



2023 WAS VERMONT'S WARMEST ON RECORD

Vermont finished out 2023 with the hottest average annual temperature in at least 127 years, according to National Weather Service data — it was very wet, too.

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HOUSING CRISIS COULD LIMIT REFUGEES

Vermont officials have expressed willingness to accept 555 new refugees by next fall, though they said the number could decrease due to the state's housing crisis.

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UVM OFFERS FULL RIDE OPPORTUNITY

UVM's Pitch Challenge is a new entrepreneurial-focused competition that gives high school students from across the world in grades 10-12 a chance to pitch innovative and impactful business plans — all while competing for individual cash prizes and full tuition scholarships to UVM, a \$180,000 value.

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Courtesy U.S. Ski & Snowboard
Stratton Mountain snowboarder Lindsey Jacobellis, pictured here in 2019, has won more than 30 World Cup events and six overall championships.

With grit and grace, she rose above

Stratton Mountain Olympic snowboarder Jacobellis rises after a fall to rewrite her life story

By Kevin O'Connor/VTDigger

Stratton Mountain School alumna Lindsey Jacobellis was 20 years old when, predicted to win the first gold medal in the 2006 Olympic debut of women's snowboardcross, she heard sportscasters play up her meteoric rise as if spinning a Hollywood script.

Then, just feet from the finish line, it all morphed into "Legends of the Fall." Jacobellis was leading the field in Torino, Italy, when she grabbed the back edge of her board to punctuate her run, only to lose her balance — and the race.

"Flash Turns to Flub for American in Snowboardcross," the New York Times would report in one of seemingly countless headlines repeated around the world.

Jacobellis forged on to compete at the Winter Games in 2010, 2014 and 2018, only for the press to again remind the public how the snowboarder who "Looks to Make Fall a Footnote" instead "Again Comes Up Short" and "Again Misses Gold."

"After a while I started to feel like I was being suffocated by this emerging narrative," she remembered.

"It became the story, instead of just a part of the story."

Turning 36, she qualified for the 2022 Olympics in Beijing, China. Most of her competitors had yet to be born when she had begun racing a quarter-century earlier. Yet her patience and perseverance finally paid off — not with a gilded medal, but two.

"Long Known for a Blunder, Jacobellis Rewrites Her Story in Gold," the Times would report 16 years after its first headline.

But the oldest American woman to top a Winter Olympics podium was only getting started. Finding her voice, she recently released a new memoir, "Unforgiving: Lessons from the Fall."

"After spending so much time trying to get out from under Jacobellis' grit →29

"After a while I started to feel like I was being suffocated by this emerging narrative," she remembered.

Residents voice concern about projected tax hike

By Curt Peterson

The Woodstock Town Select Board hosted a public information session on Dec. 19 in part to quell growing fears over an anticipated hike in state and local taxes.

Ben Ford, finance chair of the Mountain Views Supervisory Union (MSVU), state Rep. Tesha Buss, and state Sen. Alison Clark were there to answer questions.

The state's projected 18.5% education tax rate increase, plus a proposed 16% levy to finance a new middle/high school complex in Woodstock, had residents reeling — adjectives from "daunting" to "excruciating" were commonly used. Several participants mentioned

that Woodstock's taxes are already "painful," and might dissuade young families from moving to the area

"The problems our schools face are not going away," Ford said.

and/or force those currently living here (but struggling) to be forced to move out.

The cost estimate for the district's new middle school/high school is \$99 million. It is subject to voter approval by the seven district towns — Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Pittsfield, Pomfret, Reading and Woodstock — on Town Meeting Day in March.

Buss, Ford and Clarkson explained that raising the number of students in the district is key to controlling

education taxes. But residents disagree about both the feasibility of doing that, and how to best go about it. Some say keep taxes as low as possible

is the best way to keep and attract young families. Others think investing in the future, rather than patching up the past, will lead to growth.

Ford said, "Taxes are going to go up year-over-year because education costs and spending are rising state-wide," there are many factors outside of local control, he added. "And the problems

Tax concerns →27

Judge rules former Woodstock coach's speech wasn't violated in termination

By Katy Savage

Most of a former Woodstock Union High School snowboard coach's claims that his free speech and due process rights were violated against the school board, superintendent and state were denied by a U.S. District Court judge on Dec. 28.

Judge Christina Reiss denied Coach David Bloch's motion seeking irreparable harm and denied his claim that the school violated his due process rights. Reiss also partially argued in favor of Bloch's arguments that the state policies and Vermont Principal Association's policies could overburden free speech.

"The District is very pleased with this result," Woodstock Superintendent Sherry Sousa said in an email. "After a full evidentiary hearing, the federal court refused to reinstate Mr. Bloch, rejecting his arguments that he was exercising his free speech rights when he made comments about a transgender student/athlete on another team."

Bloch, who founded the Woodstock snowboard team, was fired Feb. 9, 2023, after making transphobic remarks at a snowboarding competition.

Court documents indicate he and his students were at Jay Peak on Feb. 8 for a race in which female students on the Woodstock team were to compete against a transgender student on the Hartford High School team.

During a break, a male student on the Woodstock team told a female teammate that the competition was unfair.

The girl called the male a transphobic. The male student said the conversation then "got heated," according to court documents.

Bloch entered the conversation, telling the students there were biological and skeletal differences between males and females, including different muscle distribution. The conversation was brief, according to court documents.

Bloch, who filed a complaint against the district, the Vermont Principals' Association and Agency of Education in July, initially said in court documents that nobody heard the conversation.

He alleged he was called into the superintendent's office on Feb. 9 and fired without an investigation or due process.

However, court documents show there was another exchange with Bloch.

Bloch admitted to telling female athletes on his team, "Let's go beat this biological boy" — something omitted from his original complaint, according to court documents.

Bloch said he made the comment under his breath and didn't think anybody heard him. He made the comment "out of frustration on behalf of his female team members,"

Free speech →7

Housing crisis could interfere with Vermont efforts to resettle 550 refugees by next fall

Rutland among five cities selected to receive newcomers

By Tiffany Tan/VTDigger

Vermont officials have expressed willingness to accept 555 new refugees by next fall, though they said the number could decrease due to the state's housing crisis.

By September 2024, some 330 refugees are expected to be resettled around Colchester, Montpelier and Rutland, and another 225 in the Bennington and Brattleboro areas, according to Tracy Dolan, Vermont's state refugee office director.

If the effort is successful, the new arrivals will represent the biggest number of refugees resettled annually in Vermont in almost a decade. The plans align with the state government's desire to integrate more refugees into the workforce and the fabric of Vermont life while responding to the global refugee crisis.

At the end of last year, according to UNHCR, there were 35.3 million refugees worldwide, more than half of whom originated from Syria, Ukraine and Afghanistan.

"I'm hoping that we're able to continue to resettle, and resettle at the numbers that we need," Dolan said in an interview. "Our workforce absolutely needs these folks, and communities have found it to be a very positive experience."

But she acknowledged that Vermont's projected refugee resettlement number for this federal fiscal year was "aspirational," given the state's low housing stock coupled with high housing costs.

"I wrote that to the feds, that I support this, but recognizing that we do have a housing crisis and it may need to change," Dolan said, referring to communication with the U.S. Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration.

Last fiscal year, Dolan said, Vermont received a little over 400 refugees, a broadly used term that includes humanitarian parolees, asylum seekers and holders of special immigrant visas, such as Afghans who'd worked with the U.S. military. The previous year, the state accepted 387 refugees, according to a January 2023 report to the state Legislature.

Dolan said the two federally contracted resettlement agencies in Vermont — the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants and the Ethiopian Community Development Council — inform the federal government the number of refugees they can relocate after consulting with the State Refugee Office and the host communities.

The development council's Vermont branch, which is resettling refugees in the Bennington and Brattleboro areas, is already considering cutting its current projected number from 225 to 150 because of the statewide housing crisis.

"We have some concerns about our ability to resettle as many people as we thought, given the current state of housing," said Mark Clark, the agency's Vermont resettlement program manager. "We can get people employed, but we just can't get access to safe and affordable housing."

Gov. Phil Scott, who has advocated for Vermont to accept more refugees, acknowledged that the state's lack of housing is a major problem for its resettlement efforts.

"We need people here in Vermont, and we have the jobs for people here in Vermont, but we don't have the housing they need to be here," Scott said in an interview Thursday, Dec. 28. "It's a very frustrating dynamic, and we're going to do everything we can."

"Our workforce absolutely needs these folks, and communities have found it to be a very positive experience," Dolan said.



By Master Sgt. Donald R. Allen via U.S. Air Force
U.S. Air Force loadmasters and pilots assigned to the 816th Expeditionary Airlift Squadron, load passengers aboard a U.S. Air Force C-17 Globemaster III in support of the Afghanistan evacuation at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Afghanistan on Aug. 24, 2021.

Scott said his administration will be introducing a package of housing proposals in the upcoming legislative session.

Vermont has consistently had some of the lowest housing vacancy rates in the nation, according to the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, which relied on U.S. Census Bureau data for its analysis.

As of 2022, the statewide rental vacancy rate stood at 3.2%. To meet expected demand and normalize the extremely low vacancy rate, the housing finance agency said in January, the state needs 30,000 to 40,000 new homes by 2030.

Meanwhile, the median housing rental cost as of 2021 was \$1,070, an amount that included utilities.

When refugees arrive in the U.S., each person in a household receives \$1,325 from the federal government to be used for their critical needs during the first 90 days, such as housing rent, food, clothing and furnishings.

Clark, of the development council, said people who resettle on their own have the hardest time making ends meet. For housing alone, they need the usual outlay of first and last month's rent and security deposit. Some people, he said, have decided to seek housemates among fellow refugees to make their expenses more manageable.

To help defray the refugees' initial living expenses, the development council collects donations for basics such as clothes, shoes, toiletry, household goods and furniture. Clark said development council staffers also help those

who qualify to apply for government aid such as Medicaid, food benefits and cash assistance while they look for jobs.

Under the current state government budget, the State Refugee Office is allotted \$1 million for employment assistance grants. Dolan, the office director, said the money goes to organizations such as nonprofits, which help refugees prepare to find local employment.

"Those employment rates are very high," she said, estimating that around 80% of work-eligible refugees find jobs within their initial months in Vermont.

Dolan said the state contributes a small amount into a fund that resettlement agencies use to pay for hotels or motels if their clients can't immediately find rental housing. The pot of money, she said, is primarily made up of federal funds, with private donations mixed in.

Clark said the development council also has been building relationships with landlords to help their clients find housing. The work, he said, includes explaining to landlords

To meet expected demand and normalize the extremely low vacancy rate, the housing finance agency said in January, the state needs 30,000 to 40,000 new homes by 2030.

that refugees, being new to the U.S., don't have a credit history and that the background checks they've undergone through the Department of Homeland Security, FBI and CIA should suffice.

"We don't want our clients to ever become homeless," he said.

Habib Sabet contributed reporting.

Fair Haven detective will not be prosecuted for fatal shooting

Attorney General Charity Clark has declined to prosecute Fair Haven Police Detective Shaun Hewitt for charges related to the use of deadly force in a shooting incident involving Kenneth Barber, Jr. on June 19, 2023. The Rutland County State's Attorney's Office also declined to prosecute the case after completing its own independent review.

Based on the facts and circumstances and consistent with Vermont law, Attorney General Clark concluded that the use of force by Hewitt was objectively reasonable and justified. Under the totality of the circumstances, Hewitt reasonably believed that he was in imminent danger of being killed or suffering great bodily harm at the hands of Barber, and he used necessary and appropriate force to defend himself. In reaching this decision, the Attorney General's Office reviewed all materials provided by the Vermont State Police, who conducted

the investigation, as well as a report from a use-of-force expert.

On June 19, 2023, Hewitt responded to a call for assistance involving a man, later identified as Barber, who was assaulting his neighbor. When Hewitt arrived on scene, three neighbors were attempting to restrain Barber on the ground. One of the neighbors immediately notified Hewitt that Barber had a gun. As Hewitt assisted in restraining Barber, one of the neighbors was able to remove the firearm from Barber's waist. Barber refused Hewitt's commands to put his hands behind his back, instead fleeing to his nearby vehicle.

Hewitt followed Barber to the vehicle and attempted to use non-lethal OC spray, commonly known as "pepper spray," to subdue Barber, but the OC spray did not deploy properly. Barber subsequently got into the driver's seat of the vehicle, turned on the ignition and put the car in reverse as

Hewitt was standing in the "V" between the open driver's door and the car frame. Barber ignored Hewitt's orders, "Don't do it," and "Stop," and accelerated the vehicle in reverse. Hewitt, still wedged in the open door frame, had trouble keeping pace with the accelerating vehicle, and fired one round striking Barber's torso.

The vehicle continued in reverse a short distance before coming to a stop and Barber fell out of the open door onto the ground. Hewitt and a nurse who was in the area rendered aid until medics arrived. Barber died in the emergency room shortly after arrival due to the torso wound he sustained in the shooting.

Hewitt reasonably believed that he was in imminent danger of being killed or suffering great bodily harm and was, therefore, justified in using deadly force to defend himself.

Under Vermont law, an officer may use

deadly force to repel an imminent threat to cause death or serious bodily injury when the officer objectively and reasonably believes that a person has the present ability, opportunity, and apparent intent to immediately cause death or serious bodily injury. Furthermore, the use of deadly force is deemed necessary when, given the totality of the circumstances, an objectively reasonable officer in the same situation would conclude that there was no reasonable alternative to the use of deadly force that would prevent death or serious bodily injury to the officer or another person.

Under the totality of these circumstances, during and leading up to the shooting, an objectively reasonable officer in Hewitt's position would have concluded that there was no other reasonable alternative to the use of deadly force to prevent his death or serious bodily injury.

UVM offers full-ride scholarship opportunity to student entrepreneurs

Opening date for applications is Jan. 15

The University of Vermont's Vermont Pitch Challenge is a new entrepreneurial-focused competition that gives high school students from across the world in grades 10-12 a chance to pitch innovative and impactful business plans — all while competing for individual cash prizes and full tuition scholarships to UVM, valued at up to \$180,000.

The new program is free to enter and offers young students a unique opportunity to learn from UVM faculty and alumni as well as top entrepreneurial experts about how to write a

business plan, create a compelling pitch, and achieve their ultimate career goals.

The Vermont Pitch Challenge is open to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors — as individuals or as teams of up to three people.

The Vermont Pitch Challenge is open to high school sophomores, juniors, and seniors — as individuals or as teams of up to three people — and is not to be confused with the Joy and Jerry Meyers Cup, a similar competition designed specifically for

UVM undergraduates. Monthly Entrepreneurial Exchange webinars were of-

fered starting this past Sept. 12 offering students inspiration and valuable business insights from expert entrepreneurs including Lisa Lindahl, co-inventor of the first sports bra and National Inventors Hall of Fame Inductee. Students also learned how to build a

successful business model and create a compelling pitch. All seven Entrepreneurial Exchange webinars have built toward the Pitch Challenge's formal application opening date on Jan. 15.

"The Vermont Pitch Challenge is a great new platform for young minds to bring their creativity and entrepreneurial skills to life," said Dr. Jay Jacobs, vice provost for enrollment management at the University of Vermont. "We believe in nurturing the next generation of innovators and providing them with the tools and mentorship

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'Baby Bonds' legislation proposed to address intergenerational poverty

State Treasurer Mike Pieciak was joined by state and national leaders Dec. 19 at a press conference in Burlington to announce legislation that would establish a baby bonds program in Vermont. Baby Bonds is an innovative policy to address intergenerational poverty, support rural economic development, and retain young people in Vermont.

The policy would invest \$3,200 for every Vermont child born on Medicaid into a trust fund managed by the State Treasurer's Office. Children could access their baby bond between ages 18 and 30, with the initial \$3,200 investment projected to grow to \$11,500 by age 18 and \$24,500 by age 30.

The funds would be dedicated to wealth-building activities like purchasing a home in Vermont, starting or investing in a local business, pursuing higher education or job training, and saving for retirement.

"Despite the opportunities of our state, we know our economy does not work for everyone," said Treasurer Pieciak. "Baby bonds would ensure that Vermont children facing the toughest circumstances can accumulate assets, build wealth, and shape their own financial future. By investing in our state's greatest resource — our people — we can create a more resilient, fair, and productive Vermont economy for all."

Bill sponsors Sen. Ram Hinsdale and Rep. Noyes focused on the impact the Baby Bonds program would have on helping close the racial wealth gap and addressing rural poverty.

"The median wealth of white households is nearly eight times that of Black households and five times that of Hispanic households and without a dedicated effort from government, racial wealth inequalities and their compounding effects will continue and worsen for generations to come," said Hinsdale, the Senate sponsor of the bill. "Baby Bonds is designed to confront the racial wealth gap head on by supporting our most vulnerable children with capital to

invest in themselves, their futures and their communities."

"Investing in children born into poverty in rural Vermont will allow them to see a future of hope and not a future where they never seem to get ahead. The issues of poverty are complex and come with no easy solutions, but when we see half of the children born into poverty in three of our rural counties, we need a forward-thinking solution," said Noyes. "We have support systems addressing Vermonters' short-term needs, and investing in baby bonds will allow individuals to have a stake in their future by accessing education, starting a business, or owning a home."

Professor Hamilton, a national thought leader on Baby Bonds, spoke to the transformative impact the program would have on future generations of Vermonters.

"By supporting wealth-building activities, baby bonds can help ensure that every child, regardless of their race, gender, or family economic position, can access the financial resources they need to build long-term economic security and generational wealth," said Hamilton. "As opposed to simply supporting income, the long-term wealth-building focus of baby bonds aims to break the cycle of intergenerational poverty that is itself a product of policy

Baby bonds → 6

Tractor trailer crash closes Route 4

Route 4 was closed the morning of Dec. 31 in Killington for a jack-knifed tractor-trailer unit.

Police said Kenneth Hoag, 36, of Hoosick Falls, New York was traveling in the tractor trailer eastbound on Route 4 near Jughandle Road and Winterberry Road when he lost control due to icy road conditions around 6:30 a.m.

No injuries were reported at the time, and no other motor vehicles were involved. Due to the road conditions and the motor vehicle crash, the normal flow of traffic was reduced for public safety.

The Vermont State Police were assisted by members of the Vermont Department of Motor Vehicles, Killington Fire Department, Regional Ambulance Service, and TowAway Towing and Recovery.

OBITUARY

Kathleen Demaio, 81

Kathleen A. Demaio, 81, passed away in her home on Dec. 11, 2023.

She was born Oct. 31, 1942, in Jersey City, New Jersey the daughter of Frank and Louise (Deluca) Montone.

She worked as a computer programmer as an independent contractor for the U.S. Postal Service.

Demaio graduated college with an associate's degree in Mathematics. She enjoyed bicycling, skiing and traveling around the world.

She is survived by her husband Peter Demaio, brother Anthony Montone of North Carolina, and sev-



Submitted

Kathleen Demaio

eral nieces and nephews.

She is predeceased by both parents.

There will be no services at this time. Arrangements were made under the direction of Clifford Funeral Home.

GMP's rebate programs continue in 2024

Starting Jan. 1, Green Mountain Power (GMP) will continue its rebate programs to help customers save when they switch from fossil fuels to clean electricity for driving, heating and cooling, yard care and more. All GMP's programs are designed to help cut costs for all GMP customers while also cutting carbon emissions.

Also starting in January, GMP is updating its heat pump program to expand access to the super-efficient heating and cooling technology by more than doubling its enhanced, post-purchase heat pump rebate for income-eligible customers to \$2,000. It had been \$600. To qualify, customers must have a household income at or below 80% of area median income (AMI).

To see if your household qualifies for the enhanced post-purchase rebate, check the AMI information available on the heat pump rebate page on the GMP website. At the same time, the \$300 post-purchase rebate for moderate-income customers and the \$400 midstream rebate paid to suppliers will end. The rebate program changes are for ductless mini-split cold climate heat pumps and centrally ducted air source heat pumps, and they go into effect on Jan. 1, 2024.

"Since 2020, GMP incentives have helped customers install more than 28,000 mini split heat pump systems and 2,700 ducted heat pumps and we're thrilled to enhance our post-purchase rebate to help more Vermonters," said Tiana Smith, Leader of Electrification at GMP. "Heating with fossil fuel is the top source of carbon pollution in Vermont, and GMP is proud to have partnered with installers and customers to grow the market here for this clean electric technology."

GMP customer Jonathan Klein has heat pumps at his Richmond, Vermont home as his family shifts away from fossil fuel. "They have been incredible all year long. We're able to

"Since 2020, GMP incentives have helped customers install more than 28,000 mini split heat pump systems," said Smith.

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needed to turn their ideas into reality, and this unique opportunity achieves exactly that. Hopefully this program highlights how UVM can help students achieve their innovation dreams."

Current UVM students from the Academic Research Commercialization (ARC) program and the Entrepreneur Club will introduce the challenge to high schoolers, judge the submissions, and mentor the finalists as they prepare to pitch in-person at UVM. Judging will be based on whether the proposed business offers a solution to a problem faced in the target market, creates a positive impact, delivers something different to the market, and how effectively it achieves the participants' stated goals.

"As a team lead of the ARC program at UVM, my own entrepreneurial endeavors wouldn't have taken form without the guidance and support that UVM provides to students like faculty mentorship, paid internships, and exposure at pitch events," said Mason Tuff, a current UVM student and director of the ARC program. "I'm super excited to help kick off this new program for high school students. It's a great way to discover young entrepreneurs and support their journey from the beginning of a new business concept to an actual start up."

The top five individuals/teams for the Vermont Pitch Challenge will be announced in March. These teams will then pitch their business plans in-person at UVM on Thursday, April 4, where the grand prize winner/s will be announced.

Prizes will be awarded to all individual members of each of the five winning teams. First-place students will each earn a four-year tuition scholarship to the University of Vermont, valued at up to \$180,000; second and third place winners will each receive a \$5,000 check; fourth and fifth place winners will each receive a \$1,000 check.

There is no entry fee to participate in the Vermont Pitch Challenge. Receipt of the grand prize is contingent upon admission to the University of Vermont. Winning the Vermont Pitch Challenge does not constitute automatic admission to UVM.

For the full Challenge timeline and additional details, visit uvm.edu/admissions/undergraduate/vermont-pitch-challenge.

GMP → 6

2023 was Vermont's warmest year on record, capping a year of 'wild' weather

It was not just an unusually warm year, 2023 was a year of extremes throughout the state, from flooding to cold snaps and heat waves

By Erin Petenko/VTDigger

Vermont is on track to have its hottest average annual temperature in at least 127 years, according to National Weather Service data from the Burlington area— a stark sign of rising global temperatures brought on by climate change.

This past year has not only been the warmest on record, but it also has been rife with different forms of extreme weather throughout the state. Heat waves, cold snaps, flooding and wildfire-related air pollution have been among 2023's notable weather events.

"It's just been extremely wild in a number of different ways," said Gabriel Langbauer, a meteorologist for the National Weather Service. "It's not just been, 'Oh, it's warmer.' It's not just been, 'Oh, we've had more thunderstorms.' It's all the different variables interacting. It's all kinds of wonky stuff"

Vermont is not alone. This year didn't just break global temperature records — it blew past them, according to a New York Times analysis of federal weather data. Europe and the Southwestern United States were among the regions that experienced extreme heat waves in 2023.

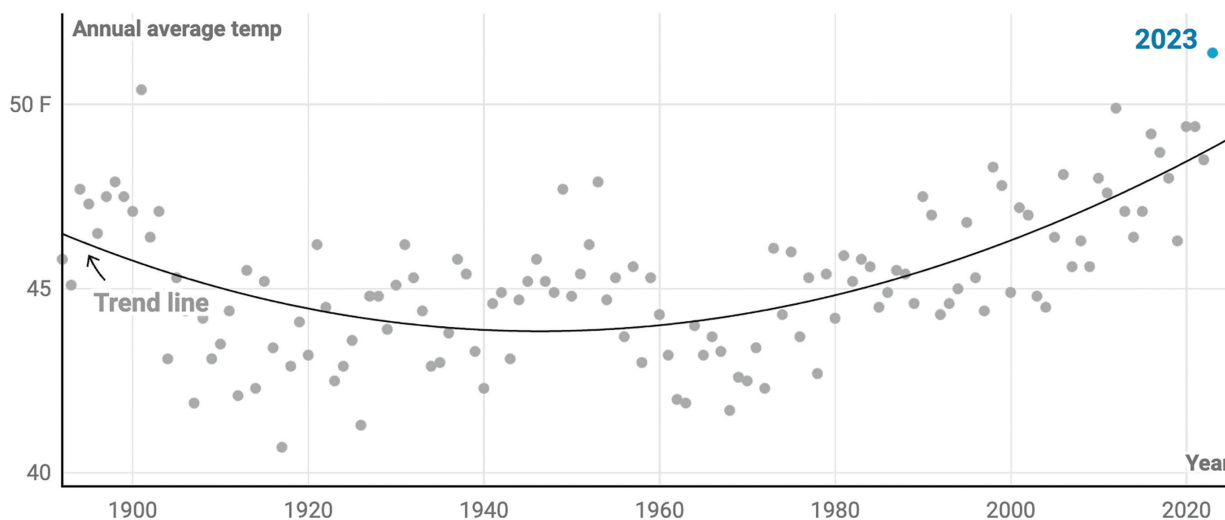
Some climate scientists have suggested that the El Niño weather pattern is responsible for the particularly high temperatures this year. But Langbauer pointed out that at least in Vermont, 2023 is part of a broader swell of rising temperatures.

"If you look at the full list of the warmest years on record, they're all in the last 10 years," he said. "This is the trend we're having, and it's going to continue to be that way moving forward."

Month-by-month data from the weather service reveals that Vermont started 2023 warm, with the fifth-hottest January ever recorded.

But February experienced the opposite extreme. Feb. 3, 2023, marked Vermont's coldest day in 20 years, with

Vermont is not alone. This year didn't just break global temperature records — it blew past them, according to a New York Times analysis



By Erin Petenko/VTDigger, with data from National Weather Service

The chart above shows the average temperatures in Burlington since 1900. This past year, 2023, was well above average.

wind chills causing a low of about -40 degrees, Langbauer said. Service organizations across the state scrambled to make sure Vermonters experiencing homelessness and other vulnerable people were prepared for the extreme cold.

Cold temperatures on May 18 also led to an unusually late frost after farmers had prepared for an early start to the growing season. Some farmers estimated a loss

of 95% of their crop, leading Gov. Phil Scott to seek a disaster declaration from the U.S. Department of Agriculture. The state then went through a record-breaking heat wave in early June, followed by several days of haze and air quality advisories from smoke blowing south from wildfires in Canada. Advocates expressed concern about the lack of cooling shelters for people living outside after some

Vermonters were evicted from motels in early June. The northern regions of the state began reporting moderate drought conditions.

Then came July. On July 9-11, record-breaking rainfall of 5-9 inches swept through Vermont. From Ludlow in the south to Johnson in the north, the state experienced catastrophic flooding that inundated homes, businesses and local infrastructure. Montpelier's North Branch River reported one of its highest-ever water levels of more than 526 feet.

In the weeks after the storm, the ground was so saturated that relatively minor rainfall forecasts set off flood warnings, again. Several communities experienced landslides that continued after the storms had passed.

And on Aug. 3, another round of rain hit Addison and Rutland counties, causing flooding in downtown Middlebury and Rutland, mudslides, and the closure of the Amtrak line.

Climate experts called the flooding a classic hallmark of the extreme weather patterns that climate change can cause. In total, the central Vermont region reported more than 20 inches of rain over the summer — the most it has received in 75 years.

"It's been a very, very wet year all over the state," Langbauer said.

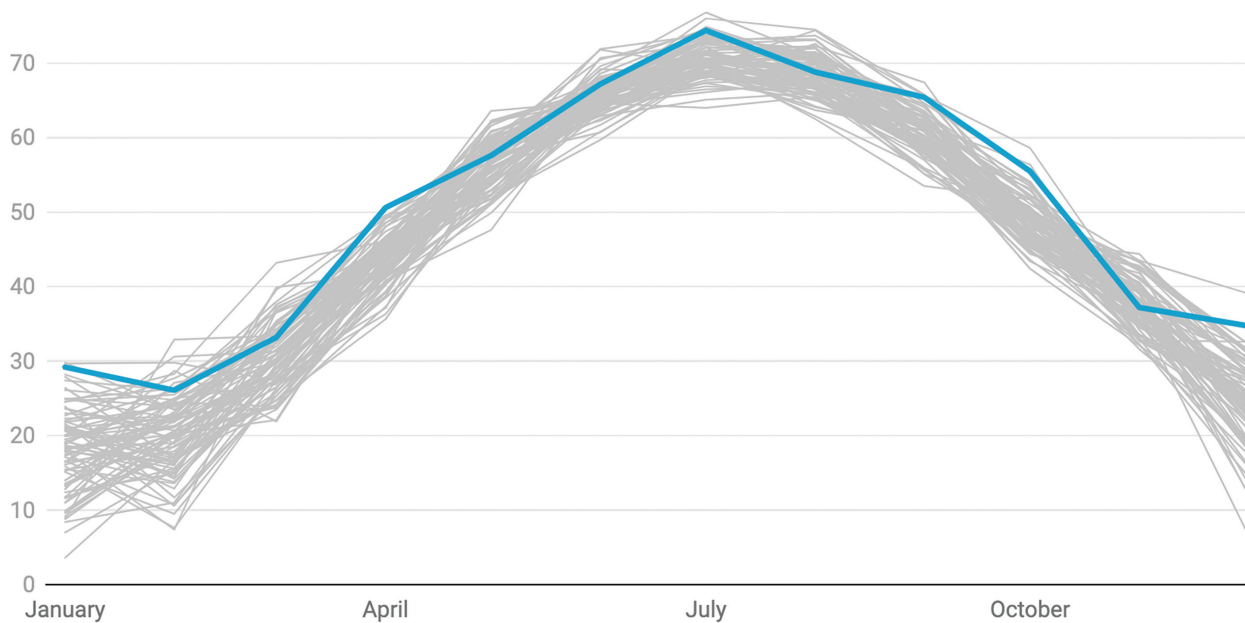
The state then experienced another heat wave in early September, followed by a warmer-than-average October, according to weather service data.

The early days of winter saw cooler temperatures and several days of snowfall. Langbauer said higher elevations had greater-than-average snowpack in early December, allowing ski resorts to open on the early side.

But in mid-December, temperatures rose once again. A storm on Dec. 18 combined both rain and snowmelt to cause flooding across Vermont.

Looking ahead to the next few weeks, the weather service is predicting temperatures closer to normal for this time of year — that is, cold. Ski areas cross their fingers hoping that prediction is true.

For more information and data visit the National Weather Service archives at: [weather.gov/ffc/archives](https://www.weather.gov/ffc/archives).



By Erin Petenko/VTDigger, with data from National Weather Service

The chart shows the average temperature by month as recorded in Burlington since 1940. Every month was warmer than average.

Utilities and environmentalists call for big reforms to renewable energy law

By Emma Cotton/VTDigger

In 2015, Vermont lawmakers reformed the state's electric grid by requiring utilities to purchase or build more renewable energy.

During the coming legislative session, which begins on Jan. 3, 2024, lawmakers plan to take up a bill to strengthen the law, known as the renewable energy standard. It will likely require utilities to source even more of their power from renewable energy, and rely more heavily on local and regional sources.

Lawmakers set themselves up to discuss the renewable energy standard this session by creating a working group that met throughout the last several months and published a report last week.

Though the group did not reach consensus on some issues, many of its members endorsed a draft piece of legislation that includes major reforms, which have long been called for by those who say Vermont needs to further reduce greenhouse gas emissions. Lawmakers will decide how and whether to use the recommendations while drafting their version of the bill.

The group included representatives of the state's electric utilities; environmental groups such as the Vermont Public Interest Research Group, the Vermont Natural Resources Council, the Conservation Law Foundation and the Sierra Club; and trade organizations such as Renewable Energy Vermont and Associated Industries of Vermont. It also included state lawmakers who lead committees that would tackle the bill during the session.

"The bottom line is, this is going to get a lot of new renewables built in Vermont and throughout the region, large and small, a broad variety of types," said Ben Edgerly Walsh, climate and energy lobbyist with Vermont Public Interest Research Group. "And that's really good from a climate standpoint."

Much of the electricity that flows through the New England grid comes from natural gas.

Vermont produces relatively high per capita emissions. In 2019, Vermont produced the third-highest per capita emissions in the Northeast, following only Pennsylvania and New Hampshire.

A relatively small share of those emissions come from the state's electric sector, which reduced emissions by 80% between 2015 and 2020, according to the Energy Action Network. But the wide-scale shift to electrification has prompted an effort to strengthen the law.

"We're always talking, in general, about beneficial electrification — moving thermal loads, moving transportation energy loads over to electricity, but the benefit is only meaningful if the electricity that's being used is generated cleanly," said Sen. Chris Bray, D-Addison, who chairs the Senate Natural Resources and Energy Committee. That panel will likely work on the bill this session.

Currently, Vermont requires utilities

to purchase 75% of their electricity from renewable sources by 2032. A majority of working group members recommended increasing that to 100% by 2030.

The renewable energy standard also requires utilities to source 10% of their electricity from small-scale, in-state renewable energy facilities, such as a solar operation or hydro-electric facility. A majority of the group recommended increasing this amount to 20% by 2032 or 2035.

The group also proposed creating a broader category in which utilities are required to source some of their power from new renewable sources from the New England region, which could include Vermont.

"Ultimately, we've got an interconnected grid," said Walsh, of Vermont Public Interest Research Group. "And pretending like the state's borders are in some ways sort of sacrosanct from an electricity standpoint just doesn't reflect physics or the market of how electricity works."

The proposed legislation suggests allowing different utilities in the state to meet the requirements in different ways, depending on each utility's ability to adapt.

While Vermont utilities largely buy power from renewable sources, much of the electricity that flows through the New England grid comes from natural gas. Helping to fund new renewable power sources could shrink natural gas's slice of the pie, according to Peter Sterling, executive director of Renewable Energy Vermont.

Renewables → 7

← Baby bonds: from page 4

choices that have disproportionately excluded people of color from asset-building opportunities. Baby Bonds establish a birthright to capital, providing young people with the opportunities and security that wealth offers, for their benefit and generations to come."

If approved by the legislature, Vermont would become the second state to adopt a baby bonds proposal.

Connecticut recently became the first to implement a statewide baby bonds program, and momentum is building for a proposal in Massachusetts. The concept has also been introduced in Congress by Sen. Cory Booker and Rep. Ayanna Pressley.

With about 2,000 babies born each year in Vermont on Medicaid, a \$3,200 investment for each child would amount to a \$6.4 million annual appropriation. To cover the program, Treasurer Pieciak suggests using the Unclaimed Property General Fund Transfer, a prescribed percentage of Unclaimed Property funds transferred annually to the state's general fund. This funding mechanism would ensure the Vermont baby bonds proposal does not require any new fees or taxes for Vermonters.

← GMP: from page 4

control energy use and temperature by room, which is great. I tell all my friends how well they work and how cost-efficient they are," Klein said.

GMP's other incentives for heating and cooling systems will continue. They include:

- Up to \$400 point of sale discount through participating suppliers
- Up to \$2,000 for centrally ducted air source heat pump systems
- \$1,000 per ton for air-to-water heat pumps
- \$2,100 per ton, up to 6 tons, for ground source heat pumps and geothermal systems

All GMP incentives and rebate programs including EV rebates, electric mower and yard care rebates cut carbon and reduce costs for all customers, and help address the top sources of carbon pollution heating and transportation. In 2023, GMP residential and business customers offset more than 629 million pounds of lifetime carbon through GMP's incentive programs, which is the equivalent of preventing the burning of 2.4 million barrels of oil.

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Will it be time for the 'NO' sign again?

Quite a few years ago, I remember visiting the House Appropriations Committee at the State House, where there was a prominent sign on the wall, "NO, is it the N or the O that you do not understand?" The committee chair then was Michael Obuchowski, who later served as House Speaker during the mid-90s. The sign was perhaps a subtle message to anyone that was considering requests for new spending.



By Rep. Jim Harrison

During the week prior to Christmas, the House Appropriations Committee (which I now serve on), met for two days to get a jump start on the upcoming session. During that time, the commissioner and deputy commissioner of finance, as well as the legislature's own fiscal office, gave somewhat of a cautious overview of the budget framework for next year's budget, which our committee will begin working on soon.

The message was clear: the bump in federal money is gone; Vermont will need to set aside significant money for flood-related rebuilding; state revenue growth is slowing; and — in addition to 15% health care hikes — employee contractual obligations are more than the administration's 3% budget guidelines.

Should we begin looking for a new "NO" sign in committee? Legislative leaders recently indicated that collectively lawmakers have requested 33% more bills than last year. As many initiatives include some funding, it will be interesting to see how many of those efforts are advanced.

We also learned that one of the first orders of business in the House when we return for the 2024 session on Jan. 3, will be to vote on H.72, which establishes safe injection sites. The legislation, in response to the increasing number of overdose fatalities, provides funding to establish one or more supervised overdose prevention sites, where drug users could go without fear of state prosecution.

Some view the bill as the first step toward decriminalization of drug usage. Scott vetoed a similar bill two years ago and is opposed to this one as well. However, the legislature may now have the votes to override such a veto if it reaches his desk. Count me in the skeptical column on this legislation.

There will be a full agenda of issues to discuss and debate in the coming months. The Rutland Herald recently reached out to area legislators and asked what their priorities were for the coming session. Like several others, mine included:

Public safety

Crime rates have been increasing and we need to ask ourselves if we are doing enough to hold people accountable when they violate our laws. Some areas to consider:

- Increasing penalties for multiple offenses
- Re-examine our bail laws
- Work to fill law enforcement vacancies
- Work to reduce court backlogs
- Improve access to treatment options for those addicted to drugs

Sustainable budget

This past year state spending increased at an unsustainable level of 13%, which follows a 9% increase from the previous year. We need to prioritize where we allocate our funding and not resort to new or increased taxes and fees to cover ever increasing budgets.

Housing

Over the past few years Vermont has invested unprecedented millions in affordable housing initiatives. As we can't solve our housing shortages solely with public dollars, we need to examine barriers that prevent us from attracting more private investment to rehab or build more houses and apartments.

Phase out of hotel program

The pandemic era hotel voucher program has been extended several times for a variety of reasons, including the shortage of alternative housing options. We need to expand our efforts to phase out of the hotel program and get the hotels back to being hotels for visitors.

Education costs and property taxes

The projected 18.5% increase in our statewide property tax rates is unacceptable. The legislature needs to evaluate ways that local school districts can reduce operating costs. Increasing other taxes, in my view, does not get at why spending is going up at double digits.

Reduce taxes on social security benefits

I have introduced a proposal to expand the number of individuals and households that would be exempt from paying Vermont income taxes on social security benefits. Around 40 states do not impose state income taxes on social security benefits.

Tax credit for volunteer firefighters and first responders

Rural communities throughout Vermont are facing a critical shortage of volunteer responders. I and others will be offering a bill to institute a \$500 income tax reduction to help attract and retain these valuable volunteers.

In closing, I want to thank you for reading my updates. I plan to provide a weekly column to the Mountain Times during the session. Best wishes for a happy and healthy new year.

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.

Free speech: from page 1

according to court documents.

One student also said Bloch yelled to female athletes from across the room, "Get out there. You have some male competition."

The girls responded by saying, "What?"

Bloch responded, "Come over here. I probably shouldn't yell this across the room."

On the way home, the Woodstock team and Hartford team rode together on the bus. Bloch sat beside the transgender student's father, who coaches the Hartford team, though there was no further discussion.

That evening, Woodstock Athletic Director Jeff Boymer received a text from Woodstock Assistant Principal Cody TranCreti the night of Feb 8. TranCreti said he heard from Hartford Athletic Director Jeff Moreno.

Moreno said in the text, "FYI, the Woodstock coach made an inappropriate comment about W (the transgender student). W. has made friends with a few of the Woodstock teammates and the coach was telling his kids that they need to try real hard because they are competing against a guy pretending to be a girl. Apparently he planned on speaking with our coach but found out W was his child so did not approach him."

TranCreti then began going through the roster and calling students on the team, according to court documents. Three separate students and one assistant coach were interviewed. They said Bloch's comments were not surprising, explaining he was sexist and seemingly favored male athletes.

Boymer then called Bloch at home the following morning. Boymer said there was an emotional conversation as Bloch was anticipating the phone call. Bloch admitted to saying he made a comment that there was a "guy pretending to be a girl" on the other team.

Bloch said he was going to hire a lawyer and call newspapers, according to court documents.

Bloch was called to Sousa's office the next morning. Sousa admitted in court documents that she could have placed the coach on leave or followed other disciplinary pursuits. She has a transgender child who was previously on the snowboard team and felt the issue "was an important one."

The judge ruled Bloch's attorneys didn't demonstrate he was fired for the speech. He was rather fired because of the disruption. "Plaintiff's comments not only had the potential to disrupt a school function and cause offense to a captive audience but in fact did so," the judge said.

Attempts to reach attorneys for Bloch weren't successful.

"The ruling demonstrates that our decision to demand that school employees behave in a way that is consistent with a supportive, respectful and inclusive learning environment is both the right thing to do and consistent with the law," Sousa wrote.

Renewables: from page 6

"Adding new renewables is the only way we can push natural gas and other fossil fuel generation off of New England's grid," Sterling said.

Others argued that the new category could make the law more restrictive — and possibly more expensive. Rebecca Towne, chief executive officer of Vermont Electric Cooperative, said much of the power the rural utility purchases from HydroQuebec would not fall under the new regional category because it isn't new enough, according to the report.

Renewable energy is defined under the new regional category as power that is "generated by any

renewable energy plant coming into service after January 1, 2010 whose energy is capable of delivery in New England."

Several of the working group members had broader concerns about the group's final report. Louis Porter, general manager of Washington Electric Cooperative, said he was concerned that conversations about reforming the state's net metering program did not play a larger role in the working group.

He argued that net metering — a program through which Vermonters with solar installations earn money from utilities by selling back

excess power — is an expensive way to generate power through renewable energy, and that the utility's other ratepayers pay more than they should for net metering.

"For a 100% renewable utility like Washington Electric, that power is just offsetting already renewable power at a higher price," he said.

Porter still voted to accept the final report and voted in favor of the proposed legislation, along with the majority of working group members.

The group was tasked with answering eight questions about the feasibility of updating the renewable energy standard, but only

answered four of them.

One of the questions left unanswered focused on equity, and how increasing the amount of renewable energy on the grid might impact households with low and moderate incomes.

For this reason, Mia Watson, a program manager with the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, urged lawmakers in a comment included in the report to more deeply consider the law's implications on equity during the legislative session.

"VHFA remains concerned that Vermont as a state is not doing enough to help low and moderate

households experience the benefits of a cleaner electrical grid," she wrote. "Without deeply subsidizing fuel switching for the lowest income households, particularly for renters, the climate transition may result in increased income inequality."

Still, many of the participants considered the group's work a success. Sterling, of Renewable Energy Vermont, said he can't remember the last time environmental groups "stood shoulder-to-shoulder with basically every utility in the state and said, 'this is a good thing. Let's move forward.' That's what we have out of this working group."

GUEST EDITORIAL

Setting the record straight on independent schools

By Reps. Seth Bongartz (D-Manchester), Scott Beck (R-St. Johnsbury), Michelle Bos-Lun (D-Westminster), Bobby Felice-Rubio (D-Barnet), Robin Chestnut-Tangerman (D-Middletown Springs) and Mike Rice (D-Dorset)

A recent commentary by Reps. Rebecca Holcombe of Norwich, Erin Brady of Williston and Monique Priestley of Bradford, while making a few fair points about the rising cost of education, unfortunately ended with inflammatory rhetoric about independent schools and the Vermont style of school choice that has provided amazing opportunities for generations of students in rural Vermont. The thrust of this argument is that students from rural parts of Vermont are driving up taxes because they attend independent schools. These three representatives then assert that our students are served by an “uncontrolled, poorly regulated” voucher system. We are compelled to set the record straight.

First, Vermont does not have an education voucher system. A voucher system, like we see in some other states, is one where a school district operates a public school, while also providing an option for families to withdraw their children and take a “voucher” to another school. This voucher has the effect of draining resources from the local public school. But, under Vermont law, families have no entitlement to tuition payments from their school district if the district operates a public school.

In rural parts of Vermont, a number of school districts do not operate public schools for some or all grades. In these rural areas without public schools, school districts can pay tuition for students to attend independent schools, such as

The system deserves to be celebrated, not demonized.

Burr & Burton Academy, Killington Mountain School and others. Often, public schools located in operating towns are only peripherally available — if at all — to these rural areas. They are not a viable alternative. Independent schools fill the gaps.

Second, this is not an “uncontrolled, poorly regulated” system that is driving up taxes for the rest of Vermont. As a benchmark, Hanover High School, the out-of-state public school serving students from Norwich, has the highest tuition rate of any high school paid by Vermont taxpayers — \$23,598. By comparison, the Taconic & Green School District, which serves parts of Bennington, Windham and Windsor Counties and is served by independent high schools, pays a tuition rate of \$19,987 to Vermont independent schools — a savings of \$3,600 per student that benefits all Vermont taxpayers.

Independent schools survive only when they deliver high quality education, for the simple fact that families can exercise a choice of where to send their children. Of course, the construction of several new public schools across rural parts of Vermont, for which the authors appear to advocate, would not be without considerable expense to Vermont taxpayers.

While the authors advocate for a ubiquitous, one size fits all system, we suspect most people recognize that just because something is different doesn't make it something we need to kill. Over the course of the last 200 years, rural parts of Vermont have developed a rich mosaic of options for their children, often public in some grades and independent in others. That mosaic provides extraordinary opportunities for our children at the same time we have saved taxpayers hundreds of millions of construction dollars. The system deserves to be celebrated, not demonized.



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2023 Was Rough by Gary McCoy, Shiloh, IL

LETTERS

Rotarians thank Ludlow community for support in 2023

Dear Editor,

The Ludlow Area Rotary Club thanks the residents and businesses of the greater Ludlow area for their support in 2023. Our club is a part of Rotary International which is one of the largest service organizations in the world. The mission of Rotary is to “provide service to others, promote integrity, and advance world understanding, goodwill, and peace.” As a result of your support, we were able to spread this mission by supporting members of our community and beyond. Our annual penny sale and chili cook off were hugely successful allowing us to support local projects and scholarships. We support local organizations such as Mountainside House with grants for needed projects.

It might be of interest to the community to know some of the ways we have
Rotarians → 10

Achievement, growth, and recognition for the Vermont Declaration of Inclusion Initiative

Dear Editor,

In 2023, the Vermont Declaration of Inclusion Initiative completed the third full year of its state-wide effort, grew internally, and was recognized by several Vermont organizations.

At year's end, 131 cities and towns had adopted the Declaration of Inclusion. Nearly 73% of Vermont's population resides in those towns. Members of the Initiative are continuing to reach out to the remaining municipalities. (For those interested in adopting the Declaration and which have not yet heard from the Initiative, contact us at al@wakefield-global.com.)

The Initiative was started by Bob Harnish of Pittsford and Al Wakefield of Mendon in 2020. Norm Cohen of Rutland was recruited shortly afterwards, Barbara Noyes Pulling of Rutland Town came on board at the end of year two. In 2023, Patti Lancaster of Mendon,

a retired public defender and prisoner rights attorney, joined the Initiative to lead its implementation efforts. She will help those municipalities that adopt the Declaration to put it into action.

“After adopting a Declaration of Inclusion, it is just words on paper until a community brings it to life,” said Harnish. “We are here to help communities incorporate those thoughts and words into their daily actions and interactions so that everyone feels welcome, respected and included.”

The initiative, a totally volunteer effort, was recognized by several statewide organizations during 2023. In May, it was recognized by Vermont Interfaith Action for its efforts. In August, the Initiative received the Vermont Council on Rural Development's Vermont Inclusivity → 10

Try to imagine Gaza

Dear Editor,

Try to imagine Rutland City without its New England steeples and Grace Church's organ parts strewn all over Court and West Streets. Imagine a flattened parking garage down the street and Walmart a charred pile of plastic poisoning the air. No running water because the water treatment plant no longer exists, little food, the odor of rotting bodies, no banks, no phone service and no toilets.

Try to imagine the daily sound of F-16s or F-35s in Burlington zooming overhead and dropping bombs all over Rutland County with broken marble blocks all around Rutland City. The carnage is everywhere with dead bodies and moans and groans of disappeared people heard under the rubble.

It's really hard to imagine such a grim scene but graphic images from Gaza make it easy.

Our tax money pays for Gaza → 10

CAPITOL QUOTES

Maine became the second state to rule that former President Donald Trump is ineligible to run because of what he did in the days leading up to, and on, Jan. 6, 2021. The move followed a ruling by Colorado's state Supreme Court.

“I reviewed very carefully the hearing proceedings and the weight of the evidence presented to me at the hearing. And that evidence made clear, first, that those events of January 6, 2021 — and we all witnessed them — they were unprecedented. They were tragic. But they were an attack not only upon the Capitol and government officials, but also an attack on the rule of law, on the peaceful transfer of power. And the evidence presented at the hearing demonstrated that they occurred at the behest of, and with the knowledge and support of, the outgoing president. And the United States Constitution does not tolerate an assault on the foundations of our government. And under Maine election law, I was required to act in response.”

Maine Secretary of State **Shenna Bellows**, a democrat, told NPR.

“If they're going to behave in that unconstitutional way, the Republican candidates can actually stop this form of election interference. So I said I would remove my name from those ballots, and I called on the other Republicans in the race to do the same thing. Now, the others have been sidestepping the issue, have been radio silent on it. But if every Republican removes themselves, that nullifies Maine and it nullifies Colorado, if they remove a candidate unconstitutionally from that ballot,”

GOP presidential hopeful **Vivek Ramaswamy**.

“Look, if there was any validity about keeping Trump off the ballot, you would see 48 other states trying to do the same. Personally, I think it's very politically motivated by the Maine secretary of state. Trump should be on the ballot,” Republican New Hampshire Gov. **Chris Sununu** said.

It's time for a Vermont State Mushroom

By Rep. Michelle Bos-Lun, D-Westminster

Editor's note: Michelle Bos-Lun is a secondary school teacher in her second term representing Westminster, Rockingham and Brookline in the Vermont House.

I recently submitted a bill to create the Vermont State Mushroom after consulting with some important stakeholders: the elementary students of Windham Elementary School and the middle school students of the Compass School in Westminster. Both groups of students spent time learning about the wonders of wild mushrooms, and after considering diverse contenders students at both schools chose the same mushroom genus by a majority vote, *Hericium*. After counting all votes: *Hericium americanum*, commonly known as Bear's Head Tooth, was the winning mushroom.

To determine which mushroom should be the state mushroom, I visited both schools and talked with students about a diverse array of mushrooms. We discussed pros and cons and symbolism from names and mushroom qualities. At Windham, the Lions Mane initially won. At Compass School, with more voting students, the ultimate winner was Bear's Head Tooth. A return visit to Windham had all but two students supporting the Bear's Head Tooth.

Many educators agree that getting students into nature is a desirable physical and intellectual activity. Compass science teacher Ron Bos-Lun (this writer's husband) brings mushroom experts into the woods with his students every year to discover and identify fungi at Bald Hill Reserve in Westminster. Bos-Lun also brought Jack O'Lantern mushrooms to both Compass and Windham Elementary this fall to let students observe mushrooms that glow in the dark. He said they found it “enchanting.”

There were a range of reasons students thought Bear's Head Tooth would be the best choice: A younger student said, “A mushroom that grows in trees would be great since Vermont has lots of trees.” The middle schoolers seemed more compelled by the uniqueness of the Bear's Head Tooth and its medicinal qualities.

Learning about mushrooms, identifying them, cultivating them or harvesting ones found in the wild is an activity that almost anyone can do. I began to explore the world of mushrooms during the rainy, isolating months of the Covid-19 pandemic. First I could identify Lobsters, then Chicken of the Woods, then Chanterelles. Suddenly a whole new world opened up! Almost every walk I took in the woods I found new fungi — not all edible, but all interesting and beautiful in different ways. I learned a new word, “mycography” (the photography of mushrooms), and delighted in capturing

images of the varied mushrooms. My new hobby gave me a reason to go into the woods and linger and explore. I want the same possibility for other Vermonters, especially children who study Vermont symbols in elementary and middle school.

Only five other states have a state mushroom at this time, though four others have had state mushrooms proposed. No other state has selected *Hericium americanum* as its state mushroom.

If the committee assigned to review this mushroom proposal decides to take up this bill, it would take testimony, including from the students who were involved in making the selection, myself as the lead sponsor of the bill and Vermont mycologists. We could have a state mushroom by the end of the legislative session in May — just in time for thousands of foragers young and old to head into the woods to see if they can find Bear's Head Tooth mushrooms and other

No other state has selected *Hericium americanum* as its state mushroom.

fungi that have emerged!

It is my hope that selecting a state mushroom will boost interest in foraging and mycography and will inspire other Vermonters to head to the woods and see what delights they can find (or some might take the easier option & buy cultivated mushrooms at farmers' markets).

Do we have more important, complicated issues to decide this term than a Vermont State Mushroom? Yes. But it is important to remind Vermonters of the treasures we have in our woods. Letting Vermont youth know that their voice matters and they can impact policy on the state level is important too.

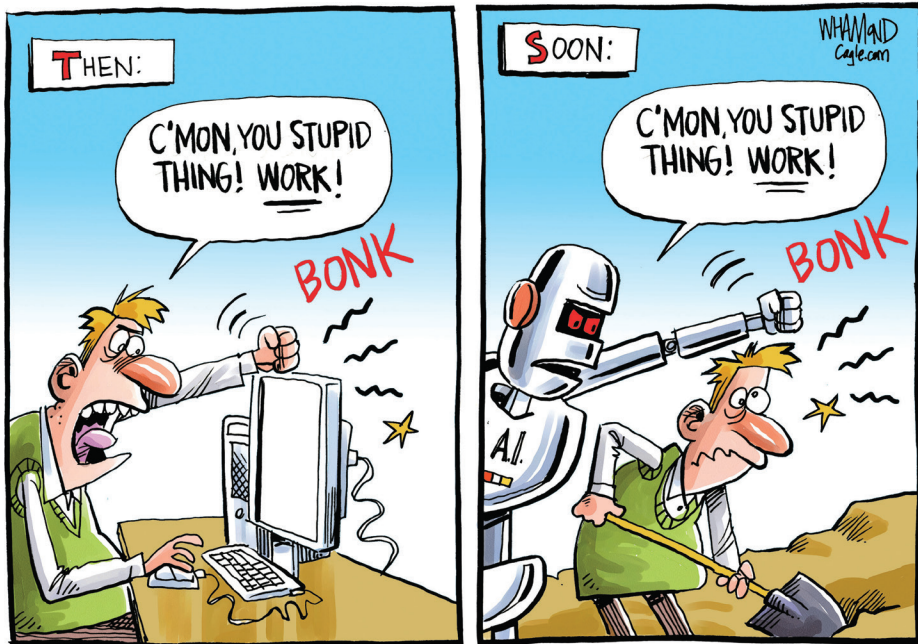
A state mushroom would develop interest and knowledge about mushrooms in Vermont and perhaps encourage new people to go out in the woods looking not only for the state bird (Hermit Thrush), the state animal (Morgan Horse) or the state tree (Sugar Maple) but also the Vermont State Mushroom!

This bill is one that can empower youth voices and encourage people to spend time in nature. It could bring together legislators who might disagree about more complex issues but can pull together to support nature and students.

Designating a state mushroom shows that we value our woods and what grows in them. It sends a message that we value what kids think. It can motivate people to learn about and explore the world of fungi in Vermont, which acknowledges thousands of foragers and home cultivators who already are aware of how fantastic fungi can be. It's time for a Vermont State Mushroom,

State mushroom → 10

CARTOONS



A.I. Enslavement by Dave Whamond, Canada, PoliticalCartoons



An uphill task by Luojie, China Daily, China



News Quiz by Bill Day, FloridaPolitics

Rotarians: from page 8

supported this mission both locally and internationally. This year our neighbors both near and far were challenged by major storms. After July's torrential rain and devastating flooding, Rotary became the fiscal agent for a collaborative effort with the Okemo Valley Chamber of Commerce. In addition, we donated substantial money to the Ludlow Enterprise Fund, to Black River Good Neighbors and the Cavendish Family Fund. We quickly secured dehumidifiers that were distributed through the Ludlow Disaster Relief Center. Representatives of the club participated on the flood relief committee to assure financial help was distributed equitably.

To help with clean-up efforts after the flood, we contributed gear and a kayak to the Black River Action Team. Some members of the club went into the trenches, helping with clean-up efforts in homes and businesses. We also financially supported fellow citizens of our country who experienced devastating wildfires in Lahaina, Maui.

Outside our local area we provide support to Rotary International to help eradi-

cate polio in the world. Rotary International is making great progress in this area and the world is 99% polio free. We also supported the Montreal Club in their efforts to bring water and sanitation to over 33,000 beneficiaries in Ghana.

We support an international student exchange program that places high school students in local homes for a year in a foreign country where they can immerse themselves in a different culture to promote world understanding. Annually, we provide scholarships to deserving graduating seniors from the communities we serve, Ludlow, Cavendish and Mount Holly helping them access post high school educational opportunities.

We are thankful for all the support from the area and wanted to share with you what your generosity can do. The Ludlow Area Rotary Club meets on Tuesdays at DJ's Restaurant in Ludlow. If you are interested in more information on the club or are interested in joining please contact Kevin Barnes, membership chairman at (802) 228-8877, to receive an invitation to a meeting.

Brigid Sullivan, Ludlow

Gaza: from page 8

this kind of devastation to support the ongoing slaughter over there. Our hypothetical signatures are invisibly etched on just about every device of destruction used to flatten Gaza.

Try to imagine the suffering you would feel without knowing whether Grandma is alive or dead or having to carry the warm lifeless body of your child wrapped in plastic.

Try to imagine this preventable situation ... it is happening at this very moment somewhere in Palestine/Israel.

Try to imagine some of our billions for bombs put toward homelessness, drug addiction, healthcare and poverty in our hometown.

Try to imagine making that happen by removing the agents of death in Washington, D.C. who vote to blow people up and the war machine lobbyists on K Street who bribe them to do so.

In spite of what is happening, try your very best to be enraptured with your gift of human consciousness, and the sacredness of being alive for anyone in our profaned earthly paradise.

Nick Santoro, Rutland

Inclusivity: from page 8

Community Leadership Award. Throughout the year and the Vermont Chamber of Commerce and the Vermont League of Cities and Towns continued the indispensable support which they have both provided from nearly day one of the Initiative.

Other highlights during 2023 were the start of collaboration with Vermont Futures, the Vermont Student Anti-Racism Network, and the adoption of the Declaration by the Stowe

Area Association, the City of Rutland School Board, and other organizations around the state.

Yet, the Initiative is fully aware of how much work lies ahead.

"The horrific shooting of three young Palestinian students, the exodus of several black leaders from municipal, educational, and elected positions due to racist experiences, and the daily difficulties and indignities experienced by persons of color and other

marginalized groups tells us how far we have to go," said Wakefield. "It underscores the importance of municipal leaders publicly embracing the principles of the Declaration by adopting it."

Additional information on the Vermont Declaration of Inclusion may be found at vtdeclarationofinclusion.org — the website is generously furnished by and maintained by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce.

Al Wakefield, Mendon (co-founder of the Initiative)

State mushroom: from page 9

Hericum americanum.

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

the General Assembly can come together to establish a new symbol of Vermont, heeding the choice of some young budding mycologists from southern Vermont to have Vermont become the sixth state with a state mushroom.

WORDPLAY

NEWYEAR'S WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards

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

BABY
BALLOONS
CALENDAR
CELEBRATE
CHAMPAGNE

CHEERS
CLOCK
CONFETTI
COUNTDOWN
GAMES

GOALS
HAPPY
INVITATION
JANUARY
KISS

MIDNIGHT
NEWYEAR
NOISEMAKER
PARTY
RESOLUTION

STREAMER
TIMES SQUARE
TOAST

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LOCAL SERVICE.**

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- Generators
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SUDOKU

Solutions → 21

How to Play

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

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Solutions → 19

CLUES ACROSS

- Bleated
- Snakelike fish
- Database management system
- Russian-American violinist
- Wendy's founder Thomas
- Ancient Italian-Greek colony
- Negatives
- Rescued
- Self-immolation by fire ritual
- Assigns tasks to
- Island nation native
- Trade
- Detergent brand
- Famed NY Giant
- Before
- Split pulses
- Extremely angry; highly incensed
- Body part
- American state
- David __, US playwright
- Move one's head slightly
- Secret rendezvous
- Improved
- A place to exercise
- 18-year astronomical period
- Automobile
- You can take it

CLUES DOWN

- Curved segment
- Wings
- From pentane (Chemistry)
- Gradually gets into
- Commercial document (abbr.)
- Overhang
- Christmas and New Year's have them
- Type of bulb
- Lacking a plan
- Tattle
- Rockers like it "heavy"
- One who's been canonized
- Indicate time and place
- Chinese province
- Shameless and undisguised
- Horizontal passage into a mine
- Adult males
- Fail to entertain
- Dried-up
- City in north-central Utah
- Southern U.S.
- German river
- Oxygen
- Make law
- Nobel Prize winner in physics
- The voice of Olaf
- Fragmented rock
- They __
- Master of Philosophy
- Backside
- Landmark house in L.A.
- An act of undue intimacy
- From which a later word

1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8		9	10	11	12
13						14				15			
16						17				18			
19				20					21				
			22					23				24	
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	41					42			43		44		
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49	50			51				52			53		
54			55					56			57	58	59
60						61					62		
63						64					65		
66						67					68		

- Portended
- Cavalry-sword
- Vaccine developer
- Napoleonic Wars general
- Italian Seaport
- Hip joint
- __ Clapton, musician
- Insect repellent
- Decorative scarf
- Delaware

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

Level: Intermediate

Guess Who?

I am an athlete born in Switzerland on January 4, 1999. I became the first Swiss player ever to be taken first in the NHL Entry Draft. My hockey fame has led to many followers on Instagram.

Answer: Nico Hischier

WEDNESDAY

1/3

Adult Crafts

12 Noon. Hartland Public Library, 153 Route 5, Hartland. Free. Come to the library to make fun things with your friends and neighbors. Create bookmarks and cards, paint with watercolors, create picture frames, do some Zen coloring, dabble in collage, and more. hartlandlibraryvt.org/calendar/

Public Skating

Wednesdays. Jan.-Feb. Union Arena, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock. \$6, ages 13+, \$5 ages 4-12, free, ages 3 and under.

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 or 802-436-2473

Mihali Presents: The Winter Sessions

8 p.m. Wednesdays in January. Pickle Barrel Nightclub, 1741 Killington Road, Killington. \$20-\$25. Join Mihali & Friends on the Pickle Barrel main stage for a 4-show residency. Each show will feature different guests and take place in a special venue. Must be at least 21. picklebarrelnightclub.com.

THURSDAY

1/4

Killington Bone Builders

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

Toddler Story Time

10:30-11:30 a.m. Thursdays. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Join us to read a few books on a theme of the week. Enjoy stories, socializing, and often a project tied into the theme. For young children ages 20 months - 3 1/2 years. Duration: 30-60 minutes. normanwilliams.org or 802-457-2295.

Storytime!

10-11 a.m. Weekly. Fox Room, Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. Promoting early literacy and socialization skills for ages 2-5. No registration required. rutlandfree.org or 802-773-1860

Memory Café

11 a.m.-1 p.m. Thursdays. Willard Hall, St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 313 Main St., Chester. Family caregivers for loved ones with a form of dementia are invited to attend the monthly [once a month or every week?] Memory Café. Sponsored by Senior Solutions. For those with dietary restrictions, please bring your own bag lunch. Parking is behind the Six Loose Ladies shop on the village green on Route 11 in Chester. Please RSVP to jerenhous@seniorsolutionsvt.org. stlukesepiscopalvt.org.

Ukulele Group

Noon-1 p.m. Thursdays. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. Musician Steven Wilson leads the group through specific sheet music. All levels welcome. Must pre-register. chaffeeartcenter.square.site or 802-775-0356

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.

S.T.E.A.M. Ring in the New Year!

3:30-4:30 p.m. Thursdays. Hartland Public Library, 153 Route 5, Hartland. Free. Join us for S.T.E.A.M. and craft activities, something different every week! hartlandlibraryvt.org/calendar/ or 802-436-2473

Artistree Open Mic Night

7-9 p.m. Alternating Thursdays. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Free. Show off your musical stuff on our warm and friendly "stage." All levels and abilities are welcome to participate. Come alone or with a group, to play or just to watch. artistreevt.org/artistree-events

The Dave Matthews Tribute Band

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub, 1741 Killington Road, Killington. \$15-\$20. Performing sold-out shows for almost 20 years, The Dave Matthews Tribute Band is known for their tight sound and improvisational skills, giving audiences an authentic DMB experience. Must be at least 21. picklebarrelnightclub.com

FRIDAY

1/5

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.

3AM Tokyo

Wobbly Barn, 2229 Killington Road, Killington. Cover charge may be required for entry. Leaders in the modern dance world with a top visual production show, 3AM Tokyo is known for their powerful mix of pop, rock, hip-hop, EDM, reggae, etc. killington.com

Live Irish Music with Tom O'Carroll

7:30 p.m. Inn at Long Trail, 709 Route 4, Sherburne Pass, Killington. Enjoy a pint of Guinness with live music on the weekends and delicious food. Casual dining at Rosemary's Restaurant. innatlongtrail.com

DRUM JOURNEYS OF THE EARTH OPEN HOUSE

SATURDAY 11 AM



WEDNESDAY 8 PM

SATURDAY

1/6

Mini Shred Madness at Killington

9 a.m. Registration at 9 a.m. on 3rd Floor of Ramshead Lodge, Killington Resort. \$20. A fun competition for grom skiers and riders 13 years and under. Competitors will get a feel for park riding and experience the rules and navigation of the park with the help of our Woodward Mountain Parks crew. Free giveaways. Registration is now live. killington.com/things-to-do/events/events-calendar/mini-shred-madness?season=summer

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

Billings Backyard Maple Sugaring

10-11:30 a.m. Activity Barn, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. \$15/person; \$10/student. Join Mary McCuaig of Top Acres Farm and Nikki Whelley of Vermont Evaporator Company for a workshop on maple sugaring. Learn to recognize sugar maple trees, tapping techniques, evaporators, and bottling homemade maple syrup. Suitable for ages 16+. The session will be followed by a Q&A. billingsfarm.org

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.org.

Drum Journeys of the Earth

11 a.m. Building #5 Howe Center, Rutland. Free. Home of the famous "Skellies" marching drum band at Rutland's Halloween parade. An open house event featuring drumming and music. [Facebook.com/DrumJourneys](https://www.facebook.com/DrumJourneys) or garymeitrottunlimited.org/classes-schedule

Rutland Railway Museum & Model Club

11 a.m.-3 p.m. 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

Drop 'n' Paint

Noon-2 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$25. All ages. All materials will be set up and ready for you with a choice of three images to paint. Provided: canvas, paint, brushes, easel, smock. Youth must be accompanied by an adult. Must pre-register by Friday noon. chaffeeartcenter.org.

Après Afternoons at Jackson Gore: Dustin Marshall

2-5 p.m. Jackson Gore Courtyard, Okemo Ski Resort, 111 Jackson Gore Road, Ludlow. Join us for live music, games, food, drinks and more. okemo.com

3AM Tokyo

Wobbly Barn, 2229 Killington Road, Killington. Cover charge may be required for entry. Leaders in the modern dance world with a top visual production show. 3AM Tokyo is known for their powerful mix of pop, rock, hip-hop, EDM, reggae, etc. killington.com

Annual Tree Burn

6 p.m. Main Street Museum, 58 Bridge St., White River Junction. Suggested donation of \$5 per tree. Admission: \$10 per person. The Main Street Museum is accepting tree and greens donations leading up to the event which will feature live music featuring Bayou X, gumbo, punch, and a festive atmosphere. mainstreetmuseum.org.

Live Irish Music with Tom O'Carroll

7:30 p.m. Inn at Long Trail, 709 Route 4, Sherburne Pass, Killington. Enjoy a pint of Guinness with live music on the weekends and delicious food. Casual dining at Rosemary's Restaurant. innatongtrail.com

SUNDAY

1/7

Adult 'Shinny' Pickup Hockey

7:20-8:20 a.m. Sundays, Jan.-Feb. Doors open at 7 a.m. Union Arena, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock.

Public Skating, All Ages

11:10 a.m.-12:10 p.m. Sundays, Jan.-Feb. Union Arena, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock. \$6 Ages 13-up; \$5 Ages 4-12; Free Ages 3-under. Rental Skates available! \$6/pair. unionarena.org/public-skate-sessions

**OKEMO RESORT
INNKEEPERS
RACE**

MONDAY 10 AM



Paint and Sip

1-3 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge, 2551 Route 30, North Castleton. \$55. Get ready to unleash your creativity and enjoy a fun-filled evening of painting and sipping drinks with friends at Paint and Sip. The event includes all painting materials, a wood palette, and one complimentary drink. Food and beverages are available for purchase at the restaurant. Tickets are available online at Eventbrite.com. For more information or payment, contact Jonathan at 518-567-6584.

X Woolen Mill Comedy

Club: Comedy & Cocktails

7 - 8:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain Cocktail Bar - Killington Distillery, 47 Old Mill Road, Killington. Free. Headliner Luke Thayer, tasty food, and delicious cocktails at the coolest pop-up comedy club in Killington. eventbrite.com/o/still-on-the-mountain-killington-distillery-59530384983

MONDAY

1/8

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

10 a.m. Mondays, Jan. 8.- Mar. 11 Okemo Ski Resort. Teams and individuals compete. 8 weeks of races with 2 skipped races on MLK Day Jan. 15 and Presidents Day Feb. 19.

Monday Movie

1 p.m. The Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. sherburnelibrary.org

Art Bar

3:30-4:30 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. - Open craft time. Craft supplies galore, work on any project you want! Browse our craft books for ideas. We'll occasionally provide a specific craft or have special supplies available. rutlandfree.org.

Poetry Group

4-5:30 p.m. Monthly, 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

TUESDAY

1/9

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

10:30 a.m.-Noon. Online via Zoom. Free. Chat about books you are reading, the books you've loved, and the books you've always wanted to read. normanwilliams.org



PAINT AND SIP

SUNDAY 1 PM

Met Opera: 'Nabucco' (Verdi)

1 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$20. Ancient Babylon comes to life in this classic Met staging of biblical proportions. Baritone George Gagnidze stars as the imperious king Nabucco, alongside soprano Ludmyla Monastyrskya, reprising her thrilling role as his vengeful daughter Abigaille. Daniele Callegari conducts Verdi's exhilarating early masterpiece, which features the ultimate showcase for the great Met chorus, the moving "Va, pensiero."

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

Recite! Poetry Sharing Evening

5:30-7 p.m. Monthly, 2nd Tuesday. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Hybrid (in person or via Zoom). An open mic poetry event. Poets of all skill levels are welcome to share their work, and attendees can also come to listen. RSVP or request the Zoom link by emailing programs@normanwilliams.org.

Essentrics: Aging Backwards Stretch-and-Strengthen

5:30 p.m. Stone Valley Arts at Fox Hill, 145 East Main St., Poultney. \$12. A unique age reversing workout designed to restore and maintain joint mobility, release tension, and unlock tight muscles. stonevalleyarts.org

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Mini-Shred Madness is a super fun way to let it rip

Saturday, Jan. 6 at 9 a.m.—KILLINGTON— Killington's Mini-Shred Madness competition is an easy going event where competitors can compete for prizes in a friendly and fun environment. Grom skiers and riders 13 years and under will get a feel for park riding and experience the rules and navigation of the park with the help of Killington's Woodward Mountain Parks crew. Mini Shred Madness is all about having fun in a competition setting. There will be all sorts of free giveaways for competitors.

Divisions:

Super Grom - Ages 9 & under (first-time park riders): boys & girls combined

Grom - Ages 10 - 13 (have park-riding experience): boys & girls

Registration:

Registration will take place from 9:00 a.m. - 10:00 a.m. on the 3rd floor of the Ramshead Base Lodge.

Entry fee is \$20 for all divisions.

No registration will be taken after 10:00 a.m.

Due to the nature of this event, competitors are NOT required to have a season pass/lift ticket in order to compete.

All participants of Mini Shred Madness must have a parent or guardian fill out an express assumption of risk form.

If spots are still available, day-of registration will take place 9-10a.m. Participants may pay only via credit/debit card.

Registration will max out at 100 competitors.

Schedule:

Registration: 9-10 a.m. on 3rd floor of Ramshead

Practice (All Divisions): 10-10:30 a.m. Venue TBD

Athlete Meeting: 10:30-10:40 a.m. at the announcer's Tent

Session #1 - Supergrom: 10:40-11:05 a.m. Venue TBD

Session #2 - Grom 11:15-11:40 a.m. Venue TBD

Awards: 11:55 a.m. at the announcer's Tent



Courtesy Killington Resort

[MUSIC Scene]

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

WED

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Daniel Brown

6 p.m. Rivershed – Sammy B

7 p.m. Casey's Caboose – Ruby Street

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

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Mihali & Friends

LUDLOW

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

QUECHEE

6 p.m. Public House Pub – Kim Wilcox

QUECHEE

6:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Name That Tune Bingo with DJ Dave

RUTLAND

6:30 p.m. Angler Pub – Open Mic hosted by John Lafave

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

SOUTH POMFRET

7 p.m. Artistree – Open Mic Night

FRI

KILLINGTON

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton

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

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

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

6 p.m. Rivershed – Live Music

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

7 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Tom O'Carroll

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Live Music

8 p.m. Wobbly Barn – 3AM Tokyo

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

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

LONDONDERRY

5 p.m. New American Grill – Sammy B

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – George Nostrand

SAT

BOMOSEEN

5:30 p.m. Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – James Joel

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – Comedy Night with Luke Thayer

CHESTER

6 p.m. Pizza Stone VT – Just the Tip

KILLINGTON

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Aaron Audet Duo

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

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

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

6 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Duane Carleton

6 p.m. Rivershed – Live Music

6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Liz Reedy

7 p.m. Casey's Caboose – Ruby Street

7 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Tom O'Carroll

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Live Music

8 p.m. Wobbly Barn – 3AM Tokyo

9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – King Margo

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. Jackson Gore Courtyard – Apres Afternoons: Dustin Marshall

8 p.m. The Killarney – Sammy B

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Em & Nat

RUTLAND

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

STOCKBRIDGE

7:30 p.m. Wild Fern – Rick

SUN

KILLINGTON

12 p.m. Rivershed – Brunch with Live Music

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

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Nick Bredice

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Rhys Chalmers

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

7 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Comedy Night with Luke Thayer

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

MON

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton

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

5:30 p.m. Mary Lou's – BAK'n

6 p.m. Rivershed – Mandatory Mondays with Name That Tune Bingo by DJ Dave

8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – King Margo

LUDLOW

6 p.m. Off the Rails – Sammy B

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

TUES

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Rhys Chalmers

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

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

LONDONDERRY

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

LUDLOW

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

PITTSFIELD

6:30 p.m. Town Hall – Acoustic Jam

QUECHEE

5 p.m. The Public House – Jim Yeager

RUTLAND

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



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Rockin' the Region with a 2023 music review

2023 was a great year for music in our region. Always check the listings to see where our great, local talent is playing because it's all so good. We also, always, seem to get some great national touring acts to come around here. We started the great music with the Grand-Opening party of the new K-1 Base Lodge at Killington Resort on Jan. 26 with Nord Peak 5. They say they're a "Newly-formed, neo-80's, jazzy, yacht rock super band". Making up the band was Daniel Brown (guitar/vocals), Nick Morgan (keyboard/vocals), Aaron Normand (drums), Justin Burgess (bass) and Chazz Canney (horns/vocals). The resort went all out for this one. I don't see this party being topped. The food incredible, the staff incredible, but the band was the most incredible. They hit you with great cover after cover and the crowd was going off. At one point there was a conga line going around the entire 3rd floor to "Jump in the Line" by Harry Belafonte. Other favorites of mine they played were "You can call me Al," "Dancing in the Streets," "Glory Days," "Honky Tonk Woman," "Iko Iko" and "SOB with "Saints Go Marching In", mixed in. Oh what a night.

There were a few good shows in February at the Pickle Barrel Nightclub. Chadwick Stokes from Dispatch played a solo, acoustic show on the 16th. He played Dispatch hits like "The General" and the crowd was singing along to every word. He also did some pretty cool covers. On the 23rd, Giant Panda Guerilla Dub Squad, made their Pickle debut. They play feel-good music and the crowd definitely felt good. My favorite was when they played "Mother and Child Reunion" by Paul Simon.

The great, Pickle shows continued in March with Daniel Donato's Cosmic Country on the 14th. I'd never heard of them but when Tom White, the Pickle Barrel sound guy, tells you he's good, you definitely go. The Grateful Dead always said, "Never miss a Sunday Show" and those bands who follow them, say the same thing. Those in attendance, like me, saw the best concert in quite some time. The band is sick, and super tight. Donato is a star but the keyboardist really shined. He played guitar, keys and sings. At one point he was playing guitar and keys at the same time. I would travel to see this band. The 23rd was Ryan Montbleau with his new band, playing their 1st stop on their new tour. The new lineup is pretty sweet. It was an awesome show.

March ended and April began 3/31-4/1) with Remember Jones at the Pickle, who are one of my favorite bands on

the planet. I first saw them close down the old K1 base lodge Teardown Party. That show was incredible from start to finish, and I didn't want it to end. They pulled out a rare cover of "I Love You, Always Forever" by Donna Lewis. I've never heard anyone cover that. I bet most people don't even know the song, but I do and they slayed it. They also did



Rockin' the Region
By Dave Hoffenberg

"I Wanna Dance with Somebody" by Whitney Houston, "Everyday is a Winding Road" by The Beatles but the show stopper, and the best song in the bunch was when they tore the house down with "Shout" by the Isley Brothers. MINKA opened the show and became a new favorite of mine. It was an incredible night of music.

April ended with the birth of my son, Judah Raphael Hoffenberg on the 28th. That might not be a concert but it was an incredible event for me.

There wasn't a lot going on in May, I was enjoying the 1st month of Judah but on the 6th was the 49th Annual Bridgewater Raft Race. I DJ'd at the finish line and did some play-by-play commentary with comedians GW Foley and Hickory, the Drunk and Underwhelming. It was a beautiful Spring day, the race was fun and exciting. Tons of people turned out for it. That night at the Woolen Mill Comedy Club, upstairs in the Bridgewater Mall, was a great comedy show with headliner Vicki Ferentinos and special guest Liam Welsh.

June 18 was the 13th Annual Vermont Adaptive Charity Challenge, at Killington Resort's Skyeship Base Lodge. It was an all Connecticut lineup of music. I DJ'd it, Kenny Mehler opened the show and then Jamie's Junk Show with the Deep Banana Blackout Horns closed it out. That band was Jamie Livesey (guitar/vocals), Donnie Fortin (drums/vocals), Rob Somerville (sax/vocals) and Rob Volo (bass/trombone/vocals). There was even a guest appearance by Smokey Bear. Good times were definitely had by all with almost 300K raised.

July 21st was Friday Night Live in Rutland and the rain forced Uprooted to play inside the Paramount Theatre. Uprooted is Michael Glabicki from Rusted Root's new band. I don't like to see rain but on this occasion, it made for a better show than would've been outside. The new band is great, the show was awesome. They obviously played "Send Me On My Way" but the "Suspicious Minds" by Elvis stole the show. That's a favorite song to sing by Glabicki and he does a wonderful cover of it.

Judah's first concert was also a great "Cooler in the Mountains" show,

outside at Killington Resort's Snowshed Lodge on Aug. 13. The Dirty Water Dance Band from Cape Cod were awesome. The band is fronted by husband and wife duo Josh and Melissa Ayala. They've dubbed themselves "Dirty Reggae Soul". It's soulful vocals and harmonies. It was a high energy show. Melissa has an incredible voice and the band is tight. Annie Sullivan recommended them to me, months earlier, and they didn't disappoint. I hope they come back. A new local favorite of mine, Nick Bredice, opened the show.

Sept. 10 was Chip & Cowboy's Ride at Moguls Sports Pub which is a charity event for the Rutland County Humane Society. It was Sal's annual Pig Roast too. It's a great day of music with The Gully Boys, Super Stash Bros and the duo of Kenny Mehler and Nick Bredice. They formed this duo just for this event. You would have thought these guys had played together a long time, due to how in sync they were with each other. They played some of Kenny's originals and some choice covers. Nick is the only person I know that covers Kenny's songs so I know this was as special for him as it was for me to see.

Oct. 20 was the 2nd Annual "Singer/Songwriter Festival" at Rivershed in Killington. They bring up Nashville artists who have written songs for Morgan Wallen, Reba McEntire, Faith Hill, etc. There were six performers who each did a few songs of their own and then played some together. They were all having a great time on that stage. April Cushman is a semi-regular fixture at Rivershed Killington but I've never been able to see her until this night and wow is she awesome. Her songs are so relatable, she's a great singer/songwriter. Chris Locke played some cool tunes. Blue Foley was a late addition and what a great addition he was. He has great, fun stories and his music is pretty great too. He mentors young musicians in Nashville. Lance Carpenter's music is energetic. He played his hit song, "I Bought a Bar". I interviewed him last year and became a huge fan of his music. Kylie Sackley was great. She has written a song for Faith Hill. Tiffany Goss aka @tiffycent on Instagram, ended her set with her awesome song, "80's Tune". That's a great tune. I'm not a country music guy but I really enjoyed every performer. Look them up and go see them.

November brought the Women's World Cup back to Killington Resort and that weekend is always filled with great music. My favorite this year was Matisyahu who performed on Sunday the 26th. I really enjoyed his whole set. This was my 3rd time seeing him but my favorite by far. His set included his awe-

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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.



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.



Rutland CO-OP

The Rutland Area Food Co-op is a community-owned grocery and wellness market situated in downtown Rutland. As a food cooperative, we are owned by a membership base of around 2,000 members. We aim to provide affordable access to high-quality, local, organic and sustainable foods and goods. At the same time, as a mission-driven, community-oriented business, we proudly strengthen our region by carrying products of more than 180 local businesses. 77 Wale St. Rutland. rutlandcoop.com 802-773-0737



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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.



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.

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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.



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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.



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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The Annual Tree Burn in White River Junction marks the end of the holiday season

Saturday, Jan. 6 at 6 p.m.—WHITE RIVER JUNCTION—The Annual Tree Burn in White River Junction is set to take place at The Main Street Museum, 58 Bridge St., White River Junction this Saturday at 6 p.m. This event marks the end of the holiday season and the start of carnival. Attendees can expect live music featuring Bayou X, gumbo, punch, and a festive atmosphere. The Main Street Museum is accepting tree and greens donations leading up to the event, with a suggested donation of \$5 per tree. Admission to the event is \$10 per person, and all proceeds will go towards supporting the museum.

In addition to the Tree Burn, there are other community events happening in the area. The Lyme Food Pantry Drive-up will be offering fresh food and staples on Jan. 2, 1-1:30 p.m. Those Guys Breakfast will be held on Jan. 3, 6:30-7:30 a.m. The CCL Living Room and Office Hours will be available for community members on Jan. 4, 11 a.m.-1:00 p.m.

Overall, the Annual Tree Burn in White River Junction promises to be a lively event that brings together the community to celebrate the end of the holiday season. With live music, food, and a festive atmosphere, attendees are in for a memorable evening.

For more information, visit: mainstreetmuseum.org.



Submitted

The Annual Tree Burn in White River Junction is set to take place at The Main Street Museum in White River Junction. This event, which will have live music featuring Bayou X, gumbo, punch, and a festive atmosphere marks the end of the holiday season and the start of carnival.

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Submitted

Family caregivers for loved ones with dementia are invited to attend the monthly Memory Café on the first Thursday of each month from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Willard Hall at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 313 Main Street in Chester.

Senior Solutions holds monthly meeting to help caregivers

Thursday, Jan. 4 at 11 a.m.—Family caregivers for loved ones with a form of dementia are invited to attend the monthly Memory Café on the first Thursday of each month from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. in Willard Hall at St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 313 Main St., Chester. Whether it is Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, or one of the many forms of dementia Senior Solutions knows how demanding that can be.

This is a free and welcoming environment where caregivers can socialize, provide mutual support, and exchange helpful information.

The Memory Café is based on the Vermont Alzheimer's model. Senior Solutions volunteers will be keeping your loved ones entertained with live guitar music, games,

and fun activities. Volunteers will work to keep your loved ones engaged and safe.

Caregivers are also welcome to come alone. Also, for those who have been recently diagnosed with Alzheimer's and are still able to drive and care for themselves are also welcome to attend. Senior Solutions provides snacks and beverages. For those with dietary restrictions, bringing a bagged lunch is recommended.

There is a parking lot behind the Six Loose Ladies shop on the village green on Route 11 in Chester. The entrance to Willard Hall is accessed from the parking area. Just follow the walkway to the rear door of St. Luke's.

Please RSVP to jerenhouse@seniorsolutionsvt.org. For more information, visit: stlukesepiscopalvt.org.

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Solutions
From page 11

Crossword

B	A	A	E	D		E	E	L		D	B	M	S		
E	L	M	A	N		D	A	V	E		E	L	E	A	
N	A	Y	S		S	A	V	E	D		S	A	T	I	
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Sudoku

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

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George Gagnidze stars as King Nabucco in Met Opera: 'Nabucco' (Verdi)

Tuesday, Jan. 9 at 1 p.m.—RUTLAND—Ancient Babylon comes to life at the Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland this Tuesday in this classic Met staging of Baritone. George Gagnidze stars as the imperious king Nabucco, alongside soprano Liudmyla Monastyrka, reprising her thrilling turn as his vengeful daughter Abigaille. Mezzo-soprano Maria Barakova and tenor SeokJong Baek are Fenena and Ismaele, whose love transcends politics, and bass Dmitry Belosselskiy repeats his celebrated portrayal of the high priest Zaccaria. Daniele Callegari conducts Verdi's exhilarating early masterpiece, which features the ultimate showcase for the great Met Chorus, the moving "Va, pensiero."

Gagnidze is a renowned baritone and a leading singer in his genre. He has received critical acclaim for his baritone voice and phrasing. Gagnidze made his debut at the Metro-

politan Opera in 2008 as Rigoletto and has since returned for over 130 performances in various roles.

Composer, Giuseppe Verdi, had an extraordinary career in the theater that spanned over six decades. He is best known for his 26 operas, many of which are still performed today. Verdi's contribution to Italy's cultural and political development has elevated him to the status of an icon in his homeland. Temistocle Solera, a professional librettist and composer, played a crucial role in Verdi's early works. He provided Verdi with the libretti for his first opera, Oberto, as well as subsequent operas like I Lombardi, Giovanna d'Arco, and Attila. Solera's collaborations with Verdi helped shape the trajectory of the composer's career and establish him as one of the most influential figures in opera history.

Nabucco's score is characterized by a combination of

elements, creating a perfect backdrop for the individual and societal facets of the drama. The chorus plays a significant role, expressing the emotions that evolve from terror to despair, faith, and ultimately bright hope. Unlike other operas that depict madness in a character, Abigaille's music reflects her malicious persona rather than insanity. While the opera includes a brief mad scene for the title character, Verdi places more emphasis on Nabucco's journey back to sanity in his poignant Act IV aria "Dio di Giuda." The pinnacle of operatic prayer can be found in "Va, pensiero," where the simplicity of the choral melody and unity of the vocal line perfectly capture the communal sentiment.

Tickets are \$20 + fees. Approximate run time is 3 hours, 5 minutes.

For more information, visit: paramountvt.org.



Courtesy metopera.org

A classic Met staging featuring Baritone George Gagnidze as the imperious king Nabucco, alongside soprano Liudmyla Monastyrka, reprising her thrilling turn as his vengeful daughter Abigaille.

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Maple sugar farmers Nikki Whelley and Mary McCuaig to host a sweet workshop at Billings Farm and Museum

Saturday, Jan. 6 at 10 a.m.—WOODSTOCK—Learn about the world of maple sugaring with Mary McCuaig of Top Acres Farm and Nikki Whelley of Vermont Evaporator company. Billings Farm and Museum, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock will host a maple sugaring workshop this Saturday where participants will learn to identify sugar maples in wintertime and how to select the perfect tree for tapping. The workshop will delve into tapping techniques with live demonstrations on site. Participants will learn about tapping equipment, the chemistry of sap, and bucket vs. tubing collection methods. The instructors will discuss evaporators for backyard boiling and the ins and outs of converting sap into syrup. Finally, participants will explore the essentials of bottling and preserving homemade maple syrup. Whether you're a seasoned enthusiast or a curious beginner, this workshop provides valuable insight and hands-on experience into the delightful world of backyard maple sugaring.

Mary McCuaig, a fourth-generation maple syrup farmer from Top Acres Farm, brings a wealth of experience and passion for maple sugaring. The connection to the land and family legacy runs deep. Her great grandparents, Ada and Erwin Fullerton, established and

cultivated Top Acres Farm in 1901. Originally a dairy farm until 1989, the farm is now primarily producing maple syrup and baled hay. Alongside her husband Carl, Mary tends 3,500 taps in their South Woodstock farm and have built their dream sugarhouse. Mary continues to be enthused about maple and loves working on new maple recipes in her kitchen.



Courtesy Billings Farm & Museum
Mary McCuaig at work in a the sugarhouse. McCuaig, a maple sugar farmer, will be on hand at Billings Farm & Museum to discuss the science behind the syrup.

Nikki Whelley, relocated from her hometown in Elba, New York, to Vermont, and discovered her love of sugaring. As the communications director at the Vermont Evaporator Company, Whelley combines her geology background with a love for sustainable living.

Whelley officially joined the Vermont Evaporator Company in 2019. She started with boxing orders and website redesign, and now has moved up to running all things communications. Vermont

Evaporators makes hand-made, wood-fired, barrel-style maple sap evaporators and grills that are perfect for backyard boiling.

The session will be followed by a 30-minute question and answer period.

For more information, visit: vermontevaporator.com or gmhainc.org/listing/top-acres-farm or contact Billings Farm at info@billingsfarm.org with questions.



Submitted

Embracing Vermont's sweet tradition: Each bucket hung delicately on maple trees marks the start of a maple sugaring journey, where nature's essence transforms into liquid gold.

← Rockin': from page 16

some song and one of my favorites, "One Day".

December started with the 2nd Annual Vermont Comedy Festival, which is a 4 day festival that spans this region with incredible comics from across the country. It's put on by Collen Doyle and Matt Vita. This year's headlining show was at the Woodstock Town Hall Theatre on the 7th with Collen, Matt, Jeffrey Gurian and Colin Quinn. Everyone was really funny and Colin Quinn

was hilarious from start to finish. I'm really glad to have seen it.

The month ended with an incredible night of music at the Pickle Barrel. It was Night 2 of Mihalidaze which was Mihali, Zdenek Gubb and Adrian Tramontano of Twiddle, Scott Hannay from Mihali and Friends, Mike Oehmen and Michael Bafundo of West End Blend with special guests Brandon "Taz" Niederauer and G Love. The entire night was incredible,

everyone slayed it but in my opinion, G Love stole the show. He was en fuego. My Favorites were "What I Got", "Burning Down the House", "Casey Jones" which had the entire building dancing and "Folsom Prison Blues" which electrified the crowd.

I know the shows I mentioned were only in Killington, Rutland and Woodstock but our entire region is filled with great music. Get out and see some.

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Rutland County Humane Society



JAYLEE

5-month-old and a Standard Schnauzer mix, so she will be medium to large when full grown. Jaylee is a sweet girl and has a brother and sister looking for loving homes as well, they all look about the same. Male is larger and darker. We are open Wed-Sat from noon to 4 for walk-ins.

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



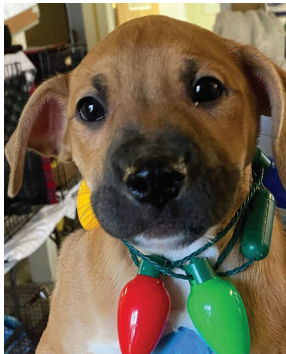
ZUZU

I'm a 2-year-old spayed female. I am a fun, comical and adoring girl and am looking for a person or family that speaks my language! It's not unusual for me to get really excited - I just can't help myself! I love people and I love attention! I would do best in a cat-savvy home with people that have experience in reading feline body language.

This pet is available for adoption at
Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society
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 *(By appointment only at this time.)
 Tues. - Sat. 12-4 p.m. & Thurs. 12-7 p.m. • lucymac.org



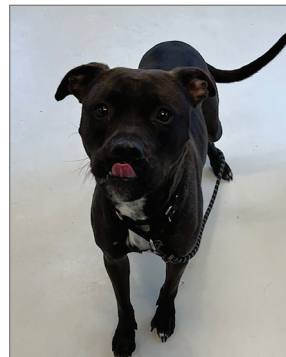
Winnie—6-month-old.
 Spayed female. Mixed breed.



Blitzen—2-month-old.
 Neutered male. Mixed breed.



Snowball—1-year-old.
 Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Pringles—1-year-old.
 Neutered male. Pit bull mix.



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



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



Magnolia—2.5 year-old.
 Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.



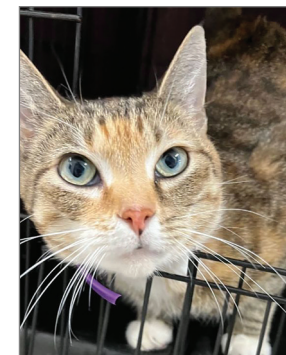
SCONE

Scone—Adult. Hooded. White/black. Small.

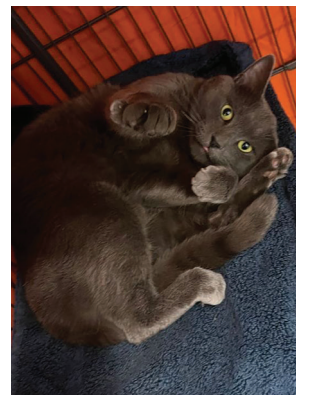
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Aries
March 21 - April 20



It's your Friends, Groups and Communities that become active this year, in ways of which you've never seen. While you prefer to move solo, the more you can embrace a wider circle, the more your life will change in profound ways. Sure, you may need to face a few fears first, but the life that lies before you is found on the path you're the least willing to traverse. It's February where things will really kick into gear. Prepare now.

Leo
July 21 - August 20



Relationships of all kinds – business, personal as well as your friendships and social circles are all featured heavily in 2024. This may be the busiest year yet when it comes to your interactions with others. Life may feel like a revolving door at times, but it's important that you keep your center. Decide this week the kind of people and experiences you want to attract into your life this year. Choose growth and contentment over drama and temporary thrills.

Sagittarius
November 21 - December 20



Someone significant may arrive from June. A relationship may arrive or you may enjoy more adventure together if you are partnered. If you're looking to learn something new, someone may take you under their wing and mentor or guide you. Learning, communication and self-development will see you enter 2025 so much wiser than you are now. Let go of your old opinions. Also, make time for fun and creativity and do more of what you love to do – and with whom.

Taurus
April 21 - May 20



If you begin discipline and diligent action this week, you'll thank yourself in April. The world is your oyster now, but you just need to decide whether you want to open it. Truth be told, it's going to open anyway. Do you want a say in what happens? Then don't get complacent and think things will stay the same, because they aren't. Authenticity counts, especially to yourself. Be honest with your desires and go after them this year.

Virgo
August 21 - September 20



In order to have something you've never had, you have to do something you've never done. 2024 will see you work harder than you ever have before. While that may not seem appealing, if you have a reason, a meaning and purpose, it will be worthwhile. This week, decide on what is worth it for you and what isn't. Otherwise, you may end up confusing activity for achievement. Not everything that glitters is gold.

Capricorn
December 21 - January 20



Eclipses will continue to prompt the question of whether your professional life and your private life are balanced enough or not. What was once balance in your life at one point may no longer be, so adjust accordingly in April and October. You're no stranger to hard work and the efforts you make are set to transform not only your bank account, but also your confidence in 2024 and beyond. Make sure you make bank with your efforts.

Gemini
May 21 - June 20



Life changes for you in profound ways in 2024. Spirituality, philosophy, foreign people and places have the potential to change the gears of your life, especially in June. To prepare, start widening your scope of what you think is possible for you. Start thinking about possibilities, not probabilities. Dream big! Bigger than big – huge! Don't waste this potential by playing it small or fussing over details. Opportunities multiply when they are seized. Hard work is unavoidable, but worth it.

Libra
September 21 - October 20



If love, romance and even children are what you want in 2024, it's all yours for the taking. The only catch is that you have to give up some old habits and attitudes, but you're ready for that. Someone from a foreign place could be the reason for these changes or perhaps it's just a shift in your perspective. Something or someone magical awaits you in June. Decide what you want and go all in. Nothing to lose but, oh so much to gain.

Aquarius
January 21 - February 20



By the end of this year, you'll understand everything you've been reading in the horoscopes you read. Your life will change in 2024 in profound and permanent ways, all featuring a combination of the good, the bad and the ugly. Expect some exciting, albeit turbulent, developments on the home front. In the second half of the year, happiness, joy and romance arrive bringing you the opportunity to see the silver linings that will last well into 2025.

Cancer
June 21 - July 20



This year is about facing the fears that have held you back from having everything you've ever wanted. While at face value, this likely doesn't sound like the year you want, but once you dig beneath the surface of who you are, you'll discover this is the year you need. While being inside your shell is your comfort zone, there is a fine line between that shell being your palace or your prison. It's a journey to be sure, but a worthwhile one.

Scorpio
October 21 - November 20



Your domestic life, real estate situation and family dynamics are up for some profound changes in 2024. Life may feel a bit unsettled initially but it will lead to better things eventually. Also, issues with finance are possible. A bonus via a loan or through a personal or business partner may see you in a better financial position by years end. Relationships that are new, existing or yet to begin may take on a whole new theme come April.

Pisces
February 21 - March 20



Sudden, yet welcome developments arrive in April which may shake up your local neighborhood, sibling relationships or that which has piqued your curiosity since mid-2023. Upgrades and renovations or a relocation is possible on the home front. Domestic expansions may involve visiting relatives, the arrival of new family members or the chance to take your family on a special holiday. 2024 is the chance to decide what a meaningful life really looks like for you.

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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.

Be the beacon of light and kindness

Happy Gregorian New Year! A change in the calendar year is always so much more than an old year ending. It offers the chance, the hope, the possibility of what you want to bring into your sphere being closer than it was before.

Even if you awaken from slumber on Jan. 1, having seen better days, and nothing in actual reality has really changed, it still feels different.

2024 is going to see the collective stage change in dramatic and obvious ways. On the one hand, it only looks like chaos and confusion, destruction and hate, as those who move the chest pieces



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall

think they get to decide how we respond. They don't. We do. While on the other hand, the worse things get, the closer we are to getting to the other side of what all of this is.

This year begins the process of some dramatic never seen before crescendo of outer planetary sign changes. We are on the precipice of something pretty huge and the energy of it all is palpable. So as you awaken on Jan. 1, decide

whether you want to create magic, beauty and love in the world. If so, then begin the great work of being that beacon of light and kindness that is so so needed now.

Sparkling icicles, a haiku

Iceicles sparkle,
As they hang from shining rocks,
Now falls, beautiful.



Poetry Is Power
By Bree Sarandrea

Gratitude and goodwill grow blessings in life

A dear friend of mine keeps a gratitude journal to write down the good things that transpire—like a heart-to-heart talk with a friendly neighbor, a courteous driver, a fall she avoided. Gratitude grows blessings. It's a high vibration that attracts the same back to it like a magnet.

When I go for a walk, I like to express the gratitude I feel for my 72-year life. I've been given so much, but of course, there have been trials and myriad health challenges that I've overcome with the help of healers and grace. For those recoveries, I'm eternally grateful. Those experiences have taught me so much.

To be an artist in Vermont is also a blessing that I treasure. It adds joie de vivre and is thrilling to see the beauty that surrounds us every day — glorious trees that reach up to Heaven with a backdrop of crisp cobalt skies, birds and animals that are enchanting, glistening ice crystals and unique snow flakes, the sun as it rises and sets in techni-



Mountain Meditation
By Marguerite Jill Dye

color, spectacular landscapes that ever-change, ferns, leaves and flowers in their plethora of colors... These are a few of our visual delights.

Family, friends, and especially our grandkids also fill my heart with contentment and joy. To watch them grow and interact with the world amazes and inspires me to do more. Interacting with children reminds us of the awe and enthusiasm we felt in our youth, then try to regain once we've grown up. Fortunately, it is contagious so time with little ones is very well spent.

I feel blessed to be living my life. Sometimes I wonder what I've done to deserve it when so many are suffering world wide. Is it Karma or a spin of the wheel that determines our circumstances and place in this world?

It's always best to treat others with loving kindness and extend a helping hand to people in need. We've all been through challenges and troubled times, and can

Mountain Meditation → 27

Thundersnow: A rare type of winter storm

It's deep in winter, and a nor'easter is dumping snow outside. In between the howling winds you hear a *boom!* Maybe a heap of snow fell from the roof, you think, or a giant icicle crashed from the eaves. A few minutes later, another *boom* pounds through the blizzard's gales. It's closer this time, and it seems to resound from the sky. This booming may be a rare wintertime phenomenon: thundersnow.

While most of us equate thunderstorms with hot, humid summer weather, they can also happen during the winter. Thundersnow is, simply, a type of thunderstorm where precipitation falls as snow rather than rain. The thunder and lightning of a thundersnow storm result from the same factors that cause rainy thunderstorms. Regardless of the season, lightning in any storm requires electrical charge separation, explains Peter Banacos, science and operations officer at the National Weather Service in Burlington.

"Charge separation comes about when you have what is called a 'mixed-phase' region within a cloud and strong vertical motions – think updrafts and downdrafts – in tall, cumulonimbus clouds," Banacos says. "The mixed-phase would be a combination of rain droplets, graupel, and snow within a portion of the cloud." The winds of a powerful winter storm smash those condensates together, he explains, "stripping electrons and charging those particles positive or negative." The storm cloud, now stratified into positively and negatively charged regions, may emit an electrical discharge in the form of lightning, which then generates a thunderclap.

Thundersnow, unlike the thunderstorms typical of spring and summer in the Northeast, is uncommon. It owes its rarity to the general meteorological conditions of winter. "Air temperatures are colder, the sun angle is low, and moisture is more limited" in winter, Banacos notes. "Without that instability in the atmosphere, you don't get the magnitude of vertical motion necessary to develop the charge separation within a cloud." No charge separation means no lightning – and no thundersnow.

That's why you're most likely to experience thundersnow during the Northeast's strongest storms. Only the meteorological chaos of a nor'easter – when gale force winds gust from the northeast, often coupled with heavy

precipitation – is powerful enough to introduce the necessary atmospheric instability for thundersnow when temperatures are cold enough for snow, rather than rain, to fall. Banacos says that the same instability favorable to thundersnow's formation is associated with heavy snowfall rates of up to 2 inches per hour.

But not every nor'easter or other powerful winter storm produces thundersnow. Very specific criteria must align for thundersnow to arise. Banacos estimates that thundersnow occurs in northern New England only once every year or two. He recalls two recent days when his office tracked thundersnow in Vermont: across the northern portions of the state on Nov. 15, 2019, and again on March 29, 2023. Even as a meteorologist, he has only witnessed thundersnow firsthand twice in his life, in instances two decades apart.

Thundersnow bears another characteristic that distinguishes it from warm-weather thunderstorms. Because thundersnow usually occurs during high-intensity snowstorms, falling snow often acts as an acoustic dampener. Rather than the distinct clap of summer thunder, which may be heard from miles away, thundersnow is more muffled; its *boom* is often only detectable within a mile or two of the storm's eye.

Despite thundersnow's muffled acoustics, these winter events can be dangerous. Accounts collected by the *Washington Post*, for example, describe people being struck by lightning during thundersnow. One details thundersnow lightning blasting a hole in the side of a house in Rhode Island, while another describes one strike injuring several people at a bus stop in Illinois.

Just like a nor'easter, thundersnow is most safely and prudently enjoyed from the refuge of your home. If you hear a thunderous *boom* while a nor'easter blows outside, take heed: you may bear witness to an exceedingly rare meteorological phenomenon.

Colby Galliher is a writer who calls the woods, meadows, and rivers of New England home. To learn more about his work, visit colbygalliher.com. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. *The Outside Story* is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org.



The Outside Story
By Colby Galliher



Not fast enough

Once the presents were opened, the wrapping paper was discarded, the food was served, the dishes were cleaned, the relatives had exited, and the decorations were taken down, my wife and I sat in our living room and discussed the holiday. We both agreed that it was an exceptional year, but also exhausting.

In between Christmas and New Year's, we tried our best to relax. I read the several books I received as gifts; she pattered in the kitchen trying out her new gadgets.

During the day on New Year's Eve, my wife announced that she was hungry and asked if I had any ideas. I jokingly said, "Let's go get some fast food." To my surprise, she complied. Before we knew it, we were headed out, me in my sweats and she in her pajamas.

We convinced ourselves that this was going to feel like high school — we'd order our food and then sit in the parking lot and eat in the car.

I never eat fast food and neither does my wife. This is because we both have an aversion to highly processed cuisine. It's not that we don't like the taste (it's hard not to). It's more about how the food makes us feel.

This stance on fast food developed over years of falling prey to its allure and then experiencing regret afterward.

First of all, I hate the smell. Nothing assaults my senses more than getting into my vehicle after I transported fast food and revisiting that greasy, pungent stink.

Secondly, it might be because of old age, but my stomach simply can't handle highly processed foods anymore. I get a bloated response that feels like a bowling ball in my gut. It tastes good going down, but within minutes after I'm finished, I become hyper-aware of my stomach.

And finally, the fastest way to clog your arteries and put on weight is with highly processed fast food. Why on earth would anyone indulge when that's the result? (OK, so it's probably the ease, the cost, and the taste and therein lies the problem with obesity in the U.S.)

Regardless, that day, we pulled in and ordered our food and then drove around the building facing the street so we could watch the people while eating.

While we were eating, a young man pushing a small cart walked in front of my truck. He was clean-cut and good looking

but had an odd outfit on. He stopped directly in front of my hood and started pulling balloons out of his cart. Within a few seconds he was hard at work making a balloon character.

We watched intently while chewing our food, wondering if he knew that we in such close proximity. We then got the idea that he might be making the balloon character for us.

Eventually, he finished what appeared to be a penguin and then pushed his cart into the fast food restaurant, obviously hired for some type of children's party.

It only took seconds after we finished eating for my wife to exclaim that she felt sick. I was fine, initially, but I could feel the bowling ball beginning to form.

Once we got home, we both vowed not to eat for the rest of the day. That lasted until 9 p.m., when my son arrived with four of his friends asking if they could hang out in our TV room above the garage and order pizzas. I told him I would pay for the pies, but our favorite pizza joint had just closed.

The boys insisted on a pizza chain as a replacement, so I acquiesced and ordered four pizzas. They arrived in a half hour and the boys devoured them, but not before my wife and I each had a slice.

Sick does not begin to describe how my wife and I felt for the rest of the night and all of Jan. 1 (this is not how we planned to ring in the New Year). Needless to say, we both resolved to not eat fast food again for the rest of the year.

This week's feature, "Killers of the Flower Moon" starring Leonardo DiCaprio and Robert De Niro, and written and directed by Martin Scorsese, tells the story of an Indian reservation in the early 1920s (long before fast food was invented) where the discovery of oil made the inhabitants wealthy beyond their dreams. But with great wealth comes bad people looking to exploit.

Just seeing the names of the director and main characters is enough to recommend this film. As expected, the acting is top-notch, and the direction is amazing. The story is a bit tough to follow and requires careful attention, but overall, it's a winner on multiple levels.

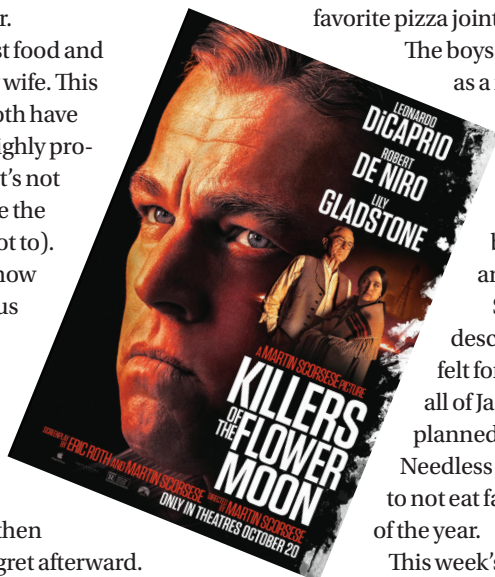
Check this one out if you're in the mood to see one of the best pictures of 2023 and a shoo-in for an Oscar nomination for best picture.

An oily "A-" for "Killers of the Flower Moon," now available for rental on Amazon Prime.

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



The Movie Diary
By Dom Cioffi



Thriving in survival mode

Last week was probably one of the most difficult ski weeks I have ever experienced in my life. I've skied in that much precipitous weather for one day, maybe two. But an entire week of water pouring off the brim of your hood — this was a week with the intensity needed for an Everest expedition rather than a few days of lift-served skiing.

I would race home every night, anxious to get my gear hung up and onto the dryer so it would have the most time to dry because no one likes that wet bathing suit feel at 7 the next morning. Leather mittens were re-waxed and baked, the rubber ones were pulled out of storage and the ugly gore-tex ones were on hand. We quickly learned the durability of uniform jackets and — if you didn't already know — how badly down can stink when it's wet. Morning conversations trended to discussion on how gear was being dried overnight. You could hear a groan when a mitten or goggles still carried moisture from the day before.

Because this was not just simple skiing. Each day you were prepared to do battle with the elements — and the rapidly narrowing trails. There was nothing we could do except survive, to make it through until the temperatures would again drop and then we would see how much snow was left on the other side.

But east coasters don't just survive in inclement weather, we thrive. You don't have just one pair of mittens and socks, you have one for the morning session and another for the afternoon and a third just in case you need to come in mid-morning. If there was a gap in your boots, you learned about it last week, that's for sure. You have extra neckies and hats and baselayers in case the moisture makes it through. But we don't surrender that easily. There is no bad weather, only bad dress.

And so we skied, all day, every day. No matter how many inches of moisture came out of the sky. No matter that each sit on a chair caused the moisture to creep closer to your underpants. Because the skiing was actually awesome. Soft, moist snow made for playful mornings that turned to moguls by mid day. This was some of the most fun skiing that we'd had all year.

And then there was the "fast grass." With this much moisture, the growing patches of grass on non-snowmaking sides of the trails were almost as fast as the snow. It was awesome. You could send it right across the patch, actually getting some lift off while you practiced for Superstar in May. The grass was clean, all the mud washed away underneath the snow rather than on top. We had the best time cruising between the patches and then coming back onto the main trail.

It was a week filled with laughter,

because the sky was crying enough for all of us combined. We did all the silly things we could, because why not? Just being out in the weather ensured our claim to being amazing and thick-skinned skiers. So it was the perfect time to try new, weird things. To go for a walk in the woods with our skis on — until the snow vanished and we'd end up carrying them.

But we made it work. We looked for the Gnar and we were stoked to shred it. Whatever we could find. The gnarlier, the better. We sang, we danced, we did kick turns and whirly birds. We skied backwards, on one ski and upside down. We skied it all, whether it was white, green or brown. Our team motto was that so long as our underwear was dry, we were good to go.

And so we went. All day, every day. And no one asked to go inside — although we did go inside one day for a quick snack. It was hot out there! Honestly, it was probably one of the most memorable weeks of skiing I have ever had, with laughter ringing out most of the day. I mean, there were a few tears when you would fall in a puddle of water while skiing the grass, but that's all part of the adventure.

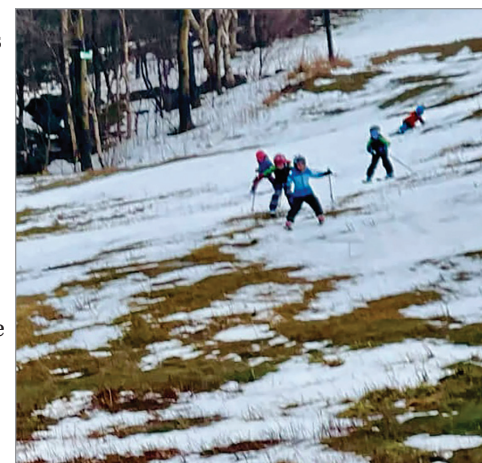
Because we are east coasters. And so we ski. In whatever weather Mother Nature sends us. We are not afraid of a little moist precipitation. I mean, we can be sad that the snow is melting, but that doesn't mean we don't enjoy it while it lasts.

Kudos to everyone that sent off 2023 with some of the best/worst skiing and riding we've had in a very long time. Our grooming team made magic happen moving snow around where they could. We made it through, and now the best snowmaking team in the world has the guns pumping hard and we've put away our wet weather gear — for now at least.

Merisa Sherman is a long-time Killington resident, KMS coach, bartender and local realtor. She can be reached at Merisa.Sherman@FourSeasonsSIR.com.



Living the Dream
By Merisa Sherman



By Philo Bishay

Coach Merisa Sherman leads team PomPom of Killington Ski Club/Killington Mountain School down some patchy snow skier's right of Snowshed.

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Skiing with disabilities

By Tony Crespi

At the top of Killington's Skyepeak a skier smiles. An onlooker appears apprehensive. Another skier gasps. Sadly, such reactions are not uncommon: this skier has one leg and one ski.

For those not fully aware of the kind of skiing options open to skiers with physical, emotional, or intellectual challenges, it may be helpful to know that there are mountains of possibilities.

As Charles Darwin once said, "It is not the strongest who survive, nor the most intelligent, but those who can adapt to change."

Spotting that skier later, their skiing looked smooth. While they might not post the fastest run they gave the impression of using sports in a wonderful way.

Walk through the base lodge at many areas and, if you look carefully, you might notice skiers coping with differing challenges. Fortunately, at first glance, you might not see the disabilities. Like many athletes, they often grin, smile and laugh. Sure, there may be leg

braces and artificial limbs, but there is also an enthusiasm for life.

From tragedy some triumph. "I don't feel disabled on the hill," exclaimed one skier. "I can't walk stairs very well but I can ski!"

Ski programs for the physically challenged can help.

From weekend adventures to Olympic racing, the range and diversity of programs is impressive. The United Disabled Ski Team represents one pinnacle of achievement, drawing elite, world-class, athletes. With Olympic medalists as powerful role models, athletes can set high goals. So often kids and adults feel badly because they can't run and jump. But these opportunities can help build spirit, strength and add a normalizing experience to life.

"It builds up that part of them that they thought would never be a source of strength or pride," reflects psychology professor Paula Gill Lopez. "It gives them dreams."

If you need proof that these pro-

grams are valuable, and fun, look at the faces of skiers. The smiles light the world. It's something, it seems, all skiers have in common.

This winter, stop and smile if you glance at a skier with challenges. Realize too, that many resorts boast programs for skiers with physical and emotional challenges. Vermont Adaptive Ski & Sports based at Killington is one of those programs. Others help veterans who returned from service deployments who now are coping with a range of challenges. All these programs can help build confidence and add a positive enjoyment to life.

"It is not the strongest body or the most dazzling mind that counts. It is the invincible spirit which overcomes all handicaps. For without this spirit, winning medals is empty. But with it, there is no defeat"

Tony Crespi has served as both a development team coach and ski school supervisor. He is a frequent contributor to publications throughout snow country.

← Tax concerns:

from page 1

our schools face are not going away, we can't just bury our heads in the sand... the costs will continue to add up and compile the longer we wait."

In seeking to grow MSVU's student population, Ford cited 92 "tuition students" who already come to MVSU from choice towns, adding that he expects more will come for the new facility. Also, he said, Killington's new village plus a workforce housing development at the base of Killington Road will include hundreds of new housing units, over time.

Other limiting factor is childcare. Given that many young families need two income earners to thrive in the area, a lack of childcare sometimes requires one parent to stay home which can also make the region unaffordable for families.

"One thing that would help," Buss said, "is better funding for pre-K 3- and 4-year olds... The district has 261 pre-K students now, and there are 60 on waiting lists."

Resident Lisa Lawler said Woodstock is also facing major investments in their water and sewer systems, and local municipal tax increases are, therefore, also imminent.

"I think these taxes are going to drive families with kids away from Woodstock, not attract them," she said.

Resident and Economic Development Commission (EDC) member John Spector said population growth is necessary for many reasons, and he thinks the EDC might con-

sider funding efforts to bring new families to Woodstock.

"We have to face it — we're going to get a new school, no matter what happens in March," Spector said. "It may not be the school we want, but we're going to get a new school. And to make it sustainable we need more people. It's the only thing that will make a difference."

Asked if the district has a "plan 'B'" if the bond issue fails, Ford replied simply, "We will try again."

One speaker summed up the discussion: "Taxes are going to go up, in large part because we refused to invest in town infrastructure and our schools for decades. Now we have to pay for those decisions. The population is growing, but we have to make sure it continues to grow."

Regarding the 18.5% possible increase in state ed taxes, Senator Clarkson explained that it's just a legally required statement, prior to consideration of various mitigating legislation or state funding. She anticipated that the real increase would be significantly less, but an increase nonetheless.

Editor's note: New funding formulas for equalized pupils with the implementation of Act 127, are projected to positively impact the MVSU. Look for a more detailed story on the new build project, financial impacts in next week's edition.

Ford plans to speak to the Killington Select Board and members of the public wishing to attend the meeting on Jan. 22.

← Mountain Meditation:

from page 24

relate to others in cycles of distress. So, whenever we're in a better place, with improved health and positive vibes, it is the time to touch others' lives through generosity and caring deeds.

It doesn't take much energy to share a smile, speak or write encouraging words, reach out to another who's in a tough spell, and share what we can to lift others up. Giving is a blessing in disguise. Goodwill generates more of the same. It goes


out in the world then comes back again. Our words and actions make a difference in creating the world that we all want to live in.

We are all family, not very far back. What happens to another also touches our lives. We are one with humanity, and also connected with all living beings—both animals and Earth elements. This is a truth passed down for eons from the ancients through indigenous peoples.

They hold knowledge that dominant cultures and societies have too often forgotten.

Today, I'll see what I can do to brighten our home life, community, and world. What tiny act might you find to offer to another whom you may encounter? You have the power to be a blessing in our world.

Marguerite Jill Dye is a writer and artist who divides her time between Vermont and Florida.



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← Jacobellis' grit: from page 1

that race in Torino, I started to realize there were so many lessons to be learned from stumbling like that in such a public way," she starts the 240-page hardcover. "I kept telling myself my story would not end with me on my butt on the side of a mountain in Italy. I vowed to write a different ending."

Still competing abroad on the World Cup circuit, Jacobellis has yet to sit down for a print interview about the book, limiting herself to an occasional broadcast appearance on such outlets as NBC's "Today." But after nearly two decades of unrelenting press scrutiny, she may be content to let her newly published words speak for themselves.

'Most magical, exhilarating feeling'

Jacobellis begins her book by tagging herself a "late bloomer." She waited until age 5 to step foot onto the slopes of Stratton, where her Connecticut family bought a weekend home in the 1980s. But her talent quickly snowballed.

"My dad was the one who put the idea of speed into my head," she wrote. "Even when I was skiing between his legs on the bunny hill, he would go fast."

Her older brother, Ben, was an even bigger inspiration. "Whatever Benny would do, I would do — and, if at all possible, I would try to do it better."

That meant skiing, skateboarding, rollerblading, motocross biking, lunch-trays-from-the-lodge sledding — and what during her childhood was the fledgling, newfangled sport of snowboarding.

Before Burton was an iconic brand, it was simply the middle name of Jake Burton Carpenter, a New York-born skier who moved to Londonderry in the 1970s to produce boards out of a barn and peddle them to neighbors.

"It was the most magical, exhilarating feeling," Jacobellis wrote of her introduction to the sport. "It was the whoosh of cold air as I barreled down the mountain. It's like I was flying, unencumbered by the laws of gravity or physics or any other pesky law of nature."

Jacobellis and her brother were soon racing Friday nights in an event called "snowboard-cross," hurtling down a Stratton hill pockmarked with twists and turns, ramps and rollers that "seemed to borrow from BMX and short-track speed skating, and maybe even a little bit from roller derby."

Throughout, Jacobellis considered herself a skier. Then a chimney fire ravaged the family's Vermont home in 1997. Her parents couldn't afford to replace everyone's skis and snowboards, so she had to pick one or the other.

"It was a genuine turning-point moment," she wrote.

Jacobellis chose a new board and rode it at the next Friday-night race. There, at age 12, she caught the attention of a coach from Stratton Mountain School, which has placed at least one alumna in the Winter Olympics since the academy's founding in 1972. Enrolling, she soon competed at the U.S. Open and X Games, all with her eye on an even higher summit.

'You abruptly realize you're in a bad spot'
Jacobellis' Olympic debut wasn't as a

competitor but instead a course forerunner at the 2002 Winter Games in Salt Lake City. She and fellow Vermont upstart Hannah Teter (who'd nab halfpipe gold in 2006 and silver in 2010) tested the Utah chute where Mount Snow Academy graduate Kelly Clark would win that year.

Jacobellis' first raced at the 2006 Olympics. Standing atop the Italian snowboardcross hill for the finals, she remembered one way to stay present and focused was to talk to herself. "Speed breeds speed," she said aloud.

Jacobellis was leading in the third turn when Swiss athlete Tanja Frieden, riding behind her, accidentally clipped her and nearly fell, allowing the American to move farther ahead. "You got this, Lindsey!" she told herself.

Jacobellis' legs began to tire by the fourth and fifth turns. But knowing Frieden was half a football field behind her, she saw the finish line. That's when the leader, approaching a jump, tried a trick move.

"I just hit the lip and reached for the back edge of my board like it was nothing at all," she wrote. "I wasn't celebrating, as critics and analysts and even some of my fellow snowboarders would soon claim. I wasn't being brash or reckless or full of myself; I wasn't showboating or hot-dogging or expressing myself in any purposeful way. I was just riding, lost in this joy-filled moment."

Until it wasn't one. "You know that sickening, worrying, stomach-dropping sensation you get when something awful is about to happen and you abruptly realize you're in a bad spot?" she wrote.

Jacobellis fell. Watching Frieden shoot past to snag gold, she scrambled up to claim silver.

Jacobellis didn't watch the replay of what she describes as "one of the biggest unforced errors in sports" until after her podium-topping run in Beijing 16 years later. But she heard about it repeatedly from the public, the press ("the best-known Olympics blunder in history," the Times would report) and sponsors who quickly dropped their endorsement deals.

"I was just 20 years old, still a kid in so many ways, still finding a way to deal with my own disappointment," she wrote, "and suddenly there were all these adults I had admired, business partners I had come to trust, looking to put as much distance between me and them as possible."

'Embrace it for the story it now tells'

Jacobellis went on to qualify for the Olympics in 2010, 2014 and 2018, only to see the media regurgitate the story of her 2006 stumble when she didn't win any subsequent medals.

"More and more, the reporters who covered our sport were starting to connect the dots," she wrote, "and somehow coming to the conclusion that I would always be chasing a way to rescue myself from myself."

Social media could be just as judgmental, with users commenting that — despite her winning more than 30 World Cup events and six overall championships.

Throughout, Jacobellis persisted, hiring a performance coach to help change her mindset, channel rather than close out her

feelings, stand up for and stay true to herself and, ultimately, accept what is and isn't in her control. "Like a lot of young athletes — most especially, a lot of female athletes — I was used to being ignored and was taught to fall in line," she wrote. "But that's just about the worst message to send to our young women, don't you think?"

Amid the Covid-19 pandemic, Jacobellis worked her way to the 2022 Olympic snowboardcross course in Beijing.

"It was another one of those biting cold days on the mountain that took me back to those frigid mornings in Vermont when I was growing up," she recalled.

Jacobellis had broken her elbow just three months earlier. But standing at the starting gate of her fifth Winter Games, she focused on the upcoming 90 seconds. "I was feeling super confident, but at the same time I was super mindful of all the things that could still go wrong," she wrote. "If there was anyone on this

mountain, anyone at these games, anyone on the planet who knew what could go wrong at the last possible second, when victory seemed certain, it was me."

Everything went right. Jacobellis scored not only in her individual race but also in the subsequent mixed event with 40-year-old teammate Nick Baumgartner.

"Funny how that happens," she wrote. "It takes you 16 years from your Olympic debut to win your first gold medal — and then just three days to win your second."

Jacobellis has enjoyed the afterglow, seeing herself inducted into the Stratton Mountain School Hall of Fame last spring and releasing her new book last fall.

In May 2022, the athlete capped it all with a visit to the White House. Through security, her solo gold medal was nicked. She came to believe that the mishap only increased its value.

"Embrace it for the story it now tells," she wrote, and with grit and grace, rise above.



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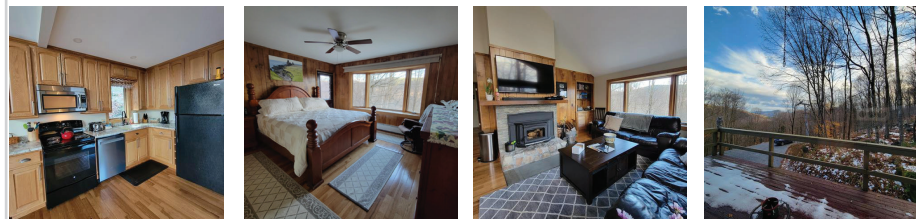

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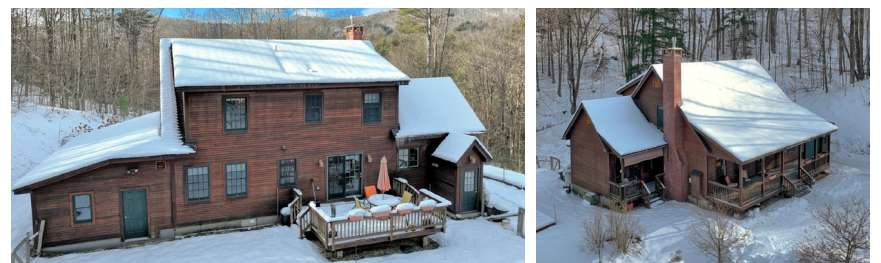
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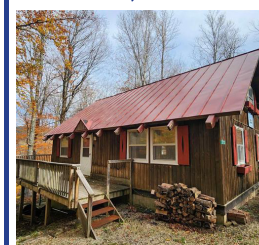
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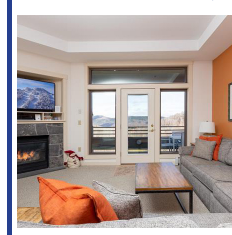
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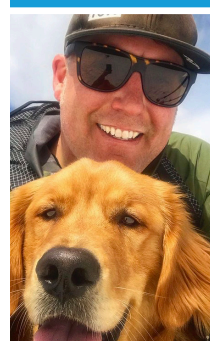
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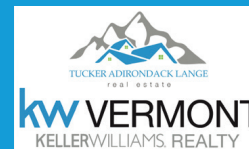


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