p.m. Rivershed – Liz Reedy & Mike Brown
7 p.m. Mogul's Sports Pub – Tommy T-Bones
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 – Kim Wilcox

THURS.
2/15

BARNARD

5:30 Fable Farm – Rumney Barn Sessions with Avi Salloway, Corey Wilhelm & Rpb Morse

BRANDON

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

BRIDGEWATER CORNERS

5 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Sammy B

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
6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Mike Brown
7 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Joe Samba with special guest Joshua West
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 – Name That Tune Bingo with DJ Dave

RUTLAND

8 p.m. Angler Pub – A Sound Space Open Mic hosted by George Nostrand
8 p.m. Center Street Alley – Karaoke 101 hosted by Tenacious T

SOUTH POMFRET

6:30 p.m. Artistree – Acoustic Jam Session hosted by Kerry Rosenthal

FRI.
2/16

BARNARD

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

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 – Daniel Brown & Chazz Carney
2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Rhys Chalmers
2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Chris Pallutto Duo
4 p.m. The Foundry – Jamie's Junk Show
6 p.m. Rivershed – Mike Brown
6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Nick Bredice
7 p.m. The Foundry – Aaron Audet
7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Shanaganans
8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Garden State Radio
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 – Pulse

LONDONDERRY

6 p.m. New American Grill – Sammy B

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Frogz

RANDOLPH

7 p.m. Underground Listening Room - Valentine's Poetry and Music w/ Partridge Boswell, Nat Williams and Oum Kamar

RUTLAND

6 p.m. American Legion – Ryan Fuller

SAT.
2/17

BARNARD

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

BOMOSEEN

5:30 p.m. Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Ryan Fuller

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – Comedy Night with Headliner Andrew Shiavone

KILLINGTON

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Rhys Chalmers
2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Nord Peak
2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Gully Boys
2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Chris Pallutto Trio
5 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Jamie's Junk Show
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 – Scott Forrest
6 p.m. Rivershed – Mike Brown
6 p.m. Wobbly Barn - KGB
6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Sammy B
7 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter
7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Shanaganans
8 p.m. Northstar Lodge Lounge – All Request Dance Party with DJ Dave
8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Garden State Radio
9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Aaron Audet Band
6 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Gully Boys
9:30 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Pulse
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 – Red Rooster Riot

QUECHEE

4 p.m. Quechee Club – Apres Ski with Ruby Street

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Blue Fox

RUTLAND

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

STOCKBRIDGE

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

SUN.
2/18

BARNARD

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

KILLINGTON

12 p.m. Rivershed – Brunch with Mike Brown
1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Nick Bredice
1 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Duane Carleton
2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Alex Shier
2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Rhys Chalmers
5 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Jamie's Junk Show
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
6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Open Mic hosted by Indigenous Entertainment
8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Dalton & the Sheriffs
9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Jenny Porter

LUDLOW

9 a.m. Okemo's Solitude Lift – DJ Dave Lift Line Party

STOCKBRIDGE

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

MON.
2/19

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton
2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Alex Shier
5:30 p.m. Mary Lou's – BAK'n
6 p.m. Rivershed – Mandatory Mondays with Name That Tune Bingo by DJ Dave
6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Aedie
8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Sammy B

LUDLOW

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

TUES.
2/20

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Rhys Chalmers
5:30 p.m. Mary Lou's – Bow Thayer & Krishna Guthrie
6 p.m. Rivershed – Nick Bredice
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

2 p.m. The Bull at Okemo – Sammy B
6 p.m. The Killarney – Trivia with Rick Davis

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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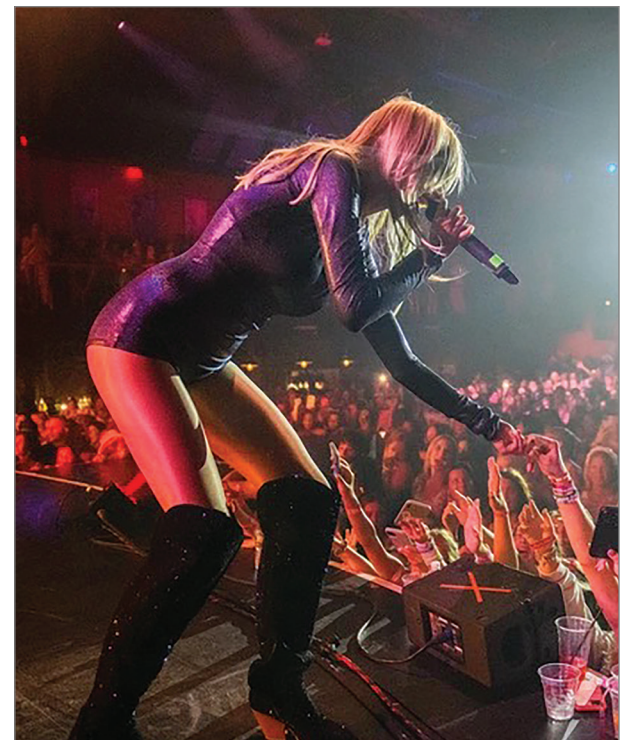
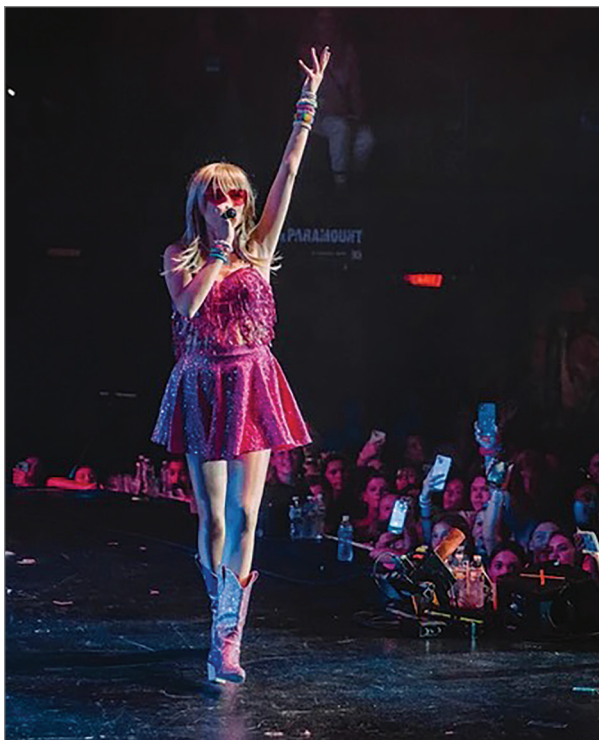
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TAKE OUT



Courtesy letssingtaylor.com

“Let’s Sing Taylor” Live Band Experience: A Tribute to the Music of Taylor Swift comes to Rutland

Saturday, Feb. 17 at 7 p.m.—RUTLAND—Calling all Swifties! Get ready for an unforgettable night as “Let’s Sing Taylor” brings the ultimate tribute to the music of Taylor Swift to the Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. This event promises the most faithful and lively covers of Taylor’s expansive catalog, creating a communal experience for fans to sing, celebrate and dance to Swift’s iconic music in a live setting.

Tickets for “Let’s Sing Taylor” are priced at \$22, \$29, and \$39.

For more information, visit: paramount.org or letssingtaylor.com.



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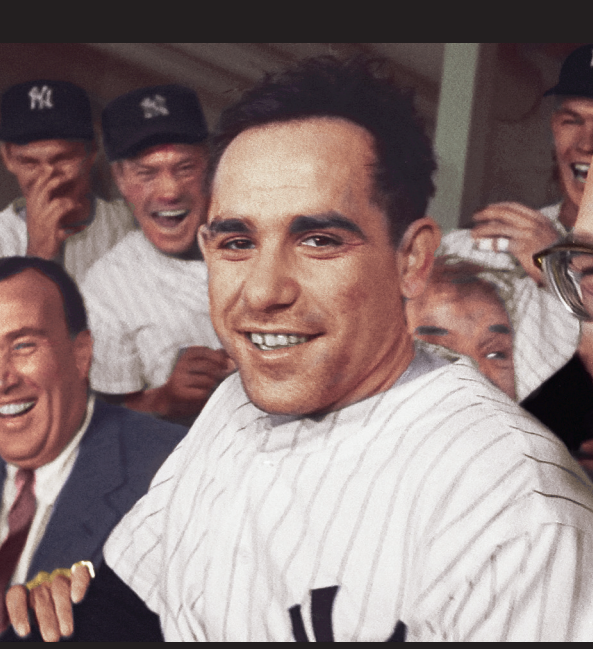
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FEB 16-25
2024

FRI, FEB 16

LOVE LETTERS TO TOWN
ONGOING - PINECONE ADVENTURE FOREST
PINE HILL PARK

COST: FREE
Presented by: Come Alive Outside

1 MAKE YOUR OWN SHIELD WORKSHOP
4:00-6:00 PM | THE MINT POP-UP STORE

COST: FREE
Presented by: The Mint

1 BLACK LIGHT NERF BATTLE PIZZA DANCE PARTY WITH DJ BRETT MYHRE
6:00-8:00 PM | WONDERFEET KIDS' MUSEUM

COST: FREE
Presented by: Come Alive Outside, Partners for Prevention & Green Mountain Approach

SAT, FEB 17

1 FOOD TOUR WITH VERMONT FARMERS MARKET
DROP IN FROM 10:00 AM-2:00 PM

COST: \$40 (PRE-REG. REQUIRED)
Presented by: Vermont Farmers Market

SNOW SCULPTING COMPETITION
10:00 AM-2:00 PM | MAIN STREET PARK

COST: FREE
Presented by: Carpenter & Costin

CHILI COOK-OFF
12:00-2:00 PM | MAIN STREET PARK

COST: FREE
Presented by: Cairo Shavers

TEEN CHILL-ZONE WITH DJ BRETT MYHRE
10:00 AM-2:00 PM | MAIN STREET PARK

COST: FREE
Presented by: Come Alive Outside

WINTERFEST STORY WALK
ONGOING | PHOENIX BOOKS
Presented by: Phoenix Books and Downtown Rutland Partnership

OWLS OF VERMONT
PRESENTED WITH THE SOUTHERN VERMONT
NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM

2:00-3:00 PM | PHOENIX BOOKS
COST: FREE
Presented by: Phoenix Books and the Southern Vermont Natural History Museum

WINTER TASTIC STORYTIME & BOOKMARK CRAFT DAY
2:30-4:00 PM | RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY

COST: FREE
Presented by: Rutland County Parent Child Center

SPONSORS

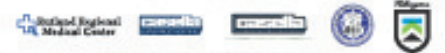
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This event is partially funded by the Region 2 WPLD state grant through the Vermont Department of Health, Division of Substance Use.

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The Paper Post
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The Mint
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The Vermont Farmers Market
Rutland Free Library
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Carpenter & Costin
Cairo Shavers
ONE Church
The Paramount Theatre
Rutland County Pride
Wonderfeet Kids' Museum
Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont
Phoenix Books

Rutland Recreation
Southern Vermont Natural History Museum
The Great Adventure
Marble Valley Catering
Joel Rowell Inc.
Lisa Pankal-Greene

SUN, FEB. 18

**"A SINGLE CANDLE CAN LIGHT THOUSANDS":
A COMMUNITY VOW RENEWAL WRITING
WORKSHOP & CEREMONY**

1:00-3:00 PM | TACONIC LOUNGE
AT THE HUB CO-WORKING SPACE
COST: \$30/COUPLE OR \$20/INDIVIDUAL
SCHOLARSHIPS ARE AVAILABLE (PRE-REG. REQUIRED)
Presented by: Come Alive Outside and The Paper Post

**G.O.A.T. (GET OUTSIDE ALL TOGETHER) HIKE
AT PINE HILL PARK**

10:00 AM-12:00 PM | PINE HILL PARK
COST: FREE
Ages 5-18 & their caregivers
Presented by: Farm & Wilderness

MON, FEB. 19

**1 WINTER SURVIVAL SKILLS FOR KIDS WITH
SURVIVOR MAN JOEL FLEWELLING**

11:00 AM-1:00 PM | PINE HILL PARK
COST: FREE (PRE-REG. REQUIREMENT)
Ages 10+
Presented by: Come Alive Outside

1 TEEN DINING CLUB

5:30-7:00 PM | MARBLE VALLEY CATERING
COST: FREE (PRE-REG. REQUIRED)
Presented by: Come Alive Outside and Marble Valley Catering

1 VIDEO GAME TOURNAMENT

6:00-8:00 PM | BOYS AND GIRLS CLUB
COST: FREE (PRE-REG. REQUIRED)
Presented by: Come Alive Outside, Boys and Girls Club, Partners for Prevention and Green Mountain Approach

TUES, FEB. 20

PJS AT THE PARAMOUNT
10:00 AM-12:00 PM

COST: FREE
Presented by: Heritage Family Credit Union

**WINTER TASTIC STORYTIME &
BOOKMARK CRAFT DAY**

11:30 AM-1:00 PM | RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY
Presented by: Rutland County Parent Child Center

1 TEEN ROCK CLIMBING

1:00-3:00 PM | GREEN MOUNTAIN CLIMBING
COST: FREE (PRE-REG.)
Presented by: Come Alive Outside

1 WINTERFEST CENTER STREET NIGHT SLEDDING

5:30-8:00 PM | CENTER STREET
Presented by: Casella Construction, Casella Waste, Rutland Recreation, Rutland Public Works

COLOR AWAY YOUR WINTER BLUES

2:00-4:00 PM | RUTLAND COUNTY PRIDE CENTER
COST: FREE | SNACKS PROVIDED
Presented by: Rutland County Pride

WED, FEB. 21

1 THE GREAT BIGFOOT CHASE

10:00 AM-4:00 PM
RUTLAND FREE LIBRARY
(PRE-REG. REQUIRED SUGGESTED)
Presented by: Partners for Prevention and Rutland Free Library

WONDERFEET WEDNESDAY

10:00 AM-4:00 PM | WONDERFEET KIDS' MUSEUM
Presented by: Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont

1 TEEN DINING CLUB

5:30-7:00 PM | MARBLE VALLEY CATERING
COST: FREE (PRE-REG. REQUIRED)
Presented by: Come Alive Outside and Marble Valley Catering

THURS, FEB. 22

LGBTQ+ FRIENDS AND ALLIES CAMP COOKING
TUESDAY, FEBRUARY 20TH, 11:30 AM-1:00 PM
CENTER STREET MARKETPLACE PARK

COST: FREE
Presented by: Farm & Wilderness and Come Alive Outside

HUMAN FOOSBALL

KIDS OPEN PLAY 1:00-2:00 PM
TEEN TOURNAMENT 2:30-5:00 PM
ADULT TOURNAMENT 5:30-8:30 PM
CENTER STREET MARKETPLACE
COST: FREE FOR KIDS, TEENS & SPECTATORS. \$50 TO REGISTER AN ADULT TEAM. TEEN TEAMS MUST ALSO REGISTER BUT THERE IS NO CHARGE.
Presented by: Come Alive Outside and Carpenter & Costin

FRI, FEB. 23

**1 TEEN BIGFOOT PAINTING AT THE
CHAFFEE ART CENTER**

1:30-4:00 PM | CHAFFEE ART CENTER
COST: FREE (PRE-REG. REQUIRED) | INCLUDES SNACKS
Presented by: Chaffee Art Center

**BIGFOOT PAINTING AT THE
CHAFFEE ART CENTER**

5:30-7:30 PM ADULTS | CHAFFEE ART CENTER
COST: \$10 PER PERSON (PRE-REG. REQUIRED)
Presented by: Chaffee Art Center

MINDFUL BODY INCLUSIVE SNOWSHOE

3:00-5:00 PM | AITKEN STATE PARK
COST: FREE (PRE-REG. REQUIRED)
Presented by: Rutland County Pride Center, Come Alive Outside, and Thicket Adventure

FREE SKATE WITH BIGFOOT

6:30-7:30 PM | GIORGETTI ARENA
COST: FREE
Presented by: Partners for Prevention, Come Alive Outside & Green Mountain Approach

**FIERCE FRIDAY PRESENTS:
WINTERFEST DRAG SHOW**

8:00-11:00 PM | RUTLAND ELKS LODGE
COST: \$25 (TICKETS REQUIRED)
Presented by: Rutland County Pride

SAT, FEB. 24

1 FOOD TOUR WITH VERMONT FARMERS MARKET
DROP IN FROM 10:00AM-2:00PM

COST: \$40 (PRE-REG. REQUIRED)
Presented by: Vermont Farmers Market Prepared Food Vendors

LOVED ONES AND LITTLE ONES WINTER DANCE
4:00-6:00 PM | ONE CHURCH RUTLAND

COST: \$15 PER PAIR (ONE ADULT, ONE CHILD)
Presented by: ONE Church Rutland and Wonderfeet Kids Museum

REAL RUTLAND FEUD

7:00-9:00 PM | PARAMOUNT THEATRE
COST: \$30 (TICKETS REQUIRED)
Presented by: Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR)

SUN, FEB. 25

1 MAKING YOUR MAGICAL SELF

1:00-4:00 PM | MEET AT DEPOT PARK
COST: FREE
Presented by: Come Alive Outside

1 Fun (12-18)

A Walking Butted Experience. Interact with magical Rutland Winterfest characters and collect special gnomes.



For complete event information visit:

COMEALIVEOUTSIDE.COM/WINTERFEST



@ComeAliveOutside



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vermontfarmersfoodcenter.org/onlinemarket




HAPPY 70th Birthday!

My husband and I are spending our second full winter in Rutland Vt.

I am a traveling nurse. We are from NY.

We are both avid skiers and for the first time last year we made it into the 100 Day Club at Killington mountain. We have been skiing at Killington for a couple of decades but only the last few years on a regular basis. We love this area and always wanted to relocate up here, but life gets in the way sometimes. Robert has been through a lot in the past few years.

My husband is celebrating a Platinum Birthday- 70 Years

Young on Valentine's Day. Platinum represents endurance, strength and a precious gem.

For years, he always said when he turns 70, he wants to go skiing but in a Tux with Tails. That is something else to check off on his bucket list.

He is a classic, super sexy, and lovable person. It took him 70 years to look this good and stay this young and fit.

He touches everyone's heart in different ways and is loved by many.

"Stay Gold!!"

Love from all of your Family and Friends. Especially your Best Babes and Ski Buddy,
 Your Shelly, XOXOXO



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Valentines Day

Mardi Gras

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Beast Week celebrates the people behind the mountain at Killington and Pico

With winter operations in full swing, it's an exciting time to work at Killington Resort and Pico Mountain. Every department is churning at full steam to provide an incredible experience for guests. From Snow Sports to accounting to the Killington Grand Hotel and employee residences, the Beast is alive 24 hours a day.

It takes a lot of people to keep The Beast running. In fact, Killington Resort is one of the largest employers in the state of Vermont with over 1,500 employees during the winter season. During this busiest time of the year, the resort celebrates Beast Week from Feb. 10-16, 2024 to say thank you to the hardworking people who make it all possible.

This year, the Beast Week events kick off with free pizza kits, which is also a contest. Team members are encouraged to share a photo of their completed pie for a chance to win a \$100 gift card. Free food is a recurring theme of Beast Week, and on Sunday, the food and beverage team cooked up a complimentary international meal for all staff members.

Monday night the fun happened at the Bubly tubing park, where team members joined in on a free tubing party with refreshments provided by Rollin' Rooster and Bubly. Mardis Gras kicked off on Tuesday, and the Beast Week fun continued with warm cookie delivery. In keeping with the theme of the day, 24 "Kings Babies" were randomly included in cookie bags for another chance to win a prize.

For Wednesday, Valentine's Day, the theme of the day is Show Us The Love.



Courtesy Killington Resort

All staff members are encouraged to write a love letter to Killington and Pico for a chance to win dinner for two at Preston's or the Wobbly Barn.

The appreciation continues on Thursday with a retro après party at the Wobbly Barn featuring DJ Stevie B and concludes on Friday with free breakfast sandwiches. In addition to all these perks, the Killington and Pico team can also score discounts at local shops and restaurants including Yamen Ramen, Base Camp, Black Dog Sports, Peak Performance and First Stop Board Barn.

Of course, fun employee events are just one of the perks of working at The Beast. No matter what department, everyone has their own favorite thing about it.

"I like the positive atmosphere, I feel as though everyone I have encountered is welcoming and happy or

excited to be here," said Alex Nichols, resident manager of the Chalet. "I also love the easy access to lots of outdoor activities!"

Accounts Payable's Amanda Hammond added, "A few of my favorite things about working at Killington/Pico include the people I work with, the flexibility of my schedule and all the different benefits (especially the new addition of paid maternity leave)."

And of course, many team members mentioned their favorite part was the people!

"My favorite things about working at Killington are 1) my coworkers! We have a really positive, upbeat team here in Snow Sports, and they make work fun every day!" said Trevor Glenn, youth snow sports team leader. "And 2) getting to share my love of snowboarding with students from all around the world."

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Solutions
From page 15

Crossword

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A	S	Y	L	U	M		C	I	R	R	U
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Sudoku

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

Pico

DON'T MISS OUT ON THE WEEK LONG FUN AT PICO.



Pico Mountain extends a warm welcome to all this Presidents' Week. The mountain will be **open daily from Thursday, February 15 to Monday, February 26**. Experience small mountain charm and big mountain skiing perfect for families and skiers and riders of all ability levels.

Purchase tickets now by scanning the code or **visiting picomountain.com/tickets**.





Submitted

Black light Nerf battle and pizza dance party held for teens in Rutland

Friday, Feb. 16 at 6 p.m. — RUTLAND — A black light Nerf battle and pizza dance party will be an electrifying evening of fun presented by Come Alive Outside from 6-8 p.m. Held at the Wonderfeet Kid's Museum located at 66 Merchants Row, Rutland, this event promises an unforgettable experience for teens aged 12-18.

Attendees will have the opportunity to indulge in pizza, engage in exhilarating Nerf battles, and groove to the beats of DJ Brett under the glow of black lights. Glow items are encouraged to enhance the immersive experience.

The event offers two hours of non-stop entertainment, combining the thrill of Nerf warfare with the excitement of a dance party. Whether you're a pizza enthusiast, a Nerf aficionado, or a dancefloor dynamo, there's something for everyone at this action-packed gathering.

Best of all, this event is entirely free of charge, providing teens with an opportunity to bond, socialize, and make memories in a safe and engaging environment.

For more information, visit: comealiveoutside.com.

Experience the magic of maple at Billings Farm

Sat., Feb. 17 - Wed., Feb. 21 — WOODSTOCK — Embrace the enchantment of Vermont's maple syrup traditions at the Magic of Maple event, hosted by Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. Visitors are invited to immerse themselves in the history of maple sugaring in the heart of Woodstock.

Set against the picturesque backdrop of Billings Farm & Museum, this event promises a blend of educational exhibits, interactive activities, and winter wonder.

Highlights of the Magic of Maple include:

Maple syrup traditions: Delve into Vermont's maple heritage through a display of photographs from the Top Acres Farm and Billings Farm collections, showcasing the timeless art of tapping, sugaring, and processing.

Sensory experiences: Sample sugar on snow, and gain insights into the science of maple trees in the spring and their sweet sap.

Family fun: Engage in a variety of children's activities, including stories, crafts, and maple-inspired recipes, guaranteed to delight visitors of all ages.

Horse-drawn sleigh rides: Weather permitting, embark on a trek through the snowy landscape with horse-drawn sleigh rides, available on selected days.

For more information visit billingsfarm.org.



Submitted

A child looks into an old-fashioned sap bucket eagerly learning how the thin, watery sap boils down to maple syrup.

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THE MOUNTAIN TIMES

Get ready to spice things up at the annual Cairo Shriners chili cook-off

Saturday, Feb. 17 at 12 p.m. — RUTLAND — Chili enthusiasts and culinary aficionados are sure to enjoy

this highly anticipated chili cook-off, hosted by the Cairo Shriners of Rutland. A flavorful showdown as contestants from across the region compete for chili supremacy and prizes.

The public is invited to indulge in the chili tasting event, happening from 12-2 p.m. at Main Street Park, Main St., Rutland. Admission to the chili tasting is free and open to everyone. Upon arrival, each attendee will receive a tasting spoon to sample the array of chili creations on display.

Categories include:

- Professional (chef/restaurant),

- Group/Organization (non-food business, church, club),
- Amateur (individual person - the at-home cook).

Each contestant must bring a minimum of 3 gallons of chili for both the judges and public tasting. All ingredients must be visible at your booth, and

contestants should provide a paper listing of the type of chili (beef, chicken, pork, or vegetarian) and its level of spiciness (mild, medium, or hot).

A panel of celebrity judges will award first, second, and third place prizes in each division. The grand prize for first place is \$250, followed by \$100 for second place and \$50 for third place.

Register by contacting Cairo Shriners at cairpote24@gmail.com or call 802-747-3400.

Please provide your name, contact number, and chosen division.

Happy tasting!



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5th annual Snowmobile Festival returns to Vermont State Fairgrounds

Saturday, Feb. 17 at 10 a.m.—RUTLAND— The excitement is revving up as the Vermont State Fair will host the return of the highly anticipated 5th annual Snowmobile Festival from 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Enthusiasts will gather at the Vermont State Fairgrounds located at 175 South Main St. (Route 7 South), Rutland, for a day packed with thrilling events and displays.

This year’s festival promises a snow-packed day of fun for the entire family. Attendees can expect a vibrant parade at noon featuring 13 classes of snowmobiles along with special awards. Trophies will be awarded at 2 p.m. with door prizes and donors announced throughout the show hours.

Admission is free, and participants are invited to enter their sleds at no cost. Judging will take place from 10-11:30 a.m. with the parade kicking off at noon. Additionally, a variety of breakfast and lunch options will be available on-site, courtesy of the High Ledge Snow Stormers.

The festival boasts an impressive class list spanning vintage models to contemporary favorites, ensuring there’s something for every snowmobile enthusiast. From “1965 & Older” classics to “Rat Sleds” and “Youth” categories, there’s a class for every sled aficionado.

In addition to class awards, extra special recognition will be given for Judge’s Favorite, People’s Favorite, Oldest Sled, Most Sleds Entered/Displayed, and Farthest Distance Traveled by Entered/Displayed.

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Courtesy Killington Resort
There's a park party Saturday for freeskiers at Killington.

Ready for a freeskiing adventure with the Tell A Friend Tour featuring Andy Parry?

Sunday Feb. 18 at 10 a.m. — KILLINGTON — Freeskiers will find it an exhilarating day of skiing, fun, and pizza with the “Tell A Friend Tour,” featuring freeskiing sensation Andy Parry and special guest skiers. Join Andy Parry and the Tell A Friend Tour crew for a day filled with exciting

park skiing sessions and camaraderie. Meet special guest skiers, including Will Wesson, Kevin Merchant, Pat Ring, Kale, and Simon Glass, as they showcase their skills and share their passion for freeskiing.

After hitting the slopes, don’t miss the pizza party and giveaways at Snowshed

Base Lodge.

The event will be held in the Woodward Killington Mountain Parks. Helmets are required to participate in this event!

Park skiing will be from 10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. at the Peace Park.

For more information visit: killington.com.



Indulge your taste buds in an exquisite culinary journey around Killington, where a diverse array of cuisine and craft beer awaits from happy hour into the night. Whether you're craving classic comfort food or seeking a more sophisticated dining experience, Killington has it all. Dive into the flavors of happy hour with mouthwatering wings and hearty burgers at local pubs, setting the perfect tone for an evening of delights. For those with a penchant for the exotic, savor the freshness of sushi or the richness of seafood at renowned establishments. Explore the culinary landscape further with a trip to one of the fine steakhouses, where expertly prepared cuts promise a truly elevated dining experience. As the night unfolds, Killington's vibrant food scene continues to impress, offering an enticing selection that caters to every palate and preference. With options ranging from casual to upscale, Killington ensures that every craving is met with culinary excellence.



Liquid Art

Relax in the warm atmosphere at Liquid Art. Look for artfully served lattes from their La Marzocco espresso machine, or if you want something stronger, try their signature cocktails.

Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, they focus on healthy fare and provide you with a delicious meal different than anything else on the mountain. liquidartvt.com, (802) 422-2787.



SouthSide SteakHouse

Southside provides a modern approach to a classic American steakhouse. Join us for an inviting, upbeat atmosphere featuring thoughtfully crafted food made with the highest quality steaks & chops, fresh seafood, and seasonal produce. We offer dinner and drink service in our dining room, bar & lounge, and on our seasonal patio, weather permitting. (802) 772-7556 southsidesteakhouse.com



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

Sushi Yoshi is Killington's true culinary adventure. With Hibachi, Sushi, Chinese and Japanese, we have something for every age and palate. Private Tatame rooms and large party seating available. We boast a full bar with 20 craft beers on draft. We are chef-owned and operated. Serving lunch 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

A place for fun, friends and good times here in Killington! Everything from soup to nuts for lunch and dinner; juicy burgers, fresh salads, delicious sandwiches and K-Town's best wings. Your first stop after a full day on the Mountain for a cold beer or specialty drink and a great meal! lookoutvt.com, 802-422-5665.



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

Voted the best ribs and burger in Killington, Moguls is a great place for the whole family. Soups, onion rings, mozzarella sticks, chicken fingers, buckets of chicken wings, salads, subs and pasta are just some of the food that's on the menu. 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.



Inn at Long Trail

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.



Mountain Top Inn

Whether staying overnight or visiting for the day, Mountain Top's Dining Room & Tavern serve delicious cuisine amidst one of Vermont's best views. A mix of locally inspired and International cuisine – including salads, seafood, poultry and a new steakhouse menu - your taste buds are sure to be satisfied. Choose from 12 Vermont craft brews on tap. Warm up by the terrace fire pit after dinner! A short drive from Killington. mountaintopin.com, 802-483-2311.



Sugar and Spice

Stop on by to Sugar and Spice for a home style breakfast or lunch served up right. Try six different kinds of pancakes and/or waffles or order up some eggs and home fries. For lunch they offer a Filmore salad, grilled roast beef, burgers and sandwiches. Take away available. www.vtsugarandspice.com 802-773-7832.

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Rutland County Humane Society



LINDA & SUGAR

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This pet is available for adoption at
Springfield Humane Society
 401 Skitchewaugh Trail, Springfield, VT • (802) 885-3997
 *Open by appointment only. spfldhumane.org



GREY

6-month-old spayed female hound mix. I came to Lucy Mackenzie after things at my last home didn't quite work out for me. I guess you could consider me as high energy, but I'm also really super cute and adorable, as well....and I'm a puppy! I think I'd do best in a home with a human who's had experience with hounds before, as I do like my routines and consistency! I can't live with cats, but I may be good with other dogs, as well as children, if I'm introduced to them first, and all goes well.

This pet is available for adoption at
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



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



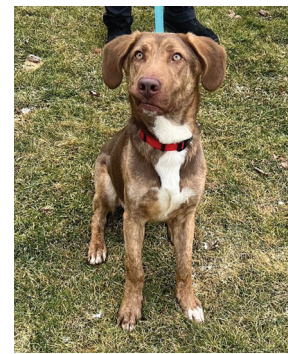
Eddie—3-year-old. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Pita—3-year-old. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Squid—10-month-old. Neutered male. Mixed breed.



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



Lemon—2-month-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.



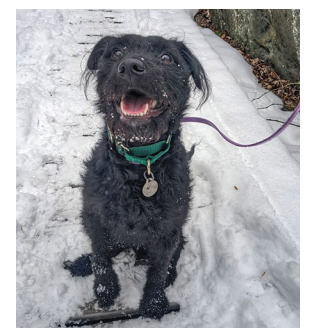
CHICO

Chico—10-month-old. Neutered male. Mixed breed.

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



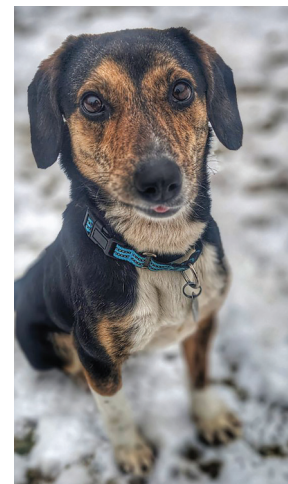
Malakai—1-2 year-old. Neutered male. Husky mix.



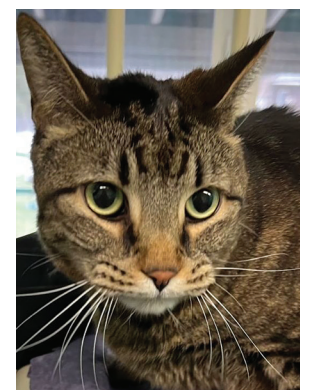
Gizmo—1 year old. Spayed female. Wirehaired terrier.



Rapunzel—6-month-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.



Maddy-Jack—2-year-old. Spayed female. Beagle mix.



Bubby—6-year-old. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.

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Cosmic Catalogue



Aries
March 21 - April 20



I've been saying this for a while now, do you want to be right or do you want to be happy? Some battles are worth fighting, but at what cost? The cost is what you must count beyond your ego or your desire to win or to be right. Try and keep the tide high this week, otherwise, you really do run the risk of cutting your nose off despite your face with a friend.

Leo
July 21 - August 20



If you've been doing everything you can to avoid a fight, then you could be doing your relationship a disservice. While unpleasant, sometimes things have to get to a tipping point and get so far out of balance that you find a new equilibrium. If you do experience relationship conflict this week, just remember to fight the problem and not each other. Letting your ego take over is never a recipe for joy and happiness.

Sagittarius
November 21 - December 20



You might understand the impact of compound interest when it comes to finance. What about when it comes to your own life and your goals? You don't have to go big or go home, or be all or nothing about your ambitions. In fact, most people experience success when they do little things consistently over time. Just a little bit of effort each day toward a new skill will be what it takes to ensure your goals are reached.

Taurus
April 21 - May 20



The changes you've been wanting to make for some time now are likely to be executed this week. For long enough, you've been grappling with the idea of personal authenticity and walking a path in life that is deeply satisfying. Be mindful that by now, you've probably got used to the struggle. Taking action that is right for you is what matters now. Take risk, bet on yourself, it will be worth it.

Virgo
August 21 - September 20



Whatever happens this week, just take a deep breath and know that you can handle it. Life is going to throw you your fair share of problems that you'll need to troubleshoot and overcome. Avoid getting yourself so lost in the minutia that you don't recognize the help and support that is on offer to you. Whatever is going on for you, you don't have to go it alone. Asking for help isn't weak either. In fact, two heads are better than one.

Capricorn
December 21 - January 20



Money moves are highlighted for you this week. It will be a combination of both long-term and short-term goals you'll need to consider. What you choose this week could have far-reaching impact over the next couple of decades. Take your time. Don't be pushed into a deal or choice you don't want to make. Decide on what you want and settle for nothing less. Holding your ground will be your key to success now. Trust yourself.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20



There have been so many rumblings regarding travel, philosophy and foreign people and places recently. This isn't going to change anytime soon. This week, start planning around this area of life. Consider a holiday, learning something new or embracing alliances from distance places. Choices made now may really alter the overall direction of your life and the influence you have internationally. Lean into whatever brings your life a sense of meaning, purpose and a bit of excitement too.

Libra
September 21 - October 20



When it comes to fun and joy, as well as happiness and romance, you've got all the stars lined up to support you. If you're coupled, things could get really spicy between you – and that's a good thing. If you're single, then sprinkling some salt and / or sugar on your life could be just what you need. It just depends on your preference. Whatever it is, just enjoy it and remember that life is for living.

Aquarius
January 21 - February 20



It's all about you right now, as planets pile up in your sign. Generally, this can be a sign to celebrate you and indulge a little bit. However, this time around, you may recognize that the old way of being is not going to serve you any longer. Like a snake shedding skin, you're beginning the process of peeling the layers of your former self away. It's tender, raw but also very beautiful. The best of you is yet to come.

Cancer
June 21 - July 20



Intimacy and connection have become important topics for you now. Now that power planet Pluto is revealing some of your fears and insecurities, you're going to need a new way of addressing deeper issues. These could be about your reluctance to let your guard down in love or it could be about your financial security and stability. It's also quite possible that both of these issues are not mutually exclusive. Let both love and abundance in!

Scorpio
October 21 - November 20



The more energy, effort and attention you put into your home and family life now, the better things will be for you. This isn't to say that everything is going to be fine and dandy, because there may be issues that need to be overcome. However, with a little bit of effort and intention, bridges can be built and a renewed sense of happiness and joy at home can be had. You get out what you put in.

Pisces
February 21 - March 20



Don't push yourself this week if your soul is telling you to rest. By all means, do what needs to be done but avoid going overboard. There's a lot bubbling up to the surface now. It may come in the form of your dreams, meditations or your sixth sense may be stronger than ever. It's a lot to process. The more you rest, the easier it will be to decipher the messages you're receiving. Be a hermit if you can this week.

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Cassandra has studied astrology for about 20 years. She is an international teacher of astrology who has been published all over the globe.

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The battle is for your mind

Now that you know something you didn't know but may have suspected, what do you do about it? Knowledge is linked to light. It allows you to emerge from the dark and see something previously unseen. The question it begs is what now? How do you move forward with this new information?

Are you facing a surmountable challenge or a deeply ingrained circle of fear? You may be tempted to dredge up historical data in replace of a sword and shield but, will that help you in the long run?

The past has passed and some issues

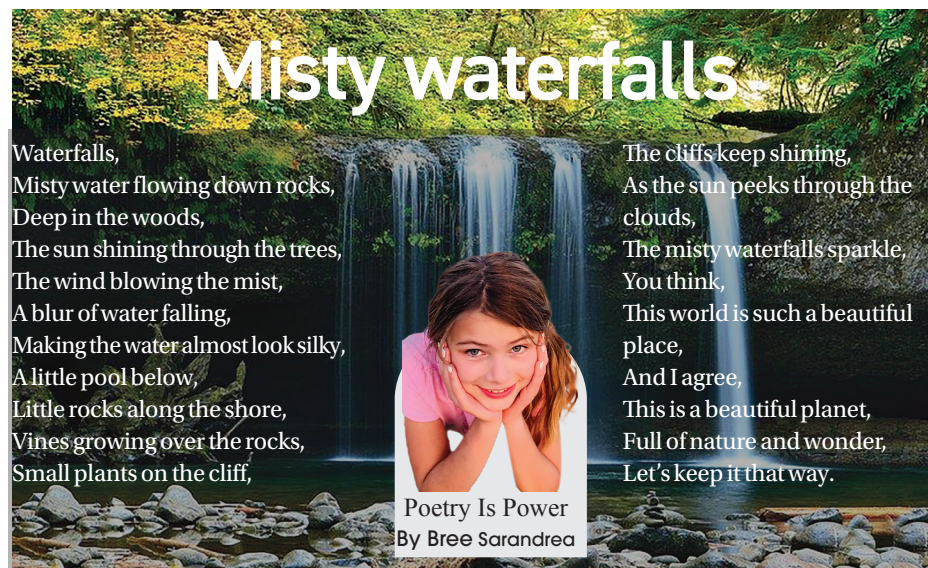
really do need to be buried, once and for all. However, with Pluto's recent shift, there's a new battle ground for power dynamics, manipulation and control.

The battle is now for your mind. How much more propaganda will it take before you've lost your moral compass? To know what is right and true? Can you face your cognitive dissonance and admit that maybe you had it wrong? Maybe you were right. If so, remain humble. Don't lose your heart or sever the ties that can be the bridge toward a return to joy and happiness.

Take the high road, just don't be naive.



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall



Misty waterfalls

Waterfalls,
Misty water flowing down rocks,
Deep in the woods,
The sun shining through the trees,
The wind blowing the mist,
A blur of water falling,
Making the water almost look silky,
A little pool below,
Little rocks along the shore,
Vines growing over the rocks,
Small plants on the cliff,

The cliffs keep shining,
As the sun peeks through the clouds,
The misty waterfalls sparkle,
You think,
This world is such a beautiful place,
And I agree,
This is a beautiful planet,
Full of nature and wonder,
Let's keep it that way.

Poetry Is Power
By Bree Sarandrea

Setting up camp in the frozen north

Building our Killington dream lodge, part two

Author's note: This is part two of a series on the Dye family Vermont adventure.

We always arrived in Killington late on our drive from New Jersey on the highways. After winding our way up dark mountain roads, we forded across Roaring Brook (before the bridge was built), rounded the bend, and climbed to the start of our steepest incline. Dad took a deep breath, floored the gas, and got a running start up our driveway. The engine roared as we took off 1 mph straight uphill. Our loaded-down station wagon was so low, especially with massive beams on top, the bottom scraped and dragged on rocks as it bounced up our driveway (steeper than the Cat Walk—the steepest ski trail I skied on).

Unloading the car in the dark was a challenge in itself—food, water, tools and building supplies, sleeping bags, pillows, furniture and clothes. By then we were bushed and ready for bed.

At first, we cleared space in the woods for the tent that we slept in for the first year in Vermont. I slept on the ground and felt the tree roots under my sleeping bag and pillow. I

wiggled until they were in the right spots. I was a kid. I could sleep anywhere and was excited we were all together, under tall trees, dancing leaves, and twinkling stars, as long as it didn't rain...

Storing necessities outside overnight was a challenge we didn't anticipate. Raccoons outsmarted us week after week, prying open our outdoor cupboard expertly. We closed the doors tightly with twisted wire to no avail—they still entered. When my brother Jack arrived from UNH, he came up with the solution—a key and lock raccoons couldn't open.

Dad looked forward to the man's arrival with the divining rod in hand. He invited me along and explained the natural science of the downturning branch that sought water when the source was near. I watched the Vermonter hold the Y-shaped branch which soon pointed downward. It moved slowly like a ouiji board arrow. We blasted with dynamite and dug way down to establish a well where the divining rod man said.

Dynamite carved out a tiny pond where

Meditation → 33



Mountain Meditation
By Marguerite Jill Dye



A tale of two grosbeaks

Last February, several evening grosbeaks, which we rarely see here, visited our feeder. About the size of robins, the males were yellow with black and white wings, a black tail, and a bright yellow band above the eyes. The females were silver-gray with tinges of yellow and similar coloration to the males on the wings and tail. Both sexes sport a massive, conical bill — the origin of the name grosbeak — used for extracting and cracking seeds.

A member of the finch family, the evening grosbeak nests primarily in coniferous forests in northern New England and New York, southern Canada, the Rocky Mountains — and as far south as Mexico at high elevations. These birds feed on a wide variety of tree seeds, buds, and small fruits. Conifer and maple seeds, elm and ash buds, and the seeds of chokecherries and apples are among their favorites. Evening grosbeaks store extra food in gular sacs, stretchy areas of the throat. They ingest grit from roads to help digest seeds, and they will break maple twigs in order to drink sap. In summer, these birds feed on insects and insect larvae, especially spruce budworm.

When seed crops fail in their breeding range, or when populations of evening grosbeaks are high, large flocks may fly south or east in winter in search of food, a phenomenon known as an irruption. Chattering flocks or small groups of these highly social and gregarious birds wander about, feeding in forests and at backyard feeders.

Evening grosbeaks are numerous and widespread, but according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, populations decreased by 74% between 1966 and 2019. Partners in Flight, a global bird conservation network, reports that this species has experienced the steepest



The Outside Story
By Susan Shea

population decline of all North American land birds. I've noticed this decline first-hand: in the 1990s, evening grosbeaks came to my feeder most winters, but in the past two decades, I've only seen them three times.

Population declines may be due to logging and development in the boreal forest, to disease such as West Nile virus, and to reduced numbers of spruce budworm and other forest insects they feed on, partially due to aerial spraying. Forest experts predict that balsam fir will recede from the Northeast over the next century due to climate change, which will likely further impact evening grosbeak populations.

Pine grosbeaks are also occasional

Evening grosbeaks are numerous and widespread, but according to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, populations decreased by 74% between 1966 and 2019.

winter visitors to the Northeast. About the same size as the evening grosbeak, this plump finch has a longer tail and a short, curved bill. Males are pinkish-red with a dark gray tail and wings, marked by two white wingbars. Females are light gray with olive-green heads and similar coloration to the males on wings and tails.

Pine grosbeaks breed farther north than the evening grosbeak, up into northern Canada and Alaska. They are circumpolar in distribution, ranging across northern Europe and Asia. Body size and color vary geographically. In North America, these grosbeaks nest in open coniferous forests across most of Canada and in high-elevation forests of the Rockies.

In winter, pine grosbeaks may stay in their breeding habitat or move to nearby low-elevation deciduous forests with

TOS → 39

Listen to what the man said

I've mentioned many times how much I love listening to podcasts and audiobooks. I listen to them in the car while commuting or traveling. I listen to them while I run and play golf. I listen to them when I'm puttering around the house doing chores. I even listen to them when I go to bed at night.

I love podcasts and audiobooks so much that I now rarely watch television. With television, you sort of have to sit there and pay attention, but with podcasts and audiobooks, you can be productive with other activities and still be absorbed in the content.

But it's not just the productivity angle that I find alluring. I also love the ability to drill down to the core elements of a particular subject. Anyone can go on a television news show and look and sound good for a 3-minute interview, but make that same person sit down and field questions for two or three hours and you'll get a much better understanding of who they are and what they believe.

I try to "read" one audiobook a month. My choices run the spectrum, but I mostly gravitate toward non-fiction titles that focus on subjects within science, history, philosophy, or religion. I recently read "Sapiens" by Yuval Noah Harari (a history of humans, which was amazing), and a biography on the theologian Martin Luther that was almost too comprehensive.

I also try to throw in a classic work of fiction on occasion just to mix things up. Over last Thanksgiving, I reread Aldous Huxley's "Brave New World." I hadn't revisited that title since high school, and I was amazed at how well it held up. Currently, I'm halfway through Dostoevsky's "Crime and Punishment" and finding it much harder to get through, which is embarrassing since it's regarded as one of the greatest novels in history.

My podcast choices are more inclined to focus on the aforementioned interviews. I love taking a subject like postmodernism, climate change, or immigration and finding interviews with individuals on both sides of the argument. I generally aim for a well-rounded understanding of the topic from various vantage points. Once I feel like I have a solid understanding or even a strong opinion, I'll then look for debates to see how each argument can stand up to criticism.

What I find (more times than not), is that most topics are full of gray. Nothing is entirely clear-cut and if someone is 100% convinced of something, I tend to be skeptical of their opinion because life is rarely black and white.

When I feel overwhelmed by intense

topics, I often opt for lighter fare to give myself a break. Occasionally, I'll dive into a crime series or something revolving around cults (which I have a strange fascination with). Recently, however, I've discovered a podcast that I'm confident is going to keep me entertained for months to come.



The Movie Diary
By Dom Cioffi

The podcast is called "A History of Rock Music in 500 Songs," and it is a comprehensive and immersive plunge into the history and cultural influence of rock 'n roll.

Hosted by Englishman Andrew Hickey (a well-regarded writer with a bent toward historical journalism), "A History of Rock Music in 500 Songs" explores the

evolution of rock music through the lens of 500 influential songs. Each episode focuses on a specific song and its cultural, historical, and musical significance, providing listeners with a deep dive into the context surrounding the music.

The podcast covers a wide range of genres and eras within rock music, from its roots in swing, blues, country, and gospel to its evolution into various subgenres like punk, glam rock, and alternative.

Through meticulous research and insightful commentary (this guy's voice is perfect for podcasting), Hickey delves into the stories behind each song, offering listeners a comprehensive understanding of the songs' impact on the broader landscape of cultures.

I'm only two dozen episodes into this podcast, but I can assure any fan of rock music

that this is a series that will become an integral part of your life, so definitely give it a try.

Music was also an integral part of Leonard Bernstein's life, so much so that he became one of the most celebrated conductors and musical educators of the 20th Century. In this week's feature, "Maestro," directed by and starring Bradley Cooper, we get a glimpse into Bernstein's life and relationship with his actress wife, Felicia Montealegre.

As expected of any profound talent, Bernstein's life was anything but simple. He was an intense man who had an underlying penchant for extramarital dalliances. And while these affairs fueled his passion, they also whittled away at the most important relationship in his life.

Bradley Cooper is Oscar-worthy in this role and could easily walk away with the award in a few weeks. For that reason alone, this film is worth seeing. A colorful "B" for "Maestro," now available to stream on Netflix.

Got a question or comment for Dom? You can email him at moviediary@att.net.



Safdie and the Killington Village: we're in good hands

My mom had left me a cardboard box filled with papers and what looked to be just a bunch of junk mail. So I left it in my car trunk for a few weeks, procrastinating in the hope that this box would just somehow vanish instead of being forced to acknowledge its own existence. But as all things, it eventually made its way back into my life and this week, I finally started to sort through the items.

I literally laughed out loud at the first one and it has kind of sent me into a spiral. Or, more aptly, a rabbit hole. The box was filled with random mementos from elementary school through college. A playbill from a sixth grade play, a letter from my Killington Mountain School U12 coaches, report cards from elementary school through college. Random pieces of my life stuffed into a boot-sized box.

But the first thing I picked up was a report card from my senior year in high school. I was privileged to have architecture and design classes offered and I took every single one. This report card was from my senior year tutorial class in which I spent an entire semester designing a cultural museum for a site in Quebec City. I had been presented with the actual site, design requirements, and building program for the Musée de la Civilisation as designed by the well known architect Moshe Safdie.

I literally laughed out loud and had to call my mom immediately. I don't know if I picked this project or Mr. Moorhead assigned it to me, but I love that I had the audacity to redesign one of Moshe Safdie's

designs. Ahhh, to be 18 years old again. And, to my utter disappointment, my design studies and floor plans have probably been lost to the annals of history. Wouldn't that have been fun to go through again?

So, of course, the rabbit hole. If you are not aware, Moshe Safdie is the architectural firm hired by the developer, Great Gulf, to design the resort village project in Killington. That means Moshe Safdie is coming here! To Killington. And honestly, I don't think that enough energy has been focused on just who this

great man is and his design philosophy. Because he is amazing. His first project, Habitat 67 for the Montreal Expo, changed the way we think about community and nature. The project redefined the idea of living spaces, bringing nature into the harsh reality of urban life. With pedestrian streets and suspended terraces, aerial speaks and skylights galore, the project fit into the urban landscape on the exterior but inside you feel like you have walked into another world filled with light and nature.

As we all come to the new resort village and we are worried about so many features, especially parking and access, there is one thing that I am not worried about. And that is the architect. Safdie wants "my buildings to take root and look as if they've always been there. It isn't about pastiche or adapting what's already there. It's about trying to blend the future and the past."

He understands the timelessness of buildings, the importance of creating community and shaping the public realm, responding to the essence of a plan and

Living the Dream → 33



Living the Dream
By Merisa Sherman



Courtesy photo
Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art in Bentonville, Arkansas, by architect Moshe Safdie is one of author Merisa Sherman's favorite designs as the building is integrated into the land.

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← **Meditation:**

from page 30

tadpoles grew into happy frogs. But it didn't yield the water we needed, so we dug in a second spot—deeper and deeper. Dad grumbled about the cost of digging 350 feet down. (Later, we discovered our best source of water turned out to be a spring under our house.)

Our black lab, Star, loved getting wet so we enjoyed our minuscule pond. When I waded in, she swam in too, crossing it with a couple of paddles. She loved to chase frogs that leapt off the edge and over her head.

A devoted Lab, Star wanted to help. Whenever we cut down a sapling or branch and heave-ho'd it over the ridge, Star ran down to grasp it in her mouth, then she dragged it back up to us.

New experiences awaited us each weekend—from cutting down trees, bushes and shrubs to clearing the land to build our ski lodge. It was Dad's life-long dream—which turned out to be a surprise for Mom. (I guess they'd never discussed it before Dad announced he'd bought Vermont land.) It was my father's idea of Heaven, but, for Mom, a nightmare in Hell—hauling spring water from Route 100, sleeping in the woods on a cot in our tent, being cold all day and freezing all night, cooking outdoors on a Coleman camp stove, and competing with critters for our food...

It was not how our rather erudite mother (a descendant of the Kings of France) expected to be living her life. I heard my aunt (from an Illinois farm) say, "Marguerite always needed the best seat in the buggy."

But Mom rose to the occasion, rolled up her sleeves, and pitched in to do what was needed for the pioneer spirit was also in her genes. Mom's grandfather was raised on a plantation, left South Caroli-



By Marguerite Jill Dye

Cut paper artwork of the half moon on the author's outhouse door in the forest.

na after the Civil War, mined for gold and later became head of the gold mine in the Black Hills. Mom's mother was raised in Spearfish Canyon, South Dakota with five siblings. As pioneers, they eked out an existence, poor in materials but rich in experiences. Family history repeats itself. Like Mom's grandparents, Mom and Dad were staking their claim, but in Vermont on our land.

For several years, we had an outhouse, a one-seater up the path in the woods. Mom decorated it with travel posters when she began work as a travel agent. A Sears Roebuck Catalog was added for effect, and for sissies like me, a roll of toilet paper. Dad cut a half moon in the door, but in good weather, I kept it open. The view from our outhouse couldn't be beat of Pico and Killington silhouetted

against sky. Lanterns and flashlights lit our way along the trail in the dark. I was the only kid I knew who had an outhouse still in use.

Later, Dad built a fun two-seater, located outdoors between two tree trunks. We had a pail of lime powder to sprinkle on top of the holes in the ground. Mom and I were sitting upon it the day it broke and we fell in. Dad and my male friend from home yelled, "Can we help pull you out?" Mom and I were laughing so hard we could barely holler "NO!" During the night and in cold weather, we switched to an old fashioned "honey pot" which I preferred when I heard the sounds of critters howling and stomping through the woods. To be continued...

Marguerite Jill Dye is an artist and writer who lives in Killington and Florida.

← **Living the Dream:**

from page 31

working with nature and its resources.

His projects seem to bring the outside in, making the buildings feel like they have always been there. He understands his responsibility to a culture and how his projects will impact the lives that surround it. Rather than feel like an intrusion of a building on nature, he believes that a building should be seen as a continuation of it. If you read his words, if you study Safdie's art, you will see that he tries to blend the past with the future, nature with structure and order, and the earth with the heavens.

Of the Killington project itself, Safdie said that his "goal is to capture the spirit of and character of a Vermont village in a contemporary rendition of vital public spaces for all seasons."

While it's difficult to infer his intentions from one quote, we can look back on a lifetime of stunning architecture that seeks to understand the communities he designs for.

In 2019, Moshe Safdie received the Wolf Prize, given to scientists and artists for their achievements in the interest of mankind and friendly relations among peoples. Safdie's citation reads: "For a career motivated by the social concerns of architecture and formal experimentation."

The more I study Safdie as an adult, the more I see how his view of the world fits in perfectly with Vermont. He builds habitats for all living things and I am truly honored that he is willing to design for our little town.

The more I study Safdie as an adult, the more I see how his view of the world fits in perfectly with Vermont. He builds habitats for all living things and I am truly honored that he is willing to design for

our little town.

While I continue to hope that he gets it right, I believe we have the absolute best architect we could have. Moshe Safdie. Designing a project in my small town. Who would ever have thought that possible?

Merisa Sherman is a long time Killington resident, KMS coach, serves on the Development Review Board and is on the March ballot for Town Lister. She can be reached at Merisa.Sherman@FourSeasonsSIR.com.

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Tales from the Riviera Maya: A truckload of stupid... a cautionary tale from New Year's Eve and New Year's Day 2023

Editor's note: Bruce Bouchard, former executive director of The Paramount Theatre, and his partner Maureen McKenna Padula have traveled from Rutland to the Riviera Maya for the past three years. This series covers adventures, food, and testimonials from Vermont to the tropics.



Tales:
Riviera Maya
By Bruce Bouchard

While researching and preparing for our fourth consecutive winter journey to our beloved Playa del Carmen, in the Riviera Maya — the east coast of the most northeastern peninsula of Mexico — we came across a Mexican ritual that seemed a terrific opportunity to welcome the new year and mingle with the local population. The Mexican people are serious about the arrival of the first sun of the new year: street

festivities, drone displays, fireworks, and a giant urban dance party on the beach, culminating in a large portion of the local population pulling all-nighters to embrace the first sunrise of the first day of the new year. How great!! Let's do it!! New Year's Eve in Playa!! We booked our tickets to fly on Dec. 31. What could go wrong?

Here is where the "Truckload of Stupid" arrives... After staying up all night, we depart from Rutland at 12:30 a.m. (plenty of time for a 5:15 a.m. Albany flight). We drove our car to Maureen's son Gerard's business in Latham very near the airport where he'll take care of it during our time away. We called an Uber, which arrived within minutes. It was very cold and we were tired and worn. Maureen and the driver loaded up the trunk of the Uber while I, in a fog of stupid, was making a change in clothing for the flight. It all happened quickly — Maureen deposited our single set of keys into a dropbox on the outside of Gerard's place of business and we departed — only to discover, to our horror, when we arrived at the airport that I had managed to leave my backpack in the back seat of our car back at Gerard's place of business (computer, books, key paperwork, and meds for both of us). Next is key, or more accurately, keys! As stated, the keys were at the bottom of the dropbox! We were locked out of the car! Total panic!

The Uber driver was terrific and vowed to stay with us until we had a resolution for this very challenging problem. We drove back to Gerard's business and called Buick roadside assistance, the police, and emergency locksmiths, all to no avail, earliest rescue would be in the neighborhood of 5:30 a.m. Seemed we were going to miss our flight. We then woke up Gerard (who was in Vermont for the New Year) to see if he could help. At his direction we scoured the building for open doors (some of the businesses hold odd hours), but to no avail.

The clock was ticking... the flight was looming.

Finally, in desperation, I wondered if Maureen's thin arm could reach inside the small aperture of the Dropbox, but she



By Bruce Bouchard

The "boombox/pissoire" wall where they welcomed the sun.



was just shy of the mark. While trying this however, the dropbox slowly started to move and then the entire lockbox came off the wall! We turned it upside down and *plop*, out fell the keys! The relief was simply overwhelming... a dopamine rush of epic proportions. We rescued the backpack and sped off to the airport and made it in time to make our flight.

Two flights later and no sleep, we were now exhausted beyond belief as we touched down in Cancun (we made a note to ourselves to never travel this early again)! When we got to the line for customs, Maureen said "Give me your passport" I felt in the pockets of my seersucker sportscoat... and no passport. I went into another panic and nearly burst into tears. The exhaustion robbed my memory of having used the passport as we boarded the plane and I thought I must have lost it in the connecting airport. Maureen became very calm (as is her way) and started searching through the pockets of my backpack. There was the passport. Death to panic No. 2.

When we got through customs, we stepped out of the Cancun Airport and into the barometric pressure of the Riviera Maya. A sweet moment upon every arrival. Our driver, graciously provided by our landlord, arrived, and whisked us to our magnificent apartment in Hacienda del Carmen by 2:30 p.m. A good long nap, a shower, and then we dressed for the famous New Year's Eve celebration with a crowd estimated to be at 150,000 on 5th Avenue and the beach.

After a fine and inexpensive meal at a French Canadian bar/bistro called Three Amigos — where the entire crowd of Quebecois, pretty well wasted, ALL sang loudly to every single word of Canadian Karaoke. The DJ, a very large man, was dressed in a costume that was half leprechaun and half Santa Claus. The French Canadians are boisterous, and the place was rockin'. We were certainly back in Playa once again!!

After dinner we walked the 5th Avenue promenade (a 4 mile stretch of food, retail, clubs, live music and performance art — it IS the primary nighttime activity in Playa) and down to the central square abutting the Caribbean Sea. The



Courtesy Bruce Bouchard

Maureen McKenna Padula (left) and Bruce Bouchard (right) stand by the gate to their apartment in Hacienda del Carmen. Weary from many extra stresses during travel, they had arrived.

party was now in full swing, the plaza packed with thousands of people from all over the world.

We marveled at this huge flock of humanity, 12-midnight struck, tears and laughter, kisses, joy and revelry, drone light shows and massive fireworks, all celebratory hopes for a better new year in this time of worldwide crisis.

Later we took our blanket to the beach, wrapped up in it, and to the sounds of Mother Ocean gently whispering to the sand, snoozed for about two hours. When we woke up, there was so much moisture in the air (the temp was about 65 F.) that our blanket was damp. We were cold. Our full instinct was to pick up and leave, but nooooo!! Truckload of stupid lingering, instead, we made our way to a wall about 200 feet up from the water and attempted to continue to sleep. We're going to see that sun come up, dammit! The problem at the wall was that we were between an annoying boom box on our left and what seemed to be the public urination wall down the way to our right (charming).

Well, finally, perfumed air aside, the sky began to brighten, and we awoke stiff and cold, but we had managed to gut it out and see the first glorious sunrise of the year in the culture, which we have adopted — moving through its four-color display reel: red, orange, yellow and then white... blazing like a hot copper penny.

A large crowd of locals, largely Mexicans, cheered the arrival of the sun, some laughing, some dancing and some crying; family units, hugging, kissing and loving life as the sun announced a new day in a new year.

We dragged ourselves back to the Hacienda and collapsed for a long, long sleep. Later, two worn travelers, a bit worse for wear, groggily awakened to embrace the remainder of the first day of the new year. We paid homage to the visit of the Truckload of Stupid, so very thankful for positive outcomes.

Feliz Año Nuevo desde Playa del Carmen en el Estado de Quintana Roo, Yucatan Peninsula! Mexico llama!!

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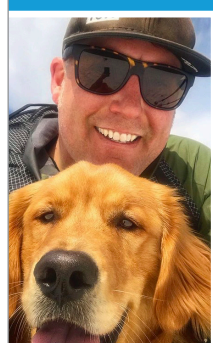
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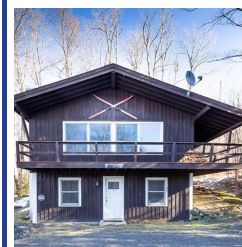
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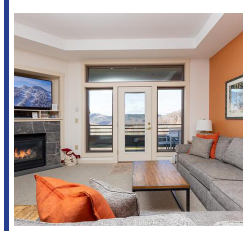
Upper level 2BR+LOFT, 2BA, 1,342 Sq. Ft.



- Great rental history
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- Furnished & equipped \$825,000



Lenore Bianchi



Tricia Carter



Pat Linnemayr



Chris Bianchi



Michelle Lord



Meghan Charlebois



Katie McFadden



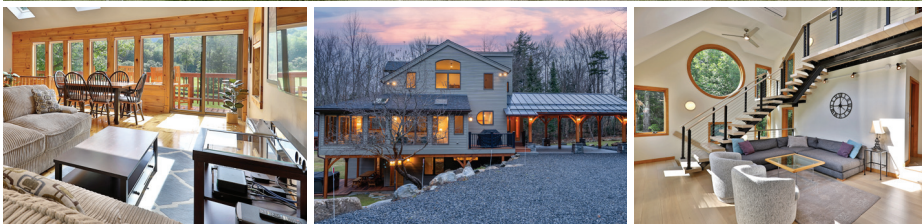
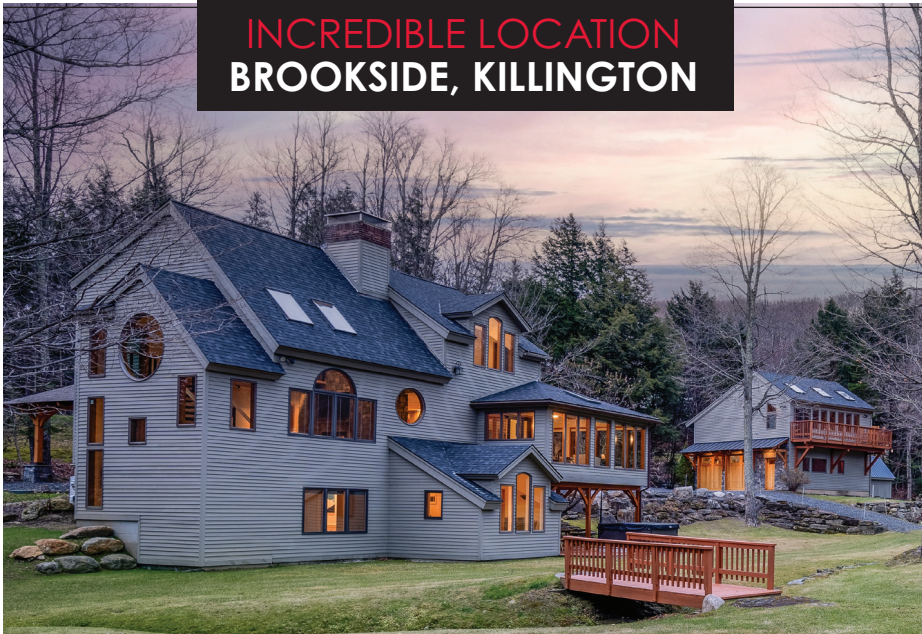
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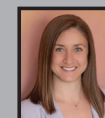
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from page 30

abundant seeds.

Like evening grosbeaks, in years when food is scarce, they may fly south or east. Pine grosbeaks sometimes travel to take advantage of plentiful mast crops, even when adequate food is available in their breeding range.

A 2023 study in Sweden by Svein Dale found that irruptions of these grosbeaks coincided with peaks in rowanberry crops: flocks moved south to feed on this fruit and then returned north in mid-winter when the food was gone.

The few times I've observed pine grosbeaks, I've seen small groups feeding on crab apples or cherries in ornamental trees near buildings. Their diet is predominantly vegetarian: seeds, fruit, and buds. Strong, stubby bills easily crush seeds and nip off buds. Flocks often stay near a tree with abundant fruit until it is all consumed.

In summer, pine grosbeaks catch insects and spiders, especially to feed to their young.

Pine grosbeaks seem to fare better than evening grosbeaks. According to the North American Breeding Bird Survey, their populations held steady between 1966 and 2019, and Partners in Flight ranks this species as low conservation concern.

Evening grosbeaks have been sighted in Vermont and New Hampshire this year, particularly in the Upper Valley, so keep your eye out for these colorful winter finches.

Susan Shea is a naturalist, writer, and conservationist based in Vermont. 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.



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