



EASTER & APRIL FOOLS

Sunday to Monday might cause a bit of holiday whiplash! Easter is followed by the day of the Trickster — guard your baskets of treats! The area abounds with egg hunts.

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RCHS IS LOOKING TO MOVE, GOT LAND?

The Rutland County Humane Society is looking for a new home to shelter homeless animal. After 56 years at the location in Pittsford, it's finally outgrown the space. Got ideas?

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BILL PROTECTS BEES

The Vermont House gave a strong endorsement to legislation designed to protect bees and other pollinators from toxic neonics.

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LOVE YOU PEAKS

Killington Resorts hosts a fundraiser for breast cancer awareness, Saturday.

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Killington fire chief resigns

Killington leaders 'sad' to see him go

By Polly Mikula

Paul Ginther has resigned after just eight months as Killington's fire chief. His departure follows other short tenures in the department; but this time circumstances differed greatly. Town leaders were unanimous in their praise of his performance and sorrow at his departure.

Ginther's resignation was "personal" in nature, Town Manager Michael Ramsey said, adding, "During the Fire Chief's time in Killington, he proved himself as an experienced firefighter who led the department from the front with professionalism and a passion for helping others."

"It really seems like Paul was here longer than he was," said Selectman Jim Haff.

Ginther began his tenure as chief on July 10, 2023.

"It's really unfortunate to see him go," Haff added. "The department ran really smoothly under his leadership; he really fit right in; like he was born to be here. I'm sad to see him go, but understand his reason to take care of himself and step back from responsibilities."

"I was very impressed with Chief's Ginther's ability to bring the entire department together," said Selectman Chris Karr. "Walking in as he did, under short notice. He quickly brought the group together. They are going to be tough boots to fill. Wishing him all the best in his full retirement"

"The town received Paul Ginther's official resignation on March 24, 2024," Ramsey explained. "Paul is planning to move back to Florida with his family for personal reasons, but in the meantime, he will help the department through the leadership transition. Craig Bowman will fill in as interim fire chief while the town considers different options for hiring"

"Personally, it was an honor to serve with Paul, and I wish for my fellow Navy veteran fair winds and following seas," he added.

"He quickly brought the group together," said Karr.

MVSU board collects voter surveys

By Curt Peterson

The Mountain Views Supervisory Union (MVSU) board has distributed a four-question survey soliciting input from voters regarding the failure of a proposed \$99 million bond to finance a new district Middle/High School complex. MVSU serves the towns of Bridgewater, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading and Woodstock.

The bond was defeated by about 60% of the voters in the district.

The survey questions include basic information: town of the survey participant, how they voted: Yes, No or

Undecided (no vote), if they were eligible to vote, and if the participant would like to be involved more directly in crafting a solution and give more specific feedback.

The survey was more about the reasons behind voters' choices on the bond than about the project itself, according to MVSU board vice chair Ben Ford, who also heads up the New Build Committee.

Ford told the Mountain Times that there were at least 1,400 survey responses (out of 3,550 voters) as of Tuesday, Survey → 3



Courtesy Killington Resort

'Storm of the year!'

Snowstorms dumped 40 inches on Killington last week, with 24 inches of that falling in a white-out blizzard Saturday, March 23. The resort was able to reopen 100% of its terrain and thousands flocked to the slopes to enjoy the light fluffy snow as it fell Saturday. Sunday greeted skiers and riders with an abrupt but welcome change: a warm sunny day!

Area resorts rejoiced.

Killington Resort called it "A week to remember" on multiple social media channels.

Okemo posted, "With 20+ inches of fresh pow on the slopes, we couldn't be more excited to drop some ropes and watch our stockpile stack up. Cheers to another March miracle!"

See more photos → 9

Daniel Banyai, owner of Slate Ridge, is arrested, will remain jailed

By Ethan Weinstein and Diane Derby/VTDigger

Daniel Banyai, owner of the controversial former Pawlet gun range and paramilitary training facility known as Slate Ridge, was charged Wednesday, March 20, with aggravated assault on a protected person and resisting arrest after a traffic stop led to an altercation with a Pawlet constable, according to Vermont State Police.

Banyai was arraigned the next day, March 21, in Rutland Superior Criminal Court. During the brief court hearing, Banyai's lawyer entered a not guilty plea on his client's behalf. Judge Cortland Corsones deemed Banyai a flight risk and ordered him held on \$15,000 bail. Banyai is expected to remain at Marble Valley Regional Correctional Facility until he posts bail on the assault charge, and until his Pawlet property is found to be in compliance with Environmental Court orders that led to the arrest warrant for contempt of court.

Banyai, 50, has had an active arrest warrant since last year after he refused to dismantle unpermitted structures on his Slate Ridge property.

In December, an environmental court judge reissued a warrant for Banyai's arrest after finding him in contempt.

"The threat of incarceration is the only remaining tool at the Court's disposal to encourage compliance," Judge Thomas Durkin wrote in his ruling, ordering Banyai to turn himself in to the Vermont Dept. of Corrections by Dec. 22.

According to state police, Banyai was a passenger in a vehicle that Second Constable Tom Covino pulled over for speeding on Route 30 in Pawlet around 2:20 p.m.

Covino recognized Banyai and informed him of the active arrest warrant pending against him before instructing Banyai to get out of the truck. In response, Banyai called Covino a "dirty cop" and "refused to comply" with the orders, according to Covino.



Courtesy of Vermont State Police
Daniel Banyai

"After repeated attempts to get Daniel to exit the vehicle failed, I informed him that I was going to administer pepper spray to him in order to gain compliance," Covino wrote in his statement. "He postured up in the passenger seat, removing his seat belt, leaning in an aggressive manner towards me," Covino wrote, later describing Banyai making a "fist" at him while yelling.

"It is unclear if Daniel struck me first on my left side of my head or I administered my pepper spray first," Covino wrote. The constable said he experienced bruising on his left temple as a result of the "initial strike," which he described as a seven out of 10 on a pain scale.

The driver of the car was identified by Covino as David Brodsky, according to court documents. Brodsky was identified in a New Yorker story as having supported Banyai financially. He reportedly owns land near Pawlet.

Banyai was transported to Rutland Regional Medical Center, where he was treated for what state police described as "minor injuries." He was then taken to the Rutland State Police Barracks and later the Rutland jail.



Courtesy FB

Banyai's militia training site terrified neighbors in West Pawlet, including posts like this one.

150 students activate HOPE with Sweethearts & Heroes

RNESU hosted the anti-bullying and suicide prevention program, March 18

An amazing duo of superheroes without capes came to Brandon to show middle school students how they can spread HOPE (Hold On, Possibilities Exist) in their classrooms and beyond.

Tom Murphy and Sgt. Rick Yarosh, of Sweethearts & Heroes, worked in the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union (RNE-SU) on Monday, March 18.

Sweethearts & Heroes is a student empowerment and empathy activation team that aims to prevent hopelessness, suicide and bullying with a focus on the basic components of social-emotional learning.

Sweethearts & Heroes offers a profound, engaging signature presentation that calls for HOPE, Empathy and Action; Circle, which is built on the ancient ritual of communicating in a circle to build empathy; and BRAVE Buddies, which trains older students in bully drills that they, in turn, teach to students in lower grades.

The Sweethearts & Heroes team is: Tom Murphy, director and founder from St. Albans; Ret. U.S. Army Sgt. Rick Yarosh, a HOPE expert, Purple Heart recipient and motivational speaker from New York who was burned severely while serving in Iraq; and Pat Fish, BRAVE and Circle Leader.

While in the RNE-SU on March 18, Murphy and Yarosh presented their signature assembly to 150 students at Otter Valley Union Middle and High School. Students attended from Otter Valley, Neshobe School, Lothrop School, and Otter Creek Academy.

For the remainder of the day, Yarosh conducted question and answer sessions with students, while Murphy led Circle activities.



Courtesy of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union
Teammates Tom Murphy and Sgt. Rick Yarosh smile with Levi Machia, a 6th-grader at The Neshobe School in Brandon.

"The RNE-SU would love to extend a big thank you to Tom, Rick, and the entire Sweethearts & Heroes team for coming to our district and working with our students," said Max Burman, RNE-SU coordinator of communications and outreach. "In the RNE-SU, we are dedicated to the development of character, competence, creativity, and community. Organizations such as Sweethearts & Heroes exemplify the values that we seek to instill in all students. The work that they do is incredibly powerful and meaningful in today's world."

For more than 16 years, Sweethearts & Heroes has presented what Murphy calls "the 'stop, drop and roll' of bullying" to more than 2.5 million students in school districts from New England to Hawaii and north into Canada. Sweethearts & Heroes also tailors its presentations and workshops for businesses, non-profits and

civic groups.

Murphy said, "We go where we're needed. That's what heroes do."

Sweethearts & Heroes has also created the HOPE Classroom, a digital subscription service designed for various grade levels and different school sizes. This value-packed offering can allow Sweethearts & Heroes to be in every school in the U.S. For more information visit: thehopeclassroom.com.

Also available is the Sweethearts & Heroes' book, "13 Pillows For Affective Teachers," which is a novel that covers the themes of HOPE, empathy and action in the Sweethearts & Heroes curriculum. "13 Pillows" is based on real students and teachers that Sweethearts & Heroes has encountered. Murphy cowrote the book with Brian McKeon, of New York.

For more information on the prevention program Sweethearts & Heroes, visit: sweetheartsandheroes.com.

Barstow school district to vote on revised budget, April 30

Staff report

The Barstow Unified Union School Board unanimously agreed to re-warn a budget with approximately \$29,000 in reductions at its meeting, March 21.

The original \$6.27 million budget (a 12.1% increase over FY2024) was defeated by only four votes on Town Meeting Day: 375-379. A subsequent recount confirmed the outcome.

Board members pointed to the common level of appraisal assessment — that has driven area property values and, therefore, taxes up — as an explanation of the budget’s initial defeat.

Board members are hopeful that

more voters understand that excessive spending by the districts is not to blame and will pass the budget this time.

High school tuition makes up 32% of the district budget, or \$1,981,217.

Chittenden and Mendon residents will vote on the new budget Tuesday, April 30. There will be an informational meeting the week prior at 6 p.m. Monday, April 22.

The \$29,000 reductions, which

bring the new budget down to \$6.25 million, are the result of the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union (RNE-SU) decision to cut \$164,315 from its budget, which include eliminating one special educator, a clinician, an elementary coordinator and a part-time bus driver.

The Barstow board noted that there were many parts of their budget that they do not have control over, such as the 16.4% increase in health insurance (brokered by the state) and high school tuition, which makes up 32% of the district budget, or \$1,981,217.

Vermont farmers urge senators to not chicken out of passing cut poultry bill

By Holly Sullivan, Community News Service

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

Vermonters want more pre-cut poultry, and local farmers are eager to meet their demand. But are legislators game?

As the law stands, Vermont farmers raising fewer than 20,000 birds a year can’t sell pre-cut meat in state if it hasn’t been inspected and prepped at a U.S. Dept. of Agriculture facility. Instead they must sell their poultry whole.

Back in January, House Agriculture Committee members passed H.603, a bill allowing poultry farms of three sizes to slaughter and sell their own birds without the need to keep them whole: farms raising fewer than 1,000 birds a year, 5,000 birds a year or 20,000 a year. By meeting a slew of conditions, those producers wouldn’t need inspections to sell raw chicken products from the farm, at farmers’ markets or to restaurants in Vermont.

The fate of H.603 lies in the hands of the Senate Agriculture Committee. Even though the bill is essentially a one-word edit, the State House was buzzing last week with local farmers who called it a game-changer for small outfits.

Elizabeth Roma, meat farmer at Putting Down Roots Farm in South Royalton, spoke on March 12. Her business trends reflect the average Vermonter’s desire to purchase pre-cut meat, she said.

“People want to buy breasts, want to buy legs, want to buy wings. They don’t want to buy a whole bird,” she explained.

“I definitely sell out of parted chickens way before any whole birds. Maybe of the 20 birds I sell a week, I might sell one whole,” she later said.

Roma said H.603 would also ensure more people eat locally.

“If we want Vermonters to eat Vermont meats — which I think that’s the goal — we need to be able to allow this to go through so that can actually happen,” she told committee members.

Hannah Pearce, co-owner of Hillside Farm and Pearce’s Pastured Poultry in West Glover, echoed Roma’s attitude during the same meeting.

Pearce’s place isn’t a USDA site, and she has to send her poultry elsewhere. That, she said, makes it nearly impossible to keep up with customers’ requests.

“I started bringing birds to be cut up in 2020, and I’ve Local chicken → 5

“Everybody was like, ‘Chicken parts? Let’s go! We love that!’” said Rep.

Heather Surprenant, D-Barnard, who sponsored the bill.

Survey: from page 1

March 26, the last day for collecting responses. A small group of board members will analyze the results later this week, then share the results.

Although there has been noise about the tax implications of the project, Ford said “not one respondent cited a tax increase as their reason for voting ‘No’ on the bond question.”

His personal opinion is that the \$99 million was “scary” for some participants, even though the cost per foot to build this facility is the lowest of its kind proposed in Vermont.

“The board is in ‘listening mode,’” Ford said. “We’re really hoping to get new ideas from the respondents.”

He said some respondents voted ‘Yes’ on the bond, but still felt they didn’t have enough information to feel comfortable with their decision. Some lingering questions included: How was the final concept developed and what options were considered? Ford said. “For example, the voters weren’t aware that we had slashed the cost of construction from \$116 million to \$99 million with our goal of keeping any resulting tax increase limited to 16%,” he noted.

Other concerns included whether the board seriously considered renovating, instead of replacing the existing facility. Ford said anyone who claims they had legitimate figures for “bringing the facility up to code” do not actually have any such numbers.

“We were assured by a team of architects, consultants and engineers who really considered the possibility, that renovating was out of the question,” he said.

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Rutland County Humane Society seeks new location, land to shelter pets

The Rutland County Humane Society's (RCHS) current building's systems are failing, it's run out of room and its ability to provide the animals with a healthy environment where they can thrive is diminished, according to a news release March 25.

"We owe it to the animals, and our community, to ensure they have an improved temporary home until they meet their forever families," stated Beth Saradarian, RCHS executive director. "Our agency opened its current shelter on Stevens Road in Pittsford in 1967 and it has served us well over the years but it's time to look to the future."

For the past year and a half, the RCHS board of directors and RCHS leadership have been in the planning phase to build a new shelter and home for RCHS. In fact,

the organization had a purchase and sale agreement in place for property in Rutland Town, but it didn't come to fruition.

"We are again looking for property in Rutland County for a new home for the animals," Saradarian said. "We are looking for a piece of land of approximately 5-10 acres centrally located in the county so we can better serve our community. Access to a major road is preferable and property with electricity and access to public water and sewer is ideal, although not a requirement."

Anyone with ideas or suggestions is encouraged to reach out to Beth Saradarian, at: shelterbeth@rchsvt.org or 802-483-6700 ext. 211.

"Together we can find the perfect spot for our animals and our community," she said.

Wallingford Block awarded \$100,000 for renovation of third floor

The Preservation Trust of Vermont (PTV) announced March 22 a Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization grant of \$100,000 to the Wallingford Block to support the rehabilitation of the underutilized third-floor into a community space.

The Wallingford Block, formerly the Odd Fellows Block, is a monumental building at the heart of Wallingford village. Constructed in 1824, the Block is privately-owned and since acquiring the property in 2017 the owner has worked tirelessly to restore the exterior and reopen the first and second floors.

The vacant third floor, which used to serve as a community theater and dance and music hall, is the final piece of the rehabilitation project. Bruhn funds will support the reopening of the third floors for community purposes and is one of two Bruhn grants awarded to privately-owned commercial buildings located in Designated Village Centers.

"The Preservation Trust of Vermont, in partnership with the National Park Service, is excited to support projects like the Wallingford Block that will help preserve and revitalize Vermont's rural communities," said Ben Doyle, PTV president. "We congratulate the community champions who are leading this work and thank Senator Sanders, Senator Welch, and Congresswoman Balint for their support of this wonderful program. We would also like to acknowledge former Senator Leahy, for his work in establishing this important national program and proposing that it be named after his good friend, and former PTV President,

Wallingford Block → 5

John Hill named new pastor of Wallingford church

At the annual meeting of Union Congregational Church, Sunday, March 3, the congregation voted to welcome John Hill as its new pastor. An invitation Hill joyfully accepted, saying, "34 years ago, I lived in a world full of anxiety. My life was transformed when I accepted Jesus Christ as my Savior and began doing God's work. He has guided my life since then. I'm honored that God has brought the members at Union Congregational Church and me together and am excited about our future."



John Hill

Submitted

Hill is completing the Southwest Association of the Vermont UCC's pastoral preparation program this June. Hill's education includes an associate's degree in animal science from SUNY Cobleskill, a bachelor of science in agricultural economics from UVM and a masters of science in agricultural economics from UVM. He has owned a small business, worked for Blue Seal Feeds, and in the insurance industry.

Pastor Hill → 5

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VNAHSR CEO Sara King to retire after 23 years

Sara King, CEO of the VNA & Hospice of the Southwest Region (VNAHSR) announced her plans to retire after more than 23 years of leadership with the agency on Monday, March 25. King began with VNAHSR as its chief financial officer, added the responsibilities of chief operating officer in 2016, and promoted to chief executive officer in 2021.

“Back in 2001, I was offered the opportunity to join an organization whose mission I believed in with my whole heart,” said King. “I had always admired the incredible work of the talented VNASHR staff, and I learned firsthand how wonderfully compassionate, patient, and skilled they truly are when they cared for my son, Nicolas, before his passing. Understanding the work we do here from an operational perspective



Submitted
VNAHSR Board President Dan DiBattista (left) with CEO Sara King (right), who announced her intent to retire.

and from the patient side has helped me be a better advocate for the agency. My time at this organization has been the honor of a lifetime, and I will continue to support the work of the agency long after my retirement.”

King explained that

spending more time with family was the reason behind her retirement.

“Family is at the very core of everything we do at VNAHSR. For many of our patients, their families are actively involved in their

King to retire → 8

← Wallingford Block: from page 8

the late Paul Bruhn.”

The Wallingford Block project and the Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grant program are supported by the Historic Preservation Fund administered by the National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior. The program supports the preservation and restoration of buildings and community gathering spaces of economic and social significance in rural communities with fewer than 7,500 residents. Additional recipients of the Bruhn Historic Revitalization subgrants include the McIndoe Falls Academy in Barnet, the Marshfield Village Store, the Kimball Public Library in Randolph, the Skinner Block in Royalton, the Starksboro

Village Meeting House, Moscow Mill in Stowe, and the Windham Meeting House. The grants range from \$50,000 to \$100,000

and will be used toward structural repairs, roof replacement, window restoration, exterior work, restoration of significant interior finishes, and code improvements.

“We are glad to see this federal funding support the preservation of historic sites in rural communities throughout Vermont. Each recipient represents a unique part of our state’s history and, thanks to the good work of the Preservation Trust of Vermont, will remain protected and preserved long into the future,” said Sen. Sanders, Sen. Welch, and Rep. Balint. “We look forward to seeing the role these historic community sites will play for generations to come.”

“We look forward to seeing the role these historic community sites will play for generations to come,” said Sen. Sanders, Sen. Welch, and Rep. Balint.

← Pastor Hill: from page 4

Hill lives in Benson with his wife, and two cats, is a native of Sunderland, Vermont and graduated from Burr & Burton.

Hill has been a vacation fill in lay minister at several churches in Bennington and Rutland counties, including Union Congregational Church. Hill currently serves as the treasurer of the Southwest Association, Vermont UCC and vice moderator of the Vermont UCC.

“We believe Pastor Hill’s biblical preaching style is a good fit for our congregation and will help our church grow and serve more people in the community,” said spokesperson Heather Cleveland.

Pastor Hill begins serving Union Congregational Church on Sunday, March 24, 2024. Services are held at 10 a.m. Everyone is welcome to and encouraged to attend.

The Union Congregational Church is located at 4210 US 7 South, in Wallingford.

← Local chicken: from page 3

sold out of everything I’ve brought every single year far before I get to the next year of production,” she explained. Pearce said she saw a 61% increase in parted bird sales from 2022 to 2023 alone. Her whole bird sales remained the same.

Pearce said her birds are noticeably anxious when traveling long distances to be slaughtered.

“We don’t want to load a trailer full of birds and bring them an hour and a half away. That extra stress for the animals, we don’t want to do that,” she said.

Though H.603 is generally well-received by the farming community, some larger-scale farmers are hesitant, fearing fewer inspections would mean hazy sanitary procedures.

Bruce Hennessy, farmer and slaughterman at Maple Wind Farms in Richmond, one of the only USDA processing facilities in Vermont, spoke to committee members March 15. During his career, Hennessy said he transitioned from an uninspected facility to an inspected one. Based on personal experience, he thinks unsupervised butchering has the potential to ignite unexpected safety hazards.

“We wanted to be as clean and sanitary as possible. When we went under inspection, we realized that we weren’t even close,” he recounted. “As diligent as we were, we didn’t really understand the problems that can occur. There’s just things you wouldn’t even think of”

Hennessy clarified that he is in favor of H.603, but only if its language ensures sanitary butchering conditions. He believes poultry farms should be required to have Hazard Analysis Critical Control Point plans, based on a U.S. Food and Drug Administration framework to reduce

potential food safety hazards. His sentiment was paralleled by a few of the farmers who testified.

Despite those safety concerns, most farmers who’ve been in the State House lately are in full support of H.603. The bill’s sponsor, Rep. Heather Surprenant, D-Barnard, said she saw zero backlash when it was in the House.

“We didn’t have anyone oppose it,” she told senators Feb. 28. “Everybody was like, ‘Chicken parts? Let’s go! We love that!’”

Taylor Blackmer, farmer at Lucky Fields Farm in Springfield, said the bill would be groundbreaking for her and her husband’s farm.

“We would retain in the business about

By meeting a slew of conditions, producers wouldn’t need inspections to sell raw chicken products from the farm, at farmers markets or to restaurants in Vermont.

50% of our current processing costs, so this year that’s about \$5,000 a year,” she told Senate committee members March 15. “Which, if you know anything about farm finances, that is like a make-it-or-break-it kind of number.”

Currently, Blackmer processes her birds in Rhode Island, a two and a half hour drive from her farm. She, her husband and her toddler, Rosie, have to make the trek down about five times a year. Blackmer said transporting 300 birds in a truck is a struggle.

“We don’t want to be driving down at 2 o’clock in the morning to get to the processor as early as possible, having to wake her up,” Blackmer said, referring to Rosie, who was sitting on her lap. “Our quality of life would be better. We would have less stress.”

The Senate Agriculture Committee is slated to discuss the bill March 27.

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Vermont House passes pollinator protection bill

The Vermont House of Representatives gave its strong endorsement March 21 to legislation designed to protect bees and other pollinators in the state from toxic neonicotinoid pesticides, known commonly as neonics. The vote in the House was 112-29.

The bill (H.706) has four main components:

1. It prohibits the use of field crop seeds (corn, soy, wheat, and cereal) treated with neonicotinoids;
2. It restricts outdoor uses of neonicotinoids that are harmful to pollinators;
3. It requires best management practices for allowed neonicotinoid uses;
4. It incorporates neonicotinoid-treated seeds into the regulatory framework that already applies to other neonicotinoids.

It also includes an emergency exemption that allows the Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets, in consultation with the Agency of Natural Resources, to lift the prohibition if seed companies fail to provide farmers with a sufficient supply of neonicotinoid-free seed or if requiring farmers to purchase neonicotinoid-free seed would cause financial hardship.

Finally, it provides farmers, service providers, seed dealers, and seed companies with time to prepare by delaying the prohibition's start date until Jan. 1, 2029, the same date that a similar prohibition begins in New York state.

A statewide public opinion survey released this week by the Vermont Public

Interest Research Group found nearly universal agreement among Vermonters about the importance of pollinators such as bees, butterflies, and moths, and deep concern over their declining numbers.

The survey also found 83% of Vermonters in support of "a phaseout of nearly all neonic pesticides in Vermont, with exemptions available in case of emergency." This language tracks the key elements of H.706.

"For people who eat, today's vote to better protect bees and other pollinators in Vermont is real victory," said Paul Burns, executive director of VPIRG. "VPIRG applauds the House for finding a way to do right by both bees and farmers in the same bill."

"Vermonters know where their food comes from, and they value the role that bees and other pollinators play in making that food possible," Burns continued. "With bee colonies collapsing at an alarming rate, Vermonters across the board want to see action to phaseout the unnecessary use of toxic neonicotinoid pesticides along with reasonable protections for farmers as they

"For people who eat, today's vote to better protect bees and other pollinators in Vermont is real victory," said Paul Burns.

transition to safer alternatives."

Since their introduction in the mid-1990s, neonicotinoid pesticides ("neonics") have made U.S. agriculture 48-times more harmful to insects and been linked with massive losses of bees. Over the most recent five-year period for which data are available, Vermont beekeepers lost an average 53% of their hives every year. These losses of man-



Submitted
Bees are critical for pollinating food crops, but Vermont beekeepers lose 53% of hives each year.

aged bees provide insight into the losses occurring each year in Vermont's 300+ species of wild bees, which undergird ecosystems and are also important crop pollinators.

"I want to be clear, bees and other pollinators in Vermont are in steep decline. Neonic pesticide exposure is a key reason behind this decline, and neonics actually provide no clear benefit

to most farmers that use them," said Bianca Braman, vice president of the Vermont Beekeepers Association board of directors. "Vermont's beekeepers play a vital role in our state's agricultural economy and food security. As farmers, we're asking the state to phase-out the unnecessary use of a chemical that's threatening to wipe out our small but critically important livestock."

A 2023 assessment by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) found that the three most commonly-used neonics likely jeopardize the continued existence of over 200 threatened and endangered species, including pollinators such as bees and butterflies, as well as other beneficial insects like dragonflies.

Neonics are so lethal that just one corn seed coated with a neonic pesticide can contain enough toxin to kill over 100,000 bees or a small songbird.

Neonics are so lethal that just one corn seed coated with a neonic pesticide can contain enough toxin to kill over 100,000 bees or a small songbird. Even lower levels of exposure can weaken and impair pollinators and other forms of wildlife, making it harder for bees, birds, and other species to survive and reproduce.

seeds seems to provide few if any benefits to farmers.

"Neonicotinoid seed treatments offer farmers almost no benefit and poison the pollinators that make growing healthy food possible," said Scott Sanderson, staff attorney and manager of Conservation Law Foundation's farm and food initiative. "With today's vote, the Vermont House took a critical step to protect the state's agricultural economy, all while providing farmers necessary safeguards."

"Vermont's legislators have taken a major step forward in safeguarding the health of pollinators by passing H706. Farmers are being sold neonicotinoid seed treatments that do not benefit them, and their widespread use is causing harm to bees, aquatic insects, and the many food chains that depend on insects" said Emily May, pollinator conservation biologist, The Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation.

Vermonters appear ready to give bees a chance. According to the poll, 96% of those surveyed agreed that pollinator species like bees, butterflies, moths, and bats are important to Vermont's agriculture; 85% said that the pollinators were very important.

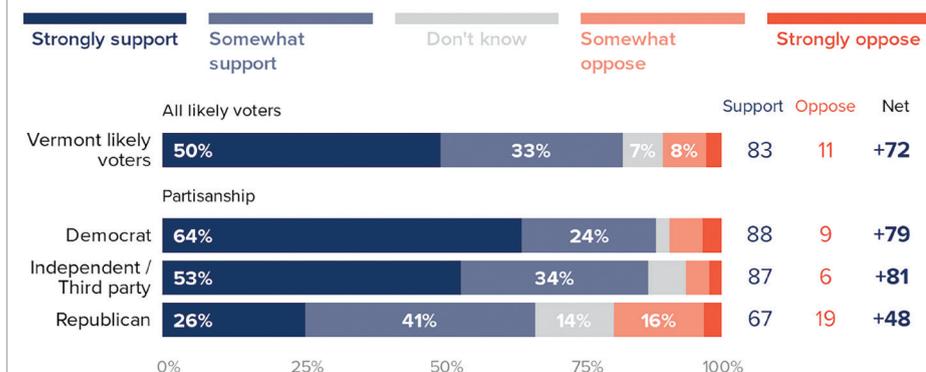
"This is an exciting first step in ultimately reducing the use of harmful pesticides that are a threat to birds, pollinators, and people. It is clear that Vermonters care about our farms and a healthy environment" said Margaret Fowle, senior conservation biologist, Audubon Vermont.

Vermont Voters Strongly Support a Phaseout of Neonic Pesticides

As you may know, there is a class of pesticides known as neonics used on some agricultural crops, ornamental plants, and golf courses in Vermont.

Because they spread throughout the environment, neonic pesticides can be present at toxic levels in places where bees and other pollinators live and in the pollen and nectar that pollinators feed on.

Do you support or oppose a phase out of nearly all neonic pesticides in Vermont, with exemptions available in case of emergency?



March 1-6, 2024 survey of 470 likely voters in Vermont

DATA FOR PROGRESS

Courtesy Vermont Public Interest Research Group

Survey data shows Vermonters overwhelmingly support removing neonic toxins from crops.

'Grump'

While our grandsons call me "Gramp," my fellow House Appropriations Committee members were probably thinking "Grump" as a more fitting name for me by the time



By Rep. Jim Harrison

Friday evening came along. That it was a long week would be an understatement. As the committee clerk, one of my tasks is to record votes, draft and write motions and ensure they get to the House Clerk's Office on each amendment and bill that goes through our committee. With a deadline to get bills referred to our committee out by Friday night, March 22, there was lobbying by fellow legislators and various interest groups to have us take up

their priorities. There wasn't enough time or money to do them all. A number stayed on our committee wall, potentially sealing their fate for this session.

In addition, several of the bills we had to vote on included major increases in spending, taxes, and fees, plus an expansion of the hotel voucher program. With some of these I let my emotions get a little ahead of me. At one point, a fellow committee member sent me a message, "It's time to chill." Suffice it to say, I needed to do some apologizing for my outbursts... Some extra sleep over the weekend should help. It's hard for me to go along with spending money we don't have.

As it stands now, I think several of the bills are on the path to vetoes. If Governor Scott has been consistent about anything in his time in office, it has been the importance of affordability and his dislike for new taxes.

The new spending bills, including public housing projects, expansion of Judiciary staffing and Medicaid expansion, are proposed to be paid for by an array of taxes and fees totaling well over \$100 million annually. Surcharges in real estate transactions, higher mutual fund fees, increases in corporate taxes and an income surcharge on higher incomes are some of the "revenue enhancers" for now.

Some other items

- The Senate approved legislation to protect river corridors and floodplains from future development to help minimize property damage with future flooding events.
- A controversial land use bill, H.687, will be debated on the House floor this week. Some have suggested that in some rural areas, Act 250 permits will be required to build even a single-family home under the bill.
- A proposal to amend Vermont's constitution that would add the right to unionize is likely to pass the Senate this week. It is already in current law. If ultimately approved by voters, the measure would prohibit a future legislature from enacting a right to work law, which gives workers the option whether to join the union at their business.
- The House approved H.289, which will require 100% renewable energy for our electric needs as early as 2030. Scott has voiced concern over the impact on ratepayers and suggested a different path to the same objective at a lower cost.
- The House approved two bills (H.621 and H.741) that increase access to diagnostic breast imaging and colorectal cancer screening.
- The Senate approved S.258, which changes the makeup of the Fish & Wildlife board to give legislative leadership some of the appointments. It also bans the hunting of coyotes with dogs.
- The Senate gave final approval to S.18, which bans

Harrison → 8

Scott appoints Zoie Saunders as Vermont's new secretary of education

Governor Phil Scott announced March 22 his appointment of Zoie Saunders to serve as Vermont's next education secretary.

Saunders is an accomplished education leader with broad strategic and operational experience driving school improvement, increasing student outcomes and enrollment, closing service gaps, and optimizing school support services.

Currently, Saunders works as the chief strategy and innovation officer for Broward County Public Schools, the sixth largest school district in the country. In this role, she is responsible for aligning resources, maximizing facility usage, strengthening part-



Submitted

Zoie Saunders

Currently, Saunders works as the chief strategy and innovation officer for Broward County Public Schools, the sixth largest school district in the country... [with] 230 schools serving over 200,000 students.

nerships, and enhancing support services for 230 schools serving over 200,000 students. (There are currently 74,507 students enrolled K-12 in 288 schools across the state of Vermont, according to the Vermont Agency of Education.) Using a collaborative

approach, Saunders has led discussions with community stakeholders to develop the goals and criteria for redefining the future of education in the county from an equity lens.

"I have always believed that, given our enormous investment and

commitment, Vermont is capable of having the best education system in the country, serving students from cradle to career," said Governor Scott. "Vermont's education system is at a turning point, and it will take all of us — teachers, parents, administrators, school staff, community leaders, and — to work together to ensure we reach our full potential. Zoie's exemplary resume, fresh perspective and impactful experience as a public school leader will be invaluable as we move forward. She has demonstrated a deep commitment to the success of students and the communities that schools serve. She will be a huge asset as we move forward, and I look forward to working with her and welcoming her and her family to Vermont."

"I have devoted my career to expanding educational opportunities for underserved communities and believe in the power of education to drive positive community change and economic prosperity," said Saunders. "It is my honor to serve as the secretary of education in a state with a strong tradition of prioritizing education and the needs of children. With leadership experience across multiple states and

Saunders → 8

Vermont sets national precedent with unanimous House vote for data privacy

The Vermont House of Representatives achieved a historic milestone by unanimously passing H.121, an act relating to enhancing consumer privacy, with a resounding vote of 139-0.

In a time where our every move, word, and heartbeat are incessantly documented by a myriad of devices, the urgency for comprehensive consumer data privacy laws has never been more critical. Vermont has a long history of prioritizing consumer privacy protections, and in the absence of federal legislation, lawmakers have acted with a duty to

protect Vermont's own.

Under the leadership of Rep. Michael Marcotte, the Vermont House Committee on Commerce & Economic Development heard a diverse range of perspectives from across stakeholder groups and sectors in order to draft a protective, but largely technology and industry-neutral proposal.

Marcotte shared, "Consumer protection is of the utmost importance in the state of Vermont. The House Commerce and Economic Development Committee continues its

Data privacy → 8

Vermont House passes modernized renewable energy standard

Last Thursday, March 21, the Vermont House of Representatives passed H.289, to modernize Vermont's renewable energy standard by a 99-39-11 vote. The bill would put Vermont on track to achieve 100% renewable electricity across all the state's utilities by 2035, which would make Vermont only the second state to meet that critical benchmark, and would significantly increase the requirements for Vermont utilities to support the deployment of new renewable energy. The bill will now head to the Senate for consideration.

If enacted, H.289 would be the first

major update to the renewable energy standard since its enactment in 2015. In terms of cutting carbon pollution, this bill will be the equivalent of taking approximately 160,000-250,000 cars off the road, for good. This bill represents the largest single move towards renewable electricity and away from fossil fueled power that Vermont has ever taken, by a wide margin.

"Vermonters have made clear over and over again that addressing the climate crisis must be a priority, and that the status quo is simply unacceptable," said Ben Edgerly Walsh, climate and energy program director

for VPIRG. "The incredibly strong vote for this bill is yet another sign that Vermont legislators have heard that message loud and clear. We deeply appreciate all the hard work Vermont representatives have done to make this bill a reality."

Peter Sterling, executive director of renewable energy Vermont, stated "Today's vote was a big victory and reflects the hard work and commitment of Speaker of the House Jill Krowinski in the fight against climate change. Without her leadership, we wouldn't have been able to bring together the

Energy Standard → 8

← Saunders:

from page 7

a background in community development, I understand that local context matters and commit to collaborating with Vermonters to advance the state's education goals. On a personal level, I am a mom of two school-aged children and will work hard to advocate for policies that prepare students for success in school and life."

For five years prior to her current role, Saunders served as the City of Fort Lauderdale's first chief education officer. In this role, she designed and led a new division to enhance educational opportunities for 180,000 residents. She expanded workforce training programs by launching the Avionics Systems Technician Program, designing a public works training-to-employment pipeline, and increasing college accessibility for historically underserved communities. To address learning loss resulting from the Covid-19 pandemic, Saunders extended afterschool and summer enrichment programs for 2,000 low-income children, resulting in improved literacy and skills development. Under her leadership, the city earned recognition for innovation in education

and workforce development from Broward County Public Schools, the state of Florida, National League of Cities, and the U.S. Department of Labor.

Previously, she was the vice president of strategy for Charter Schools USA. In this role, she oversaw enterprise-wide strategic planning, school improvement, accreditation, a \$20 million grant portfolio, and operational improvements for 84 schools across seven states, serving 70,000 students. She successfully led cross-functional initiatives that resulted in 100% school grade improvement among target schools and a 475% increase in the proportion of schools meeting enrollment targets. To scale effective planning, she worked with principals and classroom teachers to develop a school improvement platform that enabled integrated goal setting, progress monitoring and predictive analytics.

As a research fellow at Vanderbilt University, Saunders consulted on Nashville Promise Neighborhood, an education reform initiative designed to break the intergenerational cycle of poverty through a continuum of family-centered

services. Early in her career, she held nonprofit leadership roles at HospiceCare of Southeast Florida and Children's Diagnostic & Treatment Center where she expanded access to pediatric health care and wrap around services.

Saunders has conducted research on effective human service delivery, cross-sector collaboration, parent education programs, community change and social/emotional learning curriculum.

She earned her undergraduate degree from Harvard University and Master of Education from Vanderbilt University.

Saunders replaces Interim Secretary Heather Bouchey, who will help with the leadership transition and serve as deputy secretary.

"I want to thank Heather for her tremendous work leading the Agency, and for her commitment to our state, its students, educators and communities," said Governor Scott. "Her energy and passion have made her a valuable member of my Cabinet and she has been a tremendous teammate and leader"

Saunders will assume the role effective April 15.

← Harrison:

from page 7

flavored tobacco and nicotine products. It is not clear what the governor's position is on the legislation, although he has raised concern about the revenue loss expected, which may require additional taxes to replace it next year.

- A Senate Committee advanced a new tax on streaming services, such as Netflix.
- The House gave unanimous approval to a data privacy bill, H.121, which aims to protect consumers from some of the data collected on them online.
- Governor Phil Scott announced the appointment of Zoie Saunders to serve as Vermont's next education secretary. Currently, Saunders works as the chief strategy and innovation officer for Broward County Public Schools in Florida, the sixth largest school district in the country. Heather Bouchey has been serving as interim secretary since the resignation of Dan French last 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.

← King to retire:

from page 5

care, and we often hear that our clinicians and caregivers become part of their extended family. Likewise, the strength of our connections as co-workers lends itself to a feeling of family across the organization. Prioritizing time with my own family has become increasingly important, and the time is right for me to focus on enjoying my time with them, which I am very much looking forward to."

VNAHSR Board President Dan DiBattista admitted to his initial disappointment upon hearing the retirement news, but also expressed his understanding of her reasons, as well as gratitude for all King has done in her time with VNAHSR. "Sara has given her all to this agency, and the organization is better because of her," he said.

"She has worked tirelessly to strengthen VNAHSR's strategic operations which have paved the way for its growth, and she has shown unwav-

ering dedication to the entire staff, bringing employee recognition to the forefront and creating a culture firmly rooted in its values."

Founded in Rutland, Vermont, the VNAHSR has grown to include locations throughout Bennington, Franklin, and Rutland Counties. With office locations in Bennington, Dorset, Manchester, Rutland, and St. Albans, it now has over 300 trusted health professionals and caregivers committed to providing exceptional care to patients and families.

VNAHSR is a non-profit, Medicare-certified home health and hospice agency delivering a wide range of advanced medical care with compassion, dependability, and expertise to people of all ages.

King was instrumental in the agency's growth into Bennington County, and it was her ability to simultaneously streamline and strengthen operations

without sacrificing quality of care that allowed VNAHSR to begin providing services in Franklin County, despite not being geographically adjacent.

"Her contributions and accomplishments are countless, and on behalf of the entire VNAHSR board of directors, I'd like to extend my sincerest gratitude for her leadership and vision, and we wish her all the best in her next chapter," said DiBattista.

DiBattista stated that the board will embark on a search for the next CEO of VNAHSR, and noted the strength of the leadership team King has cultivated, as well as his appreciation that King will be able to help facilitate a smooth transition to her eventual successor.

King will officially step down from her role on March 21, 2025, and plans to relocate to Saratoga Springs, New York, and spend more time with her husband and family.

← Data privacy:

from page 7

tradition of being a leader in consumer protection and safeguarding data privacy with H.121. We are certain that our colleagues in the Senate will continue to follow the tradition of strong consumer protection leadership and will continue to work in partnership with other states in order to maintain a protective legislative force in the era of big data."

Consumer data privacy bills are incredibly complex and interconnected — definitions, consumer rights, business obligations, and exceptions exist in a delicate balance and even seemingly small changes in language can have cascading effects.

House Commerce and Economic Development Committee Vice Chair, Rep. Stephanie Zak Jerome added, "Data privacy is a vitally important topic and rightfully should be a federal law. In the absence of federal legislation, 14 states have passed data privacy legislation to protect consumers — Vermont is poised to be the 15th and a national model."

The Vermont Data Privacy Act champions the crucial consumer rights. It gives people the ability for individuals to access, delete, and correct the information that businesses have

about them as well as to opt out of the use of personal data for targeted advertising, data sales, and significant automated profiling decisions. It adds affirmative opt-in consent requirements around the collection and processing of sensitive personal data — including information about health status, demographics, and precise geolocation.

As the uses of big data and advanced analytics expand, where Vermonters' personal information is commodified without explicit consent, it is increasingly crucial that we establish a set of rules that balance the needs of business operation with consumer protection. Reporter of the bill, Rep. Monique Priestley stated, "By embracing legislation that consumer privacy advocates EPIC & VPIRG are touting as one of the strongest in the U.S., we have the opportunity to safeguard our personal freedoms, ensure equitable treatment in the digital landscape, and reclaim control over our digital footprints. It is crucial that we protect Vermonters in the face of unchecked technological expansion and to secure a future where data privacy is not just a privilege, but a fundamental right."

← Energy Standard:

from page 7

environmental groups, low income advocates, utilities and others who supported this bill." H.289 would:

- Double the amount of new renewables Vermont utilities are required to build in the state — in particular small and medium-sized renewables — from 10% to 20% of the electricity they deliver. This is expected to be met mostly with new solar.
- Create a new requirement for Vermont utilities to provide their customers with additional, new renewable energy of any size from anywhere in the region. This requirement is over and above the in-state requirement described above — an additional 20% by 2035 for Green Mountain Power, and an additional 10% by 2035 for Vermont's other utilities.
- Require all Vermont utilities to provide 100% renewable electricity to their customers — by 2030 for Green Mountain Power and Vermont Electric Coop, and by 2035 for other utilities that are not already at 100% renewable.
- The bill also phases out offsite or "virtual" net metering — a program that had potential to be a scalable opportunity for all Vermonters to participate in community solar but unfortunately never fully lived up to that potential — while requiring an analysis and recommendations on a "successor program" to offsite group net metering that surpasses current or future options available to Vermonters who are currently unable to install solar on their properties.



Digging out; carving in

Saturday, March 23, two feet of snow fell across the region.

Courtesy Killington Resort

Top: In the midst of the blizzard, Saturday was 1986 in Killington.

Courtesy Okemo

Middle center and right: Skiers enjoy the deep powder.

By Pat Wise

Middle left: A man shovels deep snow off his roof in Rutland.

Below: Blizzard covers the city, and its statues, in white.



GUEST EDITORIAL

Creating the college of the future

By Alex Hernandez

Editor's note: Alex Hernandez is the president of Champlain College in Burlington.

The Wall Street Journal recently reported that “roughly half of college graduates end up in jobs where their degrees aren’t needed,” raising uncomfortable questions about the value of a college education.

The report is part of a drumbeat of headlines focused on declining student enrollments, budget deficits and changing academic programs — reflecting dramatic shifts in the higher education landscape.

If you are an Ivy League university with a \$50 billion endowment, it can be business as usual, but the majority of the nation’s 3,900 higher education institutions need to evolve.

At Champlain College, we are asking: What does the college of the future look like?

If we want students to succeed in a strong first job after graduation — and realize the long-term promise of a college education — we must design institutions that give students the experiences they need to launch their careers and live meaningful lives.

The college of the future will break down the classroom walls so students can learn in the workplace, the community and around the globe.

Through deeper partnerships with employers, students can earn academic credit and a paycheck. We can turn higher education upside-down and give students career-focused experiences the moment they start college—experiences that build confidence, humility and curiosity.

For example, Champlain College recently announced a partnership with NuHarbor Security, a leading cybersecurity firm, to open a NuHarbor office on our Lakeside Campus in Burlington’s South End Innovation District. Beginning their first year, students will learn from faculty and industry professionals in the same space, take on paid internships and manage their own cybersecurity business.

This unconventional approach drives results: our cybersecurity graduates have a 97% employment rate and an average starting salary of \$70,000 in a fast-growing industry.

However, meaningful work is about more than just a paycheck. We need to set students up for long-term fulfillment and success.

The college of the future will reach across disciplines and let students combine their interests so they can be future ready.

Breakthrough technologies like artificial intelligence, digital biology and sustainable energy are reshaping the world. Students can specialize to advance these breakthroughs, but, for every specialist we educate, we need many more students who can connect the dots across fields and help us interpret and adapt to the changes these technologies bring.

At Champlain College, we imagine a team of students majoring in psychology, computer science, creative media and criminal justice working with the state of Vermont to combat the fentanyl crisis. In the future, students from different majors will share more courses and experiences to better understand the forces shaping our world. This is how students learn to collaborate, build products and

The college of the future will help students be more human in a digital world.

Future of college → 12



Easter and April Fools by Guy Parsons, PoliticalCartoons

LETTERS

For the lack of a coherent plan

Dear Editor,

Recently, a Chittenden County Superior Court judge handed down a decision siding with the state against the plaintiffs in a case brought by Vermont Legal Aid on behalf of those who are living unhoused (a.k.a. homeless) and had been evicted from motels during the middle of March.

Although I disagree with the decision by the judge, I agree with the statement made toward the end of it: Parties on all sides of this case, “could work together to design a big-picture approach to the problem rather than continuing to cobble together short-term solutions while in crisis mode.”

In fact, while thinking upon these and related matters myself, prior to the judge’s decision being handed down, this is, generally speaking, the conclusion I had reached as well.

Finding a better way to meaningfully and seriously address homelessness within the state long-term has been handled by all sides as nothing more than

Homelessness → 12

Wealthy and high-income Vermonters join call for Legislature to increase their taxes

Dear Legislators,

Editor's note: This is a public letter to the Vermont Legislature signed by 31 wealthy and high-income Vermonters urging it to support the Fair Share for Vermont proposal that would create a 3% income tax surcharge on incomes over \$500,000.

As Vermont taxpayers and community members, we recognize the urgent moment we face. We see an acute housing crisis, chronic underfunding of state services, and a need for immediate investments in our infrastructure and environmental protection. At the same time, as Vermonters who have economically prospered in our state, we believe in contributing our fair share to build a state that works for all people who live here.

We support the Fair Share for Vermont proposals to increase taxes on the wealthiest Vermont resi-

dents, and we are willing to pay additional taxes to raise revenue for fundamental government services. We recognize that through public investment, we can improve the quality of life for all people.

Vermont is defined by its community spirit. Here in

We want our state to work for all Vermonters, and we want to contribute our fair share to make it happen.

Vermont, we take care of our neighbors and form close relationships that transcend economic circumstances. Public investment, funded through tax revenue, is necessary to amplify these community efforts and fund programs that strengthen our communities.

We call on the Legislature to make fiscally responsible choices to ensure that we are addressing the needs of our residents and ensuring that our state’s revenues are

Wealth taxes → 12

Lilies are very toxic to cats

Dear Editor,

With Easter and Mother’s Day approaching veterinarians are urging cat owners to be aware that lilies, commonly added to spring bouquets, are highly poisonous to cats. These include the *Lilium* and *Heimerocallis* species, which are commonly referred to as tiger lilies, daylilies, and Asiatic lilies.

All parts of the lily plant are poisonous — the petals, leaves, stem, and even the pollen. A cat need only ingest as few as one or two leaves or groom a small amount of pollen off their fur to send them into severe kidney failure which can lead to death.

Most of the time the symptoms (vomiting, loss of appetite, lethargy, dehydration) occur within 6-12 hours and will worsen as the kidney failure develops. There is no medication to counteract the poisoning, but the sooner you can get your cat to the veterinarian to try to prevent and reverse the effects, the better.

You may believe your cat never eats plants or gets on the table to bother them.

Lilies kill cats → 13

CAPITOL QUOTES



On Friday, March 22, gunmen opened fire on the Crocus City Hall, a music venue in Krasnogorsk, Russia, as the band Picnic was about to play. At least 137 were killed and 140 were injured. The attackers were identified as members of an Islamic State group. It was one of the deadliest terrorist acts in recent Russian history. The U.S. sent warnings about potential ISIS threats to President Vladimir Putin, who mostly rejected the advice as “provocative.” He continues to suggested a possible link to Ukraine.

“The question is: Who benefited from it?.... This atrocity can be just an element in a series of attempts of those who have been at war with our country since 2014,”

Said **Vladimir Putin**, referring to the Ukrainian government according to the New York Times.

“[They appeared to be in] fairly bad shape physically...They had bruises on their faces that were visible, and also one of the men was semiconscious. He was wheeled into the courthouse with his doctor,”

said Al Jazeera's **Dorsa Jabari**, reporting from Moscow, referring to the four suspects who appeared in court.

“We gave them that private warning consistent with our duty to warn ... when we gather intelligence of terrorist attacks or potential terrorist attacks...It was because of that warning that we passed on to the Russian government that we issued a security warning on March 7, where we again said to U.S. citizens that we had information about a planned terrorist attack in Moscow... potentially targeting large gatherings including concerts.”

Said **Matthew Miller**, U.S. State Department spokesperson, according to CNN.

COMMENTARIES

U.S. Republicans slammed for craven, hateful anti-trans bills

By U.S. Rep. Becca Balint

Editor's note: On March 21, Rep. Becca Balint (VT-AL) called out hateful anti-trans bills in the House Judiciary Committee. Her remarks below:

“So here we are, spending time, one again, using our valuable time to pick on a class of people in this country. I believe I'm the only person on this committee who represents the LGBTQ community. Though, I always say that we know of. And I have to tell you, I've been absolutely stunned by the amount of time and energy that we have spent in this Congress talking about trans kids, their parents, gay Americans, that somehow my community is the source of all that is wrong in this country. And I want to associate myself with remarks of Ms. Jackson Lee from Texas and Ms. Jayapal from Washington.

“This is about basic humanity. This is about dignity. And it is no secret, if you are paying attention, that my colleagues on the other side of the aisle have decided that

this congressional term would be about bringing up the issue of trans kids and their families and gay Americans relentlessly. Amendments and bills and riders constantly, as if we have nothing better to do than

“As if we have nothing better to do than to demonize our fellow citizens. Because that's what we're talking about here. It's about constantly trying to get Americans to hate one another. It is about dehumanizing children,” said Balint.

to demonize our fellow citizens. Because that's what we're talking about here. It's about constantly trying to get Americans to hate one another. It is about dehumanizing children. Children.

“And as a former teacher, I can tell you it is hard enough to be an adolescent without getting all of these messages from our elected officials that somehow, they are not worthy. They are not loved. And some of the

Spreading hate → 13

Governor Scott is forcing people into homelessness

By James Lyall,

Editor's note: James Lyall is the executive director of ACLU of Vermont.

The people of Vermont want the best for our neighbors and our communities. Increasingly, those values are being undermined by the senseless actions of our governor.

Last week, the Scott administration forcibly unsheltered roughly 500 Vermonters who had been living in emergency motel housing—despite the Legislature's approval of a bill on March 1 that would have kept many of these people housed.

On March 15, hundreds of people were forced out of their housing while scrambling to complete paperwork attesting to their eligibility to stay. Had the process not been so rushed, Scott's rush to unhouse → 13

Truths to offset false claims in highly publicized national Real Estate lawsuit

By Budge Huskey

Editor's note: Budge Huskey is the president and CEO of Premier Sotheby's International Realty.

Last week the National Association of Realtors announced it had entered into a settlement agreement with the class actions plaintiffs in what is known as the Sitzer Burnett case, pending final approval by the court.

The basis of the suit is rooted in the most common way in which residential real estate is transacted in the country, which is sellers hiring an agent to represent their interest for a professional fee, and then offering compensation to an agent who

brings the buyer as an inducement to get their home sold.

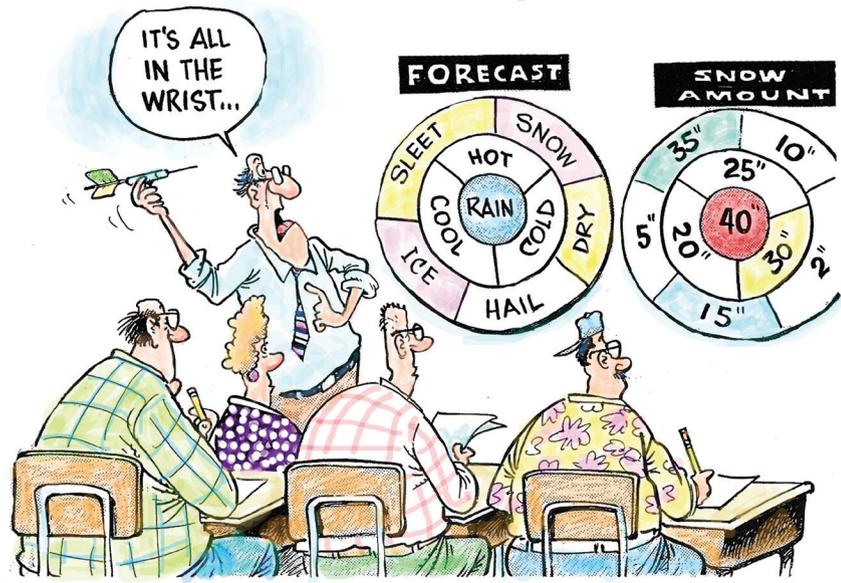
Since the settlement announcement, there have been numerous articles in the media on what this means for buyers and sellers. Regrettably, most reflect a profound lack of understanding of the real estate business as well as mistaken claims. I'd like to share a more accurate perspective.

- The settlement forces real estate brokers to reduce their compensation. False.

The settlement in no way establishes any Real Estate → 13

CARTOON

Refresher course for meteorologists...



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Weather forecast refresher by Dave Granlund, PoliticalCartoons

2024
COLUMBIA MISSOURIAN
POLITICALCARTOONS
2/22

SEE, THAT'S THE ABSOLUTE IMMUNITY I'M TALKING ABOUT!



Absolute Immunity by John Darkow, Columbia Missourian



Social Media Challenge by Gary McCoy, Shiloh, IL

← Wealth taxes:
from page 10

strong and sustainable. And we think it's important for Vermonters — especially our state legislators — to know that many of the people who will pay these taxes support them.

People like us value our state's public investments and quality of life. We love living in Vermont and appreciate the public good that taxes provide.

We support the Fair Share for Vermont proposal that would create a 3% income tax surcharge on incomes over \$500,000. We also support conversations in the Legislature to design a proposal for a modest tax on unrealized gains for taxpayers with over \$10 million in assets. We

understand the current bill to tax unrealized gains will be refined to improve scope and practicality, and as the Legislature works on these improvements, we support the effort to find ways to levy taxes on substantial pools of untaxed wealth.

These proposals would Here in Vermont, we take care of our neighbors and form close relationships that transcend economic circumstances.

raise significant revenue from those most able to pay, which would be invested back into our state to address pressing needs and build strong communities.

We want our state to work for all Vermonters, and

we want to contribute our fair share to make it happen.

Signed,
Ben Cohen, Duane Peterson, Jeff Shumlin, Evie Lovett, Hannah Dreissigacker, Jerry Greenfield, Susanna Penfield, Renee Reiner, Elsa Engstrom, David Blittersdorf, Maya Faulstich-Hon, Jo Lum, Alan Newman, Olivia Sommers, Martha Rabinowitz, Gwendolyn Talbot, Ron Miller, Barbarina Heyerdahl, John Wyman, Eliza Hale, Annie Penfield, Don Horenstein, Izzy Snyder, Sylvia Penfield, Rae Heller, Peter Wyman, Liana Moskowitz, Harley Meyer, Adeline Herbert, Gwendolyn Forbes and Brita Fisher.

← Homelessness:
from page 10

a political football. Everyone is looking to someone else to figure it out, come up with a plan and act first.

What both the administration and the Legislature have been doing up to now has been rather haphazard, lacking any actual, coherent, real, significant and workable action plan to

move forward with. Given that this seemingly formidable task could take a while to accomplish, one might ask what is one to do in the meantime?

One solution that comes to mind might be to have high-level representatives from each party involved be locked within a room together and not be allowed to

leave until they have a workable plan to put in place.

They could use the Agency of Natural Resources (ANR) annex building located in Berlin and have access to Porta-Potties, as provided to those who stayed at the temporary regional homeless shelter hosted there.

Morgan W. Brown, Montpelier

← Future of college:
from page 10

services and tackle social challenges. Imagine an entrepreneurship student interning for a sustainable food startup, combining their interests in biology and marketing to help the company launch its product. In the future, students will have more flexibility to customize their education to pursue emerging opportunities.

The college of the future will help students be more human in a digital world.

Being future ready is not simply about knowledge and technical skills. As technology does more and more, it is our humanity that sets us apart. What values guide our choices and actions? How do we form enduring relationships? How do we communicate to build trust and inspire action? Higher education has always been good at exploring questions that encourage students to grow as human beings.

Colleges will build on students' human strengths, cultivating mindsets and behaviors that lead to connection, creativity,

inspiration and achievement. In the end, employers can teach technical skills, which constantly change. What they tell us they value most are employees with the personal and professional competencies to help diverse groups of people thrive — in the workplace, at home, and in the community.

Higher education is at a crossroads. Higher education is at a crossroads. Changing demographics, economics and technology are forcing colleges to evolve.

Higher education is at a crossroads. Changing demographics, economics and technology are forcing colleges to evolve. These same factors are impacting Vermont in profound ways.

At Champlain College, we are building the college of the future so students are ready to launch their lives. We are building the college of the future because Vermont needs innovative, dynamic education institutions acting as engines of opportunity. It is time to transform.

← Lilies kill cats:

from page 10

However, there is always a first time and you cannot control the pollen from the lily dropping down onto the floor or your cat's fur. Curious young cats, in particular, are prone to testing new plants by chewing or sniffing them. It is heartbreaking to see cats develop kidney failure from

something that could have been prevented.

Please check for lilies and other poisonous flowers in any bouquets before you bring them into the house. You can find a full list of plants that are toxic to cats and other animals online by typing in the search bar "Toxic and Non-Toxic

Plants ASPCA." If your cat has come into contact with a lily — which can include licking, eating, or brushing up against the pollen — call your veterinarian or the Pet Poison Hotline (1-855-764-7661) immediately.

M. Kathleen Shaw DVM, Vermont Veterinary Medical Association

← Spreading hate:

from page 11

rhetoric that I hear right now in this body is about making them less than human. And all they want to do is live their lives, attend school, have friends, participate in sports, know that their government is not using every opportunity to fan the flames of fear and hatred.

"Now, I understand that there are some people in this room and in this body as a whole that may actually believe the rhetoric, may actually believe that you are doing good. But I'm telling you, it has a devastating effect on children, on teens and their parents.

"In this committee, we had a hearing on trans kids generally, and the danger, essentially, they were to the American way of life. And right there in that seat, we had a conservative Republican woman who came to talk about her experience trying to raise her trans kid and what it felt like for her to sit in this body and have members of her own

party try to treat her as if she were somehow doing damage to her child by simply trying to hold her for all that she was. I don't believe that you think you're doing real damage, but I'm telling you, you are.

"We had a conservative Republican woman who came to talk about her experience trying to raise her trans kid and what it felt like for her to sit in this body and have members of her own party try to treat her as if she were somehow doing damage to her child by simply trying to hold her for all that she was," said Balint.

"This is not how we should be spending our time. We should be spending our time uplifting Americans, alleviating suffering, letting Americans know that we believe in them and we support them and not this. This fear mongering, this constant fear mongering in this Congress. People who just want to live their lives and the families who love them."

← Scott's rush to unhouse:

from page 11

needlessly most of these folks—many with disabilities—would not have been displaced at all, because the Legislature had intentionally expanded who could be served by the General Assistance Housing program.

Make no mistake: This was a calculated, cynical decision by Governor Scott that put many of our most vulnerable neighbors in harm's way. Despite enacting a mass eviction, the Scott administration claimed it was actually helping unhoused people through the "unprecedented step" of providing four, short-term overnight group shelters for evictees.

But these barren "shelters" were haphazardly appointed, remotely located, and in one case lacked indoor bathroom facilities. Unsurprisingly, they were barely used; at one location, not a single person showed up.

VT Digger reported that the state spent approximately \$50,000 per night to operate four of these underused facilities, whereas allowing people to remain in the motels, where they had stable housing, would have cost significantly less: roughly \$36,000 per night for all the 458 households expected to lose their vouchers last Friday.

Beyond being an affront to human dignity,

and a callous response to the needs of unhoused people in our community, the Scott administration's actions cost Vermont more money—epitomizing the inefficiency and ineptitude of the administration's response to homelessness in Vermont.

When questioned at a press conference, the governor said merely, "We didn't have to do anything."

When it comes to helping our most vulnerable neighbors, most Vermonters would disagree.

It should never have come to this—a manufactured crisis is a policy choice by Governor Scott, not an inevitability. It directly undermines the best interests of our communities and the Legislature's work to expand access to housing and keep people sheltered. It also betrays our shared values of compassionate, responsive government and strong, supportive communities.

The people of Vermont broadly agree we need humane, long-term solutions to the state's housing crisis—and continued funding for housing in the meantime. They should urge the governor (802-828-3333) to reverse course, to keeping our neighbors sheltered.

← Real Estate:

from page 11

standard or limitation on Realtors for what they may charge, nor the services they elect to deliver. Realtor fees have always been fully negotiable and there has never been any collective bargaining or collusion. Realtors may cooperate on transactions toward a common goal yet are fiercely independent and highly competitive with one another. In every market you will find real estate representation at almost every price, and just as many different levels of service and competency. I would argue there is more variation in real estate pricing than in almost any other product or service one will ever purchase. Now there are comparisons to what fees are in the U.S. vs. some other countries — in many countries real estate professionals are employees with salaries, benefits and bonuses. Whereas the vast majority in the U.S. are 100% paid through commissions.

- The settlement will, for the first time, allow sellers to no longer pay compensation for an agent bringing the buyer. False.

There has never been any obligation for a seller to pay buyer agent compensation at any time, yet it has been a historical practice that's worked exceedingly well since the advent of modern residential real estate. This merely prohibits any reference of buyer compensation from the seller on Association-owned MLS systems. The reality is that today, well before the intended settlement date of this coming July, any listing could be displayed on the MLS whether it offered buyer agent compensation or not.

- The settlement will prohibit sellers from paying a commission to a buyer's agent. False.

The practice of whether to pay a buyer's agent is totally a seller's decision and nothing changes in terms of options. Many of us would suggest that the most important outcome is the successful sale of the property on the seller's terms, and having the greatest incentive to buyers' agents to show and sell the home the best way to achieve their goals.

- The settlement will now relieve sellers of any financial burden of buyer's agent fees. False.

Although sellers can elect not to pay any buyer agent compensation, that doesn't mean they will avoid the economics. Buyers may easily write into any offer a contingency requiring that the seller cover the cost, or may request other concessions such as closing cost assistance in the dollar amount they are paying their representative.

- The settlement ultimately reduces the total cost of transaction services as sellers will no longer pay buyer's agent compensation. False.

Should sellers now choose to compensate only the listing agent, it merely means that buyers, rather than sellers, will now have to pay for their own representation if they don't require the seller to pay as a contingency of the contract. Realtor services are not free, nor should they be. Just because two parties may now share the cost of services rather than one doesn't mean the total cost of the transaction has been lowered.

- The settlement will serve to meaningfully lower real estate prices and make homeownership affordable again. False.

General values in real estate are determined by the fundamentals of supply and demand, not Realtors. Yes, the commission represents an expense of a transaction, yet there are also title fees, closing fees, mortgage related expenses, property taxes, association fees, etc. Should real estate commissions theoretically be reduced by 1% as a result of compression, that \$500,000 home will now only cost \$495,000. Hardly the difference as to whether someone may afford the home or not. The real reason home ownership is increasingly less affordable is that homes in our market have values have risen dramatically in value in recent years.

- The settlement is a fantastic win for buyers who will now be able to negotiate the fee for representation. Highly questionable.

For those who have purchased one or more homes over the years, it is more than likely you were quite happy to have the seller compensate your agent so you didn't have to. For buyers who had to scrape up enough money for the down payment and closing expenses, having the commission paid by seller and incorporated into the price of the home allowed the buyer to finance the amount over time rather than coming up with thousands of additional dollars at closing. The reality is that most mortgages are ultimately sold to Fannie and Freddie, and both have no provisions for commissions to be financed. In fact, the VA loan program expressly prohibits the borrower from paying any form of commission in a real estate transaction. So just how is a veteran who has honorably served now better off without representation? I don't think so.

- The settlement will result in significant restitution to real estate consumers who were "harmed" over recent years in their transaction by Realtors. False.

The settlement figure is huge, yet when one divides the amount by the number of potentially qualifying consumers it works out to about \$10 per person. The only people truly profiting are the class action attorneys who have submitted a request to the court for over \$80 million in legal fees.

As a real estate professional for over 40 years, I have worked with thousands of Realtors who represent the public in what is most likely their largest investment. What I have consistently witnessed is the incredibly hard work, countless situations where the agent has gone above and beyond to do things and pay for things he or she shouldn't, manage complex transactions and calm emotions, build relationships based on trust and care, help buyers realize their dream and sellers to maximize their return and turn the page to the next chapter, and yes, sometimes serve as housekeepers, caretakers, repairmen, etc. with their sellers and buyers always their primary concern. Every day I am proud to work with them, and the public is better off because of them.

The brokerage community has always adapted when necessary to best represent buyers and sellers whenever there is a shift in the environment, and no doubt it will do so again. In the interim, parsing between truth and fiction should be an expectation for all.



KIDS SKI FREE AT PICO.



Winter 2024/25 Season Passes are now on sale! Choose from the Pico K.A.Pass, which includes summer access at Killington Resort, or the Pico winter only pass, and you'll receive a **free season pass for a child ages 12 and under with each adult pass purchased.** All 2024/25 Pico Season Passes come loaded with perks and discounts for the passholder and their friends and family.

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



WEDNESDAY

3/27

'Regenerating Life': documentary

Virtual. Ends Friday, March 29. Pentangle Arts, Woodstock. John Feldman delves deeper into the climate crisis in search of its ecological origins. Run time: 2 hours, 17 minutes. Sustainable Woodstock Film Series. To register: sustainablewoodstock.eventive.org/schedule/657c6755b2139400c930fa13

Senior Bone Builders

10 a.m. Wednesdays. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Weights are provided. sherburnelibrary.org or 802-422-9765

Killington Active Seniors Lunch

11:30 a.m. Wednesdays. Lookout Tavern, 2910 Killington Road, Killington. \$5 donation towards the meal, tip is covered by local donors. For more info, call 908-783-1050.

Castleton Community Center, 2108 Main St.,**Castleton**

1:30 p.m. Great Courses curriculum. castletoncsi.org or 802-468-3093

Book Club

1:30 p.m. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. sherburnelibrary.org or 802-422-9765

Cribbage for Adults

3-5 p.m. Wednesdays. Hartland Public Library, 153 Route 5, Hartland. Free. hartlandlibraryvt.org/calendar/ or 802-436-2473

Bone Builders

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

Graphic Novel Book Club for Kids

3-4 p.m. Norman Williams Public Library 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Learn about new graphic novels, talk about your favorites, and maybe create your own. normanwilliams.org, 802-457-2295

Zentangle Workshop

4-5 p.m. Norman Williams Public Library 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Jenny Dembinski offers Zentangle workshops for beginners and experienced Zentangers, alike. Starter kits are available (\$5 suggested fee). Space is limited. Sign up at programs@NormanWilliams.org.

Intro to Mosaics: Birdhouses, Day 2

5 p.m. 2nd of 3 sessions. The Glass Shop, The MINT, 112 Quality Ln., Rutland. Member, \$100; nonmember, \$125. Preparing the birdhouse substrate, creating the design, selecting tesserae and adhesive. Suitable for all ages; children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. rutlandmint.org

JAM Equipment Orientation

5:30-6:15 p.m. Recurring. Junction Arts & Media, 5 S. Main St., White River Junction. Free. This is a prerequisite to borrowing any form of production equipment. RSVP one week ahead to uvjam.org/event/jam-equipment-orientation/2024-03-20/

For a list of
weekend **Easter**
Egg Hunts,
see page
18

**'The Play That Goes Wrong'**

7:30 p.m. Ends April 14. Northern Stage, Barrette Center for the Arts, 74 Gates St., White River Junction. Sliding scale tix. A play within a play, this Olivier Award-winning comedy rolls out every theater troupe's nightmare. Directed by Peter Hackett. For performance dates and prices, go to northernstage.org/the-play-that-goes-wrong/. For tix, northernstage.my.salesforce-sites.com/ticket/#/events/a0S5d00000bekADEAY or call 802-296-7000.

THURSDAY

3/28

Bone Builders

9 a.m. Thursdays. Gilbert Hart Library, 14 S. Main St., Wallingford.

Advanced Line Dance

9:30-10:30 a.m. Thursdays. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. rutlandrec.com/godnick or 802-773-1853

Senior Bone Builders

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

Survivors' Support Group

10 a.m.-Noon. Thursdays. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Free. Flyers available at the Godnick Center or call 802-773-3232. rutlandrec.com/godnick or 802-773-1853

Tai Chi Falls Prevention

10:30 a.m. Castleton Community Center, 2108 Main St., Castleton.

Art at the Chaffee: Artery

10:30 a.m.-Noon. Thursdays. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Fee: \$10 if you bring your own supplies, up to \$20 if supplies provided. Painting in all mediums welcome. No set topic or instructor. Preregister, at chaffeeartcenter.square.site/

Community Lunch

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Thursdays. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Over 60, suggested donation is \$3.50; under 59, \$6 fee. Extra donations welcomed. Made possible by Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging and Meals on Wheels. Make new friends, connect with pals. If interested, call 802-773-1853 and leave a message with your name and phone number, the Monday before. rutlandrec.com/godnick

Ukulele Group

Noon-1 p.m. Thursdays. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. Ages 12+. Pre-register by the Wednesday before at 802-775-0356 or at chaffeeartcenter.square.site

National Audubon Society Photograph Contest**Exhibit**

Noon-6 p.m. Weekly, Thursday-Friday-Saturday. Castleton Bank Gallery, 104 Merchants Row, Rutland. Free. Large-format images of the 2022 contest winners selected from over 12,000 photographs and videos. Ends April 27, 2024.

Grantseeker Workshop

1-3 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. How to apply for a grant with the Vermont Council on the Arts. Program managers will be present to answer questions about eligibility and the application process. 802-773-1860

Play Bridge!

2-4 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.

3-4 p.m. Thursdays. Hartland Library, 153 Route 5, Hartland. Free. Join us for S.T.E.A.M. (Science, Technology, Engineering, Art, and Math) craft activities. Something different every week! kids@hartlandlibraryvt.org or 802-436-2473

Yoga with Kellie

3:45-4:45 p.m. Thursdays. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. 802-773-1860

Spirituality in Recovery

4 p.m. Live + virtual. Rutland Jewish Center, 96 Grove St., Rutland. google.com/mail/u/0/?pli=1#label/3.27.24/FMfcgzGxSRGfcSHzkscryzWvGILCmZC or 802-773-3455

Teen Book Club

5 p.m. Castleton Free Library, 638 Main St., Castleton. castletonfreelibrary@gmail.com or 802-468-5574

Ballroom Dance with Patti Panebianco

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

Rumney Music Session

5:30-9 p.m. Thursdays. Rumney Barn, Fable Fermentory, 1525 Royalton Turnpike, Barnard. Free. Jeremiah McLane. Firepit, woodfired pizza, soup, wine, beer, cider. info@fablefarmfermentory.com or call 802-234-5288

Open Mic Night

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

Maunder Thursday Tenebrae: Grace Congregational UCC

7 p.m. Grace Church, 8 Court St., Rutland. Free. gracechurchvt.org

Beginner Standup Comedy Showcase

7 p.m. Grange Theatre, ArtisTree, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Free. Students of Vicky Ferentinos will perform brief sets. General admission seating. artistreevt.org/artistree-events or 802-457-3500

FRIDAY

3/29

Bone Builders

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

JAM Equipment Orientation

Noon-12:45 p.m. Next date: April 3. Junction Arts & Media, 5 S. Main St., White River Junction. This is a prerequisite to borrowing any form of production equipment. RSVP with one week advance request to uvjam.org/event/jam-equipment-orientation/2024-03-20/

Holy Week at Mission Farm: Good Friday

Good Friday Service 12 p.m. Church of our Saviour - Episcopal, 316 Mission Farm Road, Killington. missionfarmvt.org

Lego Hangout

3:30-4:30 p.m. Fletcher Memorial Library, 88 Main St., Ludlow. Free. K and up. 802-228-8921

Line Dance

3:30-7:30 p.m. Fridays. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Free. rutlandrec.com/godnick

MSM: Friday Night Piano

5-10 p.m. Weekly. Main Street Museum, 58 Bridge St., White River Junction. Free. Snacks & good company around the firepit to the music produced by piano rolls from the 1900s through the present — and from ABBA to Led Zeppelin. mainstreetmuseum.org or 802-356-2776

That's Amore! Pizza & Calzone Cooking Party

6:30-9:30 p.m. Odyssey Events, 276 Labor Road, Bridgewater Hill, Bridgewater Corners. \$91.81 includes surcharge before March 29. International award-winning Chef Ted Fondulas will lead the class in all the steps, amid the stunning mountain views above the Ottauquechee River. Recipes included, gluten-free by advance request. BYOB and eat what you make! Learn about the Fondulas' fascinating career. Other classes available. For the complete schedule of future classes, photos and tix, go to eventbrite.com/cc/odyssey-events-cooking-classes-163609

Comedian Josh Blue at the Paramount Theatre

7:30 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$35 plus surcharge. Josh Blue has risen through the ranks to become a well-established headliner at venues throughout the world. paramountvt.org

Stone Valley Arts Literary Open Mic

7 p.m. Withy Hall, "The Buttery," Green Mountain School Campus, Poultney. Free.

SATURDAY

3/30

Great Easter Egg Hunt

10 a.m.-Noon. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Easter-themed arts and crafts, decorating baskets, and then participate in an Easter egg hunt around the elementary school grounds. Plan to attend? Register at killingtonvt.myrec.com/info/activities/program_details.aspx?ProgramID=29432#activities or call the Killington Rec Dept. at 422-3241 x 4.

Easter Egg Hunt at Sugar & Spice

10 a.m. Sugar & Spice, Rt.4, Mendon. Kids and families join us for our annual Easter egg hunt. Free to all children. Outdoors on the grounds of the restaurant.

'Love Your Peaks'

8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Killington Resort. Runs, silent auction, awards, raffles, live music, all to benefit breast cancer prevention. Various times, activities and venues organized by Boarding for Breast Cancer (B4BC), a nationwide charity focused on ski resorts. To view the schedule and register, go to killington.com/things-to-do/events/events-calendar/love-your-peaks.

Lego Club

10-11 a.m. Saturdays. Gilbert Hart Library, 14 S. Main St., Wallingford. 802-446-2685

Hooked on Owls

10 a.m.-1 p.m. Vermont Institute of Natural Science, Nature's Way, Quechee. Learn rughooking with fiber artist Sandra Grant. Members \$75, general public \$80. \$25 materials fee, frame extra. BYO scissors and a basket. Adults 17+ only, no experience necessary. The owl pattern is provided. info@vinsweb.org or 802-359-9000

Jeanette Fournier: Exhibit of Watercolors

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Daily to April 30. Vermont Institute of Natural Science, Nature's Way, Quechee. Portraits of birds and wildlife meticulously illustrated as we would see them in nature. info@vinsweb.org or 802-359-9000

The Vermont Winter Farmers' Market

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Saturdays. 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

Rutland Railway Museum & Model Club

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

Art at the Chaffee: Drop 'N' Paint

Noon-2 p.m. Saturdays. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$25 per person, instructor help optional for a fee. All ages. Supplies and images to paint are provided. Must pre-register by Friday noon at: chaffeeartcenter.square.site/ or 802-775-0356

'Dungeons and Dragons' for Tweens

Noon-4 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. Ages 10 to 13. All are welcome, no registration required. rutlandfree.org/calendar-events/ or call 802-773-1860

Ace Frehley of KISS

7 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St. Rutland. \$49. Mark your calendars because Ace Frehley is coming to Rutland to light up the city with an epic night of classic rock and roll. paramountvt.org

Mass of the Easter Vigil: Christ the King

7:30 p.m. Christ the King Church, 66 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. Holy Saturday

Folk Song Evening with Jennifer Hart

7 p.m. Live only. Rutland Jewish Center, 96 Grove St., Rutland. "This Land is Your Land," "Annie's Song," "Leaving on a Jet Plane," and "Puff the Magic Dragon," among others. Sweets, liquers, etc. will be served in our "bistro." All are welcome to join in or simply sit back and listen! 802-773-3455

SUNDAY
3/31
EASTER

Easter Brunch at Mountain Top

Mountain Top Inn, 195 Mountain Top Road, Chittenden. Buffet menu — \$48/adult - \$21/child. Reservations are required. Brunch is held in the Event Barn with sweeping views of the Green Mountains. mountaintopin.com

Sunrise Service

5:30 a.m. The K-1 Express Gondola, Killington Resort will load from approximately 5:30-6:15 a.m. with the Easter Sunrise Service set to begin at 6:30 a.m. at the Killington Peak Lodge. Immediately afterwards, there will be a community breakfast sponsored by Killington Resort. killington.com

Easter Sunrise Gathering

6:30 a.m. Ashcroft-Billings Farm, 731 Creek Road, Rutland Town. Free. 10 a.m. Easter Celebration with Festival Brass Timpani and Handbells. Form detailed info, visit: gracechurchvt.org

Easter Service: Christ the King

7:30 a.m., 9 a.m., 11 a.m. Christ the King Church, 66 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. Easter Sunday worship services.

Killington Resort Easter Egg Hunt

8:30 a.m. Ages 5-14. K-1 Lodge, Killington Resort. Free, no registration needed. 9:30 a.m. Ages 4 & under. killington.com

Easter Service: Killington

Sherburne United Church of Christ
9 a.m. Little White Church, 4173 US-4, Killington. Free. Join us for Easter Sunday worship. 802-422-9440.

Holy Week at Mission Farm: Easter Sunday

9 a.m. Mission Farm – Easter with Nick Bredice
9:30 a.m. Church of our Saviour - Episcopal, 316 Mission Farm Road, Killington. Free. missionfarmVT.org

Bread and Puppet Theatre: 'The Hope

Principle' Show
6-7 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$20 + surcharges. The world-famous mix of street theater and protest art out of Greensboro, Vermont, makes Rutland its first stop on its month-long Spring tour. Thought-provoking themes are expressed by giant figures and awe-inspiring props. Presented in partnership with Pittsford Village Farm. General admission seating, first come, first served. Please call the box office at 802-775-0903 or email boxoffice@paramountvt.org for ADA or accessible seating.

MONDAY
APRIL/01
APRIL FOOLS

Firing season opens

10 a.m. Open weekly, Thursday-Sunday until Dec. 14. Hammond Cove Shooting Range, Ferry Road, Hartland. Free. 6-port 100-yard rifle range and a pistol bench. Range rules and complete information at vtfishandwildlife.com/hunt/shooting-ranges/hammond-cove-shooting-range

Senior Bone Builders

10 a.m. Mondays. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Weights are provided. sherburnelibrary.org or 802-422-9765

Community Lunch

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Mondays. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Over 60, \$3.50; under 59, \$6. Donations welcome. In partnership with Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging and Meals on Wheels, the Godnick Center hosts congregational meals. Make new friends, connect with pals. Call 773-1853. and leave a message with your name and phone number, the Thursday before. See rutlandrec.com/godnick for the menu.

Monday Movie

1 p.m. The Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Contact the library for the title. sherburnelibrary.org/movie-monday/ 802 422-9765

Poetry Group

4-5:30 p.m. Mondays. Norman Williams Public Library 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Looking for feedback on your poems? You are invited to join the Poetry Group at NWPL for sharing and critique. normanwilliams.org, 802-457-2295

TUESDAY
APRIL/02

Bone Builders

9 a.m. Tuesdays. Gilbert Hart Library, 14 S. Main St., Wallingford. 802-446-2685

Line Dance for Beginners

9-10:30 a.m. Tuesdays. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Line dance basics taught by Sharon McKee. No partner or experience needed. Call 802-773-1853 for cost and to sign up. rutlandrec.com/godnick



Bridge Club

Noon-4:30 p.m. Tuesdays. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Free. rutlandrec.com/godnick

Blood Drive to Honor Gary Salmon

Noon-5 p.m. Grace Congregational UCC, 8 Court St., Rutland. The second annual blood drive in honor of Gary Salmon, who passed away on New Year's Day, 2023. Grace Congregational UCC invites the people of his many communities and others to celebrate Gary's life of dedication and giving. To make an appointment, please visit RedCrossBlood.org and enter IMOGARY or call 1-800-RED CROSS at 800-733-2767.

Bridge Club

2-4 p.m. Tuesdays. Hartland Public Library, 150 US-5, Hartland. Free. Bridge with Toni and Edith. Players of all levels are welcome. Want to learn how to play? Contact Toni at 802-436-2943 or email tonidave@vermontel.net.

Chess Club

4-6 p.m. Tuesdays. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Free. Whether you have been playing for years or are new. If possible, bring your own chess set some sets will be available. Contact club organizer Gregory Weller at gawchess802@gmail.com.

Play Chess & Backgammon!

5-7 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 or 802-457-2295

Swing Dance Class

6:30-8 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. 802-773-1860

Ballroom Dance for Adults with Patti Panebianco

Tuesdays through June. Wallingford Town Hall, School St., Wallingford. 6 p.m. Tango for adults
7 p.m. Salsa for adults
New students, 1st class is free. Individual classes or back-to-back. Regular tuition varies by number of classes attended, so check out wallingfordvt.com/community-events/ or contact Patti Panebianco at 516-909-1686 or email pattipdance@gmail.com

Need paper?

- Fire starter
- Base for a new litter of puppies
- Arts & Crafts

The Mountain Times is happy to share! Call 802-422-2399 and we'll set aside extras for you!



Courtesy Killington Resort

There are over a dozen local Easter egg hunts throughout the weekend. At Killington Resort, the Easter Bunny made a surprise early appearance; perhaps he'll be back for Sunday's events?

Egg-citing Easter egg hunts and festivities abound, hop into spring with fun for all ages

SATURDAY 3/30

9 a.m. Roadside Chapel: Easter 'Eggsperience': egg hunt and breakfast

RUTLAND — The Roadside Chapel, 1680 Town Line Road, Rutland will host a breakfast, and an “egg-citing” Easter egg hunt with prizes and lots of fun. Pre-register for a chance to win the grand prize. Festivities start at 9 a.m. For more info visit: roadsidechapel.org

10 a.m. Sugar & Spice Easter egg hunt

MENDON — Kids & Families: Join us at Sugar & Spice's annual Easter egg hunt on Rt. 4 Mendon. For more information, visit vtsugarandspice.com.

10 a.m. Ira Baptist Church Easter egg hunt

IRA — The Ira Baptist Church will host an egg hunt for Easter on Saturday, March 30 on 485 Old Town Farm Road, West Rutland. Search for eggs - snow or not. Children up to grade 6 are welcome to participate. For more information, visit irabaptistchurch.com.

10 a.m. Cairo Shriners annual Easter trunk hop

RUTLAND — On Saturday, March 30, The Cairo Shriners, 51 Washington St., Rutland, will host an Easter egg trunk hop from 10 a.m. until noon. This year we will be doing the easter egg hunt a little differently. It will be kind of like a trunk or treat. Enjoy a photo op with a life size Easter egg or get a photo with the Easter Bunny! For more information, visit cairoshriners.org.

10:30 a.m. Sherburne Memorial Library

KILLINGTON — Attendees can expect a vibrant egg hunt, held at Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington, where colorful eggs will be hidden throughout the library grounds, waiting to be discovered by eager egg hunters. With eggs hidden in various nooks and crannies, participants will have an egg-cellent time searching high and low for these sweet-filled treasures.

The youngest egg-hunters will kick-off the search party at 10:30 a.m., with the older hunters following a few minutes behind.

The egg hunt is planned to take place outside the library. In the event of inclement weather, the event will take place within the library. A decision will be made and communicated by the afternoon of March 29.

Participants are encouraged to bring their own Easter baskets to collect eggs during the hunt.

Admission is free, although participants are encouraged to pre-register by March 29 for planning purposes. Candy donations are being accepted up until March 29 to help fill the eggs. Donations can be dropped off at the recreation offices located at 2706 River Road between 9 a.m. and 3 p.m. Monday through Friday.

In addition to the egg hunt the library will host a craft space for participants of all ages. This craft space will be available starting at 10 a.m. and will continue after the egg hunt until 12 p.m.

For more information and to pre-register, visit: Killingtonrec.com, or contact the Killington Parks and Recreation department at (802) 422-3241 x4.

11 a.m. The Great Eggscape: RUTLAND — This exciting egg hunt will be held in the fields directly behind the Rutland Intermediate School. Multiple community partners are joining together to throw The Great Eggscape.

There will be thousands of eggs for toddlers to teens to hunt, amazing prizes, a picnic lunch, games, DJ Brett and so much more.

SUNDAY 3/31

8:30 a.m. Killington Resort Easter egg hunt

KILLINGTON — Starting at 8:30 a.m., Killington Resort will hold an Easter egg hunt (ages 14 & under) at the new K-1 Lodge. At 9:30 a.m., a toddler-friendly (ages 4 & under) easter egg Hunt will also take place at the Roaring Brook Umbrella Bar (near K-1 Lodge).

Watch the kids as they search for treats left behind by our local Easter Bunny. Some of the eggs will be filled with more than candy—lucky egg hunters could find a youth season pass to Killington Resort or Pico Mountain. The Egg Hunt does not require a ticket for entry. **9 a.m. Castleton egg hunt and fireman's breakfast**

CASTLETON — The firemen's breakfast follows at 9 a.m. The events will be held together at the Castleton American Legion, 378 Route 4a, Castleton.



Courtesy Killington Resort

[MUSIC Scene]

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

WED 3/27

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Daniel Brown

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

6 p.m. Rivershed – James Joel

7 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub - Tee Boneicus Jones

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

LONDONDERRY

6 p.m. New American Grill – Jim Yeager

LUDLOW

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

QUECHEE

6 p.m. Public House Pub – Chris Pallutto

RUTLAND

8 p.m. Center Street Alley – Full PA/Backline Open Mic hosted by Josh LaFave

THURS 3/28

BARNARD

5:30 Fable Farm – Rumney Barn Sessions with Jeremiah McClane & Eric Boodman

BRANDON

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

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto

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

6 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Duane Carleton

6 p.m. Rivershed – Chris Pallutto

6 p.m. The Foundry – Liz Reedy

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

LONDONDERRY

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

LUDLOW

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

QUECHEE

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

RUTLAND

8 p.m. Angler Pub – A Sound Space Open Mic hosted by Caber Wilson

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

SOUTH POMFRET

7 p.m. Artistree – Open Mic Night

7 p.m. Grange Theatre - Beginner Stand Up Comedy Showcase hosted by Vicki Ferentinos

FRI 3/29

KILLINGTON

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

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Nick Bredice & Daniel Brown

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

6 p.m. Rivershed – Rhys Chalmers

7 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Nick Bredice

7 p.m. The Foundry – Aaron Audet

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Noca Night featuring Too Turnt Tony, Fat Bunny and DJ Primary Instinct

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

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Jon Clinch

RANDOLPH

7:30 p.m. Underground Listening Room - Chodus/Phrogs w/ Wicked Louder and Time Life Magazines

SAT 3/30

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – Comedy Night with Headliner Matt Goldich

CHESTER

6:30 p.m. Pizza Stone VT – Moon Hollow

KILLINGTON

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

6 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Duane Carleton

6 p.m. Rivershed – Acoustik Ruckus

6 p.m. O'Dwyer's Public House – County Down

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

7 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

8 p.m. Northstar Lodge Lounge – Dance Party with DJ Dave

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Taylor's Version: A Swiftie's Dance Party

9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Chris P

LUDLOW

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

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

2:30 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Apres-Ski Dance Party with DJ Dave

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Blue Fox

STOCKBRIDGE

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

SUN 3/31

KILLINGTON

9 a.m. Mission Farm – Easter with Nick Bredice

12 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto

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

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. Still on the Mountain – Open Mic Night with Indigenous Entertainment

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

STOCKBRIDGE

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

MON 4/1

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

LUDLOW

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

TUES 4/2

KILLINGTON

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

6 p.m. Rivershed – Nick Bredice

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

LONDONDERRY

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

LUDLOW

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

QUECHEE

5 p.m. The Public House – Jim Yeager



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Weekly camps designed around educational themed units. Students participate in hands-on lessons designed specifically for the weekly theme while incorporating gymnastics, crafts, team building, problem solving, and more!

Campers will need to provide snacks and lunches.

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Rise and shine: Killington Easter Sunrise Service 2024 brings hope, community, and breakfast delights

Catch the K-1 Gondola early in the morning for a sunrise at the peak, a non-denominational service and delicious breakfast offerings

Sunday, March 31 at 5:30 a.m.—KILLINGTON—If you're one of the lucky ones who scored a ticket before they sold out, you'll be enjoying a sold-out Sunrise Service from the top of Vermont's second-highest peak. The K-1 Express Gondola will load from approximately 5:30-6:15 a.m., with the Easter Sunrise Service set to begin at 6:30 a.m. at the Killington Peak Lodge. Immediately afterwards, there will be a community breakfast provided by Killington Resort.

The service at the Peak Lodge is weather-dependent. If there's a weather challenge on Easter Sunday, the service will be moved to the K-1 Base Lodge.

All proceeds from this event will go towards Boarding for Breast Cancer (B4BC), a 501(c)3 non-profit foundation founded in 1996 whose mission is to:

- Prepare young people with education on early detection.
- Promote the importance of maintaining a healthy, active lifestyle as the best means of breast cancer prevention.
- Provide survivor support for those affected by breast cancer.

To donate, visit b4bc.org.

After the service and breakfast, starting at 8:30 a.m., the ever-popular Easter egg hunt (ages 14 and under) will ensue at the K-1 Lodge. At 9:30 a.m., a toddler-friendly (ages 4 and under) Easter egg hunt will also take place at the Roaring Brook Umbrella Bar (near K-1 Lodge). Some of the eggs will be filled with more than candy—lucky egg hunters could find a youth season pass to Killington Resort or Pico Mountain!

Both of the Easter egg hunts are non-ticketed events and do not require a Sunrise Service ticket in order to participate.

For more information, visit Killington.com.

NIGHT EAGLE WILDERNESS ADVENTURE

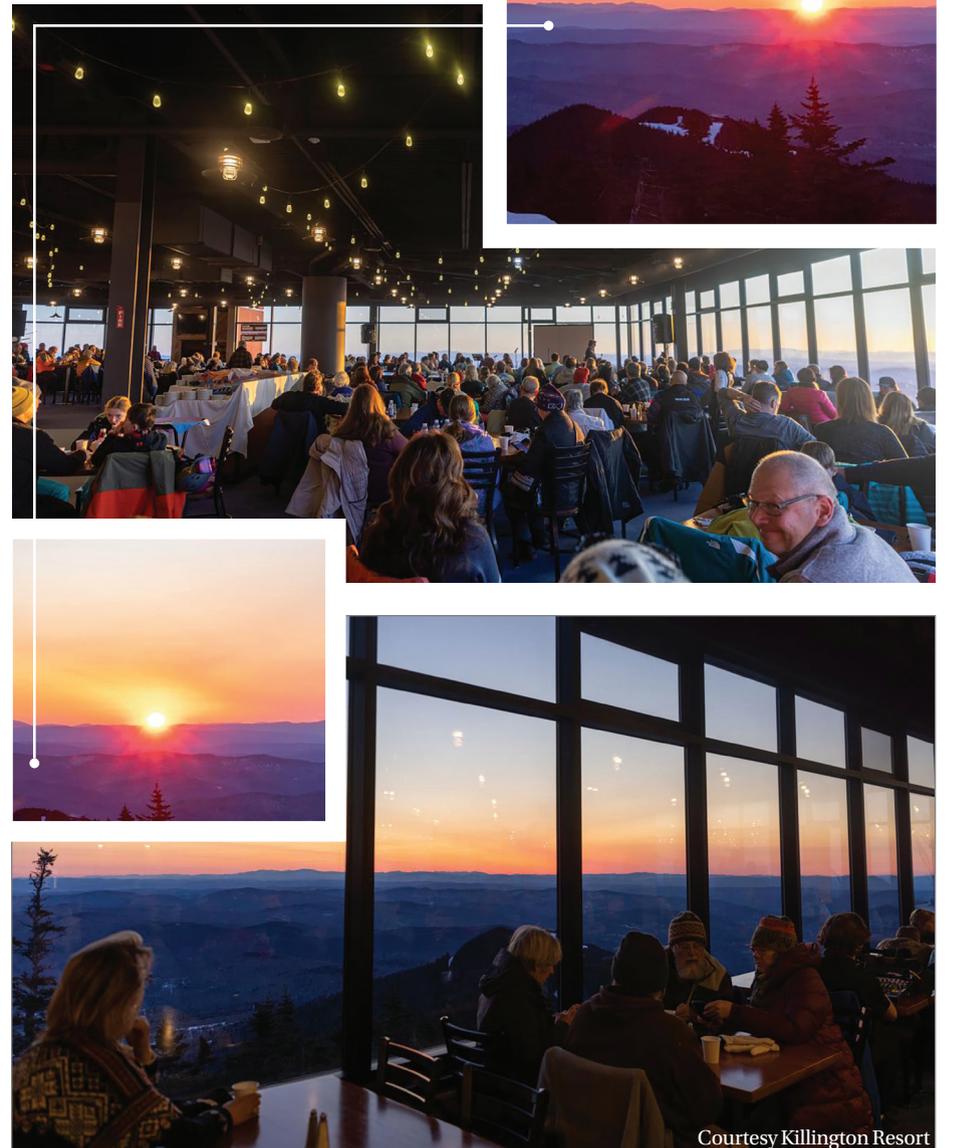
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nighteaglewilderness.com



Courtesy Killington Resort

Love Your Peaks: Join Killington Resort in supporting breast cancer prevention with B4BC

Saturday, March 30 at 9 a.m.—KILLINGTON—Killington Resort is excited to host Love Your Peaks, a breast cancer prevention event series & fundraising campaign organized by Boarding for Breast Cancer (B4BC). Love Your Peaks is a fundraising campaign in support of breast cancer awareness and prevention at resorts nationwide. Participants can head to Killington this spring to get on board and dedicate their day outside in support of B4BC’s mission of a healthy, active lifestyle as the best means of breast cancer prevention, while raising funds for B4BC’s education, prevention and survivorship programs!

To participate, simply register, fundraise, ride, and post during this winter season. The resort will have a ski-style poker run, merch you won’t want leave without, and prizes to give away.

Registration

Build a team of your family & friends and register online to maximize your impact.

Schedule

Poker Run Registration	9-11 a.m.	K-1 Lodge
Silent Auction	9 a.m.-3 p.m.	K-1 Lodge
Pink Poker Run	11 a.m.-1 p.m.	Resort-wide
Awards	1:30 p.m.	B4BC tent
Tribute Ride	2 p.m.	Snowshed slope
Raffle	2:30 p.m.	B4BC tent
Live Music	2:30-5:30 p.m.	K-1 Lodge (3rd floor)
Silent Auction Closes	3 p.m.	K-1 Lodge
Second Raffle	4:30 p.m.	K-1 Lodge

Volunteering

Boarding for Breast Cancer is recruiting volunteers for this event. For volunteer information, visit: <https://tinyurl.com/yck4wjpt>

Boarding for Breast Cancer (B4BC) is a 501(c) 3 non-profit foundation dedicated to providing education, prevention and survivor support programs for young people. Founded in 1996, B4BC hosts year round grassroots events, educational outreach and young survivor wellness retreats to further its mission of early detection + a healthy, active lifestyle as the best means of breast cancer prevention. For more information, visit: b4bc.org.



Courtesy Boarding for Breast Cancer

Skiers don pink tutus and creative costumes, showing their support for a charity event supporting breast cancer awareness. Proceeds benefit Boarding for Breast Cancer (B4BC).



Holy Week

AT MISSION FARM
(Church of our Saviour - Episcopal)

Palm Sunday	March 24 9:30 AM
Good Friday	March 29 12:00 PM
Easter Sunday	March 31 9:30 AM

316 Mission Farm Road, Killington
www.missionfarmVT.org

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or visit us at 5465 US-4, Killington.

Registration is open for 'Race Around the Lake 2024'

The most beautiful race in Vermont

Registration is now open for "Race Around the Lake on Sunday May 19 at Silver Lake State Park, 250 North Road, Barnard. The Race begins and ends at Silver Lake State Park, with courses encircling Silver Lake on town roads, dirt roads and single-track wooded trails with intermittent views of the lake. The challenging 10K route pops out of the woods on Royalton Tpk. and loops back to the state park via Tower Road.

Early registration fees
Sign-up by April 30 to receive a free Race Around the Lake T-shirt!

- 10K Adults: \$45, 12 & under: \$25
- 5K Adults: \$35, 12 & under: \$25
- Virtual 10K & 5K: \$25 & \$15

Schedule

- 10K Race begins 10:30am
- 5K Race begins 11am

After-Race activities along Silver Lake include a Chef's Table lunch free to all racers, live music and an award ceremony.

For registration and more information, visit: barnarts.org.



Courtesy Barn Arts
Runners begin the race on Silver Lake at a recent Race Around the Lake, a fundraiser supporting BarnArts Youth Programming in Barnard, Vermont.

Grace Congregational UCC

8 Court St., Rutland, VT • 802-775-4301 • gracechurchvt.org

Palm Sunday March 24 at 10 am with Brass and Timpani	Easter Sunrise Gathering March 31 at 6:30 am Ashcroft-Billings farm, 731 Creek Rd, Rutland Town
Maundy Thursday Tenebrae March 28 at 7 pm	Easter Celebration March 31 at 10 am with Festival Brass, Timpani and Handbells




CHRIST THE KING CHURCH

66 South Main St. • Rutland, VT • Msgr. Bernard W. Bourgeois • 802-773-6820

Holy Thursday March 28 6:30 p.m.	Evening Mass of the Lord's Supper
Good Friday March 29 3 p.m.	Commemoration of the Lord's Passion Stations of the Cross
Holy Saturday March 30 7:30 p.m.	Mass of the Easter Vigil
Easter Sunday March 31 7:30 a.m., 9:30 a.m. & 11 a.m.	Mass of the Resurrection of the Lord



Killington Sherburne United Church of Christ

An Open & Affirming Congregation

MAUNDY THURSDAY, MARCH 28 AT 6 P.M.
EASTER SUNDAY, MARCH 31 AT 9 A.M.

Killington Little White Church
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802-672-5220 • www.bethanybirches.org/summer-camps

Laugh out loud with Josh Blue 'The Freak Accident Tour' hits Rutland

Friday, March 29 at 7:30 p.m.—RUTLAND—Comedian Josh Blue is coming to the Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. After his groundbreaking win on Last Comic Standing in 2006, Josh Blue has risen through the ranks to become a well-established headliner at venues throughout the world. In 2018, Josh crushed his set on "The Tonight Show Starring Jimmy Fallon." In the same year, he was honored with a performance at the William H. Macy Gala at the prestigious Just for Laughs Comedy Festival in Montreal, Canada. He wrapped up 2018 by recording his 5th-hour special, "Broccoli," at his home club, Comedy Works in Denver. In 2021, following his 3rd place finish on NBC's "America's Got Talent," Josh Blue hit the road with his "As NOT Seen on TV Tour." Josh does over 200 shows a year, continuing to spread laughter and break down stereotypes of people with disabilities. His stand-up routine is in a constant state of evolution and his off-the-cuff improvisational skills guarantee that no two shows are alike.

Josh represented the United States in 8 countries as a member of the US Paralympic Soccer Team. Josh and his team were thoroughly disgraced in the 2004 Paralympic Games in Athens, Greece by not scoring a single goal. He is a single father living in Denver, with his son and daughter. Don't miss Josh on "The Freak Accident Tour"!

No age restriction. Tickets: \$35. For more information, visit paramountvt.org.



Courtesy Josh Blue.com

Learn the art of rug hooking at the Hooked on Owls workshop at VINS

Saturday, March 30, from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.—RUTLAND—Discover the traditional craft of rug hooking at the Hooked on Owls workshop hosted by the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS), 149 Natures Way, Quechee.

Led by experienced fiber artist Sandra Grant, this three-hour introductory class will teach participants the fundamental techniques of rug hooking while creating a charming owl design. The class fee is \$80 for the general public and \$75 for VINS members, with a \$25 materials fee covering the pattern, hook, and ample wool for the project.

No prior experience is necessary, making this workshop suitable for beginners aged 17 and above. Participants are encouraged to bring a small pair of scissors and a basket or tray for organizing materials.

Sandra Grant, a seasoned rug hooker and educator with a master's degree in teaching art, will guide students through the process. As the education chair for the Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild and a member of the League

of New Hampshire Craftsmen since 2016, Sandra brings a wealth of expertise to the class.

Attendees will also have the opportunity to view Sandra's stunning rug artwork, showcasing her intricate designs and use of hand-dyed wool. To learn more about Sandra's work, visit rugshow2020.gmrhg.org/sandra-grant.

For more information, visit: info@vinsweb.org or 802-359-5000.



Courtesy VINS

The Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS) is hosting a Hooked on Owls workshop on March 30, featuring fiber artist Sandra Grant, who will teach basic rug hooking techniques and create intricate owl designs.

ATM LOTTERY

killington market

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Food *Indulge your taste buds*
MATTERS

Killington offers a diverse culinary scene with local pubs serving wings, burgers, sushi, seafood, and steakhouses, catering to all palates and preferences.

RUTLAND CO-OP *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

SUGAR & SPICE *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.

MOUNTAIN TOP INN & RESORT *Mountain Top Inn*

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

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Liquid Art
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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.

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Sherburne UCC "Little White Church," Killington, VT

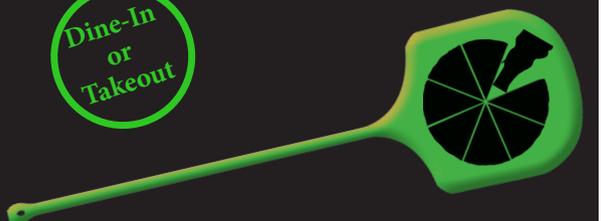
killington market *Killington Market*

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.

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maryloukillington.com

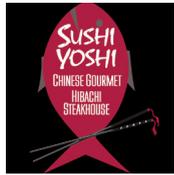
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TAKE OUT

Solutions From page 15

Crossword

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

Sudoku

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

Rock with Ace Frehley!

Saturday, March 30 at 7 p.m.—RUTLAND—Mark your calendars, because Ace Frehley is coming to Rutland to light up the city with an epic night of classic rock 'n' roll.

Ace Frehley's solo career has surpassed the success of his former KISS bandmates. His 2014 album, "Space Invader," made history as the only post-KISS solo album to crack the Top 10 on Billboard's Top 200 albums chart. Additionally, his acclaimed 2011 autobiography, "No Regrets," became a New York Times best-seller.

Adding to his career, Frehley's latest album, "Origins II," released on Sept. 18, 2020, features renowned guests including Robin Zander (Cheap Trick), Lita Ford, Bruce Kulick, and John 5.

With KISS embarking on their farewell tour, Ace Frehley remains in the spotlight, making headlines almost daily and being mentioned in every article.

Tickets are available for \$49 (plus tax and fees).

For more information, visit: paramountvt.org.



Submitted
Ace Frehley shredding
during a KISS concert.

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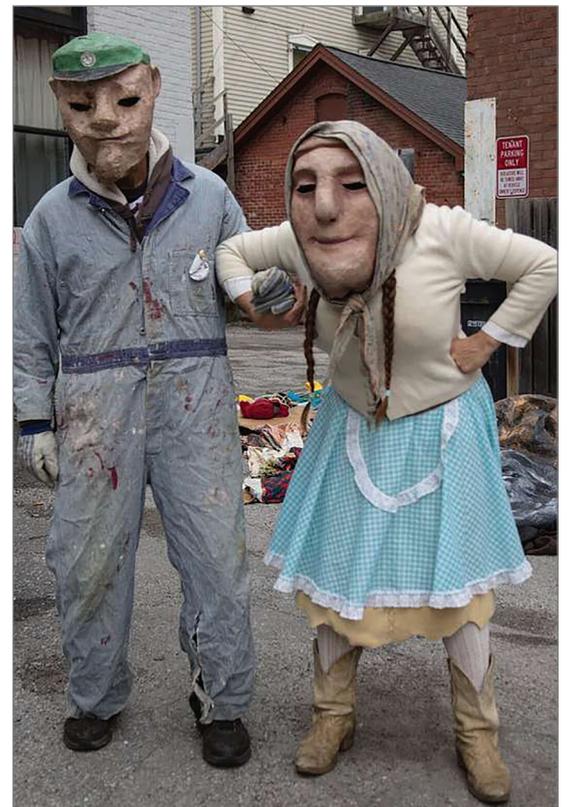
Sunday, March 31 at 6 p.m.—RUTLAND—Get ready, Rutland. The acclaimed Bread & Puppet Theater is set to perform in Rutland, bringing their unique blend of protest, artistry, and community engagement to our doorstep. As they prepare to take the stage, Rutland residents can anticipate an experience that transcends traditional theater, inviting us all to join in the celebration of creativity and social change.

Founded in 1963 by Peter Schumann on New York City's Lower East Side, Bread & Puppet has been based in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont since the early 1970s and is one of the oldest, nonprofit, self-supporting theatrical companies in the country. Well known for its visually rich, street-theater brand of performance art, Bread and Puppet revels in music, dance, and slapstick-filled celebratory protest.

Believing that theater is a basic necessity like bread, the company frequently brings its work to the streets for those who may not otherwise go to the theater. Its shows are political and spectacular, frequently featuring puppets on stilts, huge masks with expressive faces, singing, dancing, and a richly elaborated repertoire of iconic characters. Bread and Puppet is recognized throughout the world and has won distinction at international theater festivals in Italy, Poland, Colombia, and Yugoslavia, beginning with their break-out performances at the 1968 Nancy Festival in France.

Notable awards include the Erasmus Prize of Amsterdam, 4 Obies, the Puppeteers of America's President's Award, and the Vermont Governor's Award. Bread and Puppet is constantly active, performing at its farm in Glover, and in local churches, schools, and parades. It regularly tours Europe, Canada, and the United States and has recently visited El Salvador, Haiti, Russia, Greece, and Korea.

Tickets are \$20. Availability will be based on a first-come, first-served basis. Call the box office at 802-775-0903 or email boxoffice@paramountvt.org if you require ADA or accessible seating. For more information, visit paramountvt.org.



Carol M. Highsmith
Eccentric figures from the Bread and Puppet Theater ready to take the stage. Known for their unique performances and homemade bread offerings, the theater troupe brings its captivating entertainment to the heart of the community.

After the Resurrection of Jesus

Behind locked door the disciples gathered, for each one had feared for his own life.

Jesus appeared to them saying, "Peace be with you," bringing them joy out of strife.

Thomas first doubted it was truly Jesus, who again appeared among them to abide.

Knowing what Thomas wanted, Jesus said, "Believe; put your hand in my side."

"Receive the Holy Spirit," He added, breathing on the disciples, who were deeply relieved.

Jesus also said, "Blessed are those who have not seen me and yet have believed."

After Jesus blessed his disciples near Bethany, with his hands held out high, He was taken up to Heaven, as they looked intently into the sky.

J. Browning



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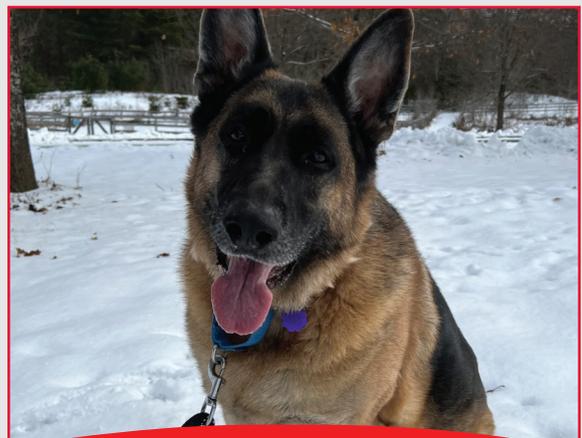
Rutland County Humane Society



SIBLEY

This mellow sweet 4-year-old 60-pound female mastiff is waiting to love you!! Sibley adores people, dogs and doesn't seem to mind cats! She is looking for someone to chill with and just be your best friend! Stop in Wed-Sat from Noon to 4. Join us May 11, 9 a.m.-3 p.m. at the Shaws Plaza for our annual Mother's Day event! Call 802-885-2174 if you can bake some goodies for this event.

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 *Open by appointment only. spfldhumane.org



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 *(By appointment only at this time.)

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Chico—10 m/o. Neutered male. Mixed breed.



Remus—2y/o. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



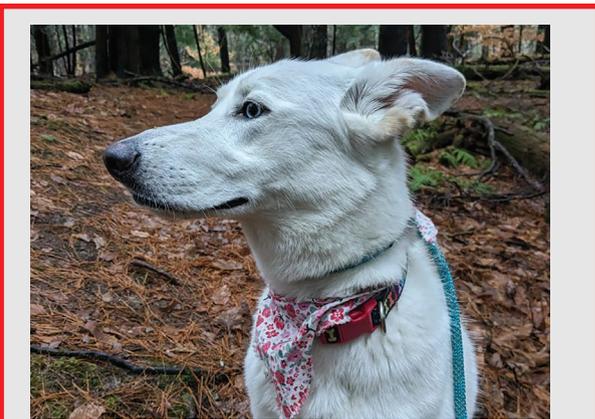
Mochi—11m/o. Spayed female. Mixed breed.



Dandelion—2y/o. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Banana—3y/o. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



YURI

Yuri—11m/o. Spayed female. German shepherd mix.

All of these pets are available for adoption at
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 765 Stevens Road, Pittsford, VT • (802) 483-6700
 Tues. - Sat. 11 a.m. - 4 p.m.
 Closed Sun. & Mon. • www.rchsvt.org



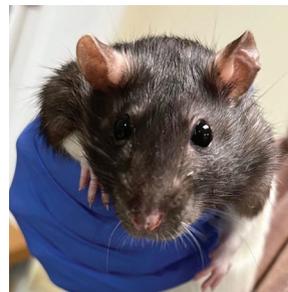
Clover—1y/o. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.



Lucky Meow—4y/o. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.



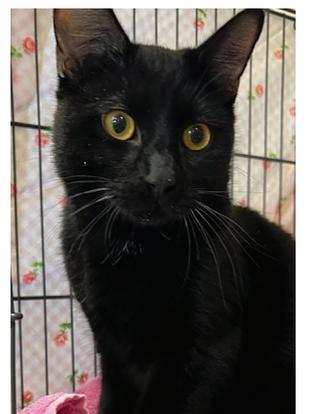
Domino—1y/o. Neutered male. Terrier mix.



Penelope—1y/o. Female. Fancy rat.



Tilda—1y/o. Female. Fancy rat.



Melford—8m/o. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.

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Cosmic Catalogue




Aries
March 21 - April 20

Your ego may be telling you to fight to the death. However, your heart may be telling you to surrender and let it go. If you've been holding on to a relationship, situation, or something or someone else for too long, let them go on their way this week. Wish them well. Maybe they'll come back. Maybe they won't. It's better to have loved than to have never loved at all.



Leo
July 21 - August 20

Your spiritual life beckons. Maybe it's topics to do with religion or philosophy that are calling you now. If you can see a pathway ahead of where you want to be, then ask yourself: What are you doing on the daily to turn that dream into a reality? It's one thing to want, hope, and pray, but it's another to commit to regular rituals and daily habits to make it happen.



Sagittarius
November 21 - December 20

Everyone who smiles at you isn't a friend. You're going to learn that this week. The more you invest in yourself, your growth, and your joy and happiness, there's likely to be some people who'll get their noses pushed out of joint. This week, when it comes to friends, those who are a reason, a season, or a lifetime will be revealed. Pay attention. Let go of anyone who isn't acting in your best interest.



Taurus
April 21 - May 20

The definition of insanity is doing the same thing over and over again and expecting a different result. So why are you continuing to put more on your plate while complaining that you've got too much to do? This week, but some battles back. You don't have to do it all. In fact, it's recommended that you don't. If something doesn't feel right or you just don't want to, then let it go. Just say no.



Virgo
August 21 - September 20

Have you heard of the idea that your net worth is related to your self-worth? If your bank balance isn't where you'd like it to be, then chances are some inner work may be required. This might mean stepping up and asking for more. Also, it could be about eradicating the limiting belief that you don't deserve the abundance you want. Banish that thought! Also, a collaboration with someone else, romantically or professionally, could help.



Capricorn
December 21 - January 20

You have a reputation for putting work first. As you reach one peak, you look for the next summit to climb. Not this week, however. Instead, you'll want to keep your focus and priorities close to home. After all, if you don't make your family and loved ones your priority, then what is the point of working as hard as you do? Slow down and work; relish in what your home life has to offer.



Gemini
May 21 - June 20

Friends and lovers, lovers and friends. The company you're keeping seems to be a bit of a revolving door right now in both your professional and personal circles. It all kind of feels karmic and fated, with some pivotal lessons you're learning along the way. Stay honest with the messages you're getting, and don't read into anything more than what the other person is actually saying and giving. Today's loss will be tomorrow's gain.



Libra
September 21 - October 20

Don't be so hard on yourself if you feel fatigued or have a dose of CBF. As the week begins, be gentle on yourself. Rest if you need it. Also, cleanse, purify, and purge all the things you know aren't good for you, including your habits and attitudes. Your life is going to change in dramatic ways soon enough. Things often feel worse before they get better, and this week is here to remind you of that.



Aquarius
January 21 - February 20

Look at your stars, and it feels like you're losing your religion. Maybe you are. Maybe you're doubling down on a faith or a philosophy you follow. How is that going for you, though? Are you happy? Is life turning out the way you always hoped it would? Only you can answer that, but you must be honest with yourself. One way or another, a change in perspective and philosophy is inevitable.



Cancer
June 21 - July 20

It often pulls on your tender heartstrings to have to juggle your domestic and family dynamics with your career or job. Right now, the cosmos is asking you to put your professional life at the helm. You may not want to do this, but it's necessary. Keep your aspirations and your sense of purpose in front of mind and it will make things easier. If you let your mood or feelings dictate your action, life will be harder this week.



Scorpio
October 21 - November 20

The strange paradox is that when you accept yourself for exactly who you are, then you can change. That's not from me, but from psychologist Carl Rogers. This week, you're reminded that you can overthink a situation and blame yourself for what isn't right in your life. Or, you can accept things with grace, move on, and change. Pay attention to your dreams this week too; they may reveal the answers to your questions.



Pisces
February 21 - March 20

The entanglements you share with other people are in the process of unraveling. This could be the debt you share with the bank, marital money, or even emotional knots you've tied with someone. It's tricky stuff, to be sure, and it can get messy. However, being proactive about what is and isn't right for you is essential now. This isn't your time to go along to get along. Go after what you want and what you've earned.

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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.

'Win' at all costs?

The lunar eclipse this past weekend began a dramatic turning point for events that will only be exacerbated by the upcoming solar eclipse.

A full moon in Libra tends to highlight the dynamic of we versus me in relationships. The sun in Aries is individualistic and "me first." While the full moon in Libra whispers, "What about us?" When it comes to relationships, it's more than just the two people involved; it's person 1, person 2, and the third entity, the relationship itself.

As this eclipse is attached to the South Node, tact, diplomacy, and compromise

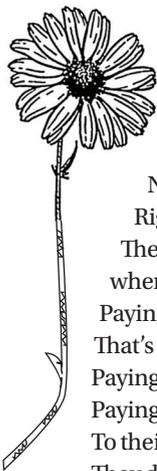
aren't going to be easy feats. A win-at-all costs mentality is likely. Some relationships, entities, or ways of being simply aren't meant to last forever. Sometimes, walking away with grace and keeping your decorum in tact is best for everyone, especially yourself. In this day and age of binary thinking, where you're either with us or against us, agreeing to disagree is a novel and noble stance.

Separation and loss may be unavoidable. Keep your head held high, even if tears well within your eyes. Keep your upper lip stiff, even if you're dying to speak. Maintain your dignity. Close the door. Walk away.



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall

The bunny's field of daisies



Fields and fields of daisies,
As far as the eye can see.
Bunnies hopping around,
Cute little creatures,
So carefree,
Not paying attention to anything else.

Right now,
They are paying attention to
where they are,
Paying attention to when it is.
That's what's important.
Paying attention to themselves,
Paying attention to their families,
To their friends,
They don't need to get caught up
in the drama of elsewhere,

They are here,
It is now.
They wanted to send a reminder out,
To all the people of the world,
To be kind to each other,
And especially,



To be kind,
To yourself.
You don't need to worry about the past,
You don't need to worry about the future,
Focus on now,
Focus on here.
The bunnies are telling us,
To take time to ourselves,
To spend more time with family,
To go relax in a field of daisies,
To be calm,
And especially,
To be happy.
The bunnies want to share,
Their field of daisies,
With you.



Poetry Is Power
By Bree Sarandrea

Snowflakes

I looked out the window at the crystals slowly drifting down. Their lacy designs are both beautiful and unique at the same time. I thought about how they are beautiful in their own way, like us. They pile up on the ground, raising the pile of fluff higher and higher. They seem to sparkle and shine in the sun. They are tiny diamonds on a journey to the ground. I think about how fun skiing will be tomorrow and how they will fly in the air as the wind tosses them around.



Green Mountain Tales
By Lizzy Gieder

Coming April 8: A Total Eclipse of the Sun

In the cosmic dance of heavenly bodies, no phenomenon possesses the drama of a solar eclipse, when the moon passes directly between the sun and earth. In the path of totality, where the moon completely obscures our home star, the world falls into an ominous darkness that has evoked everything from wonder to dread. This year, our region will experience a total solar eclipse on April 8.

For any specific geographic location, "total solar eclipses are extremely rare events," said Amanda Leith, education coordinator at the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center in Concord, New Hampshire. "The next time we will see a total eclipse in New Hampshire won't be until May 1, 2079."

The most recent solar eclipse in which New England was in the path of totality was in 1970, and totality then was visible only in Nantucket and the southeastern tip of Cape Cod. Before then, Maine was within an eclipse path of totality in July of 1963, and parts of New Hampshire and Massachusetts were in October 1959. Vermont has not experienced totality since Aug. 31, 1932, and according to NASA's website, there will not be another major total eclipse in the U.S. until Aug. 12, 2045, when the path of totality will start in northern California, arc across the southern states, and end in Florida.

On April 8, 2024, the eclipse maximum (when the largest portion of the sun's disc is hidden behind the moon) will pass over northern New England during a span of about 8 minutes. It will begin in northern Vermont at 3:25 p.m. in South Hero, then at 3:26 in Burlington, 3:27 in Montpelier, and 3:28 in St. Johnsbury. It will start at 3:29 in Lancaster, New Hampshire, and 3:32 in Caribou, Maine. Eclipse viewers along the path of totality will see the moon block out all but the sun's corona (outer atmosphere), which will appear as a faint glow around the edge of the moon's disk.

"The duration of totality may last seconds to several minutes, depending on location," said Catherine Miller, an observatory specialist in the Department of Physics at Middlebury College. "As you go farther away from the path of totality, the fraction of the sun that is blocked by the moon gets smaller." When viewed from southern Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine, the eclipse will block roughly 95% of the sun.

Many organizations are planning events to celebrate the eclipse. The Fairbanks Museum & Planetarium in St. Johnsbury,

Vermont (fairbanksmuseum.org) will feature educational programs and a live video from NASA, plus a play-by-play description of the eclipse with Planetarium Director Mark Breen and Vermont Public's Jane Lindholm. From April 6-8, the Appalachian Mountain Club (outdoors.org) will offer a full schedule of astronomical programming.

From making pinhole cameras to assembling a 9-foot Total Eclipse Puzzle, the McAuliffe-Shepard Discovery Center (starhop.com) is planning fun and informative eclipse-related activities and a Solar Eclipse Viewing Party from 12-5 p.m., April 8. The Center will also screen the film "Totality" at noon each Wednesday through Sunday through April 7. The Center's "Countdown to the Eclipse" web page includes eclipse information, activities, and safety tips.

Safety is paramount, and eclipse viewers should never look directly at the sun when viewing the eclipse, which could burn the retinas in their eyes and cause blindness. Both NASA and the American Astronomical Society offer detailed safety information on their websites.

"Sunglasses, 3D glasses, and regular telescopes and binoculars will not protect your eyes from damage," cautioned Leith. "The safest ways to look at the sun are with dedicated, safe solar eclipse viewers... and by looking at the eclipse indirectly, such as with a pinhole projector."

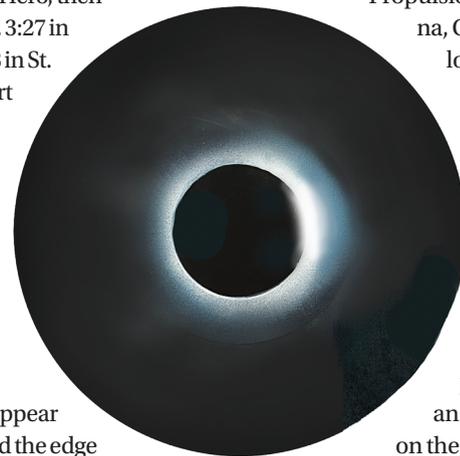
Miller recalls viewing the partial eclipse of 2017 while working at the NASA Jet Propulsion Laboratory in Pasadena, California. "I remember looking at the ground beneath some trees where the sunlight was filtering through the leaves. Instead of seeing normal leaf shadows, I saw crescent shapes. The openings in the tree canopy were acting as pinholes, each creating an image of the eclipsed sun on the ground."

Celebrating the solar eclipse is a way to share a mesmerizing experience with millions of people. It is a rare opportunity to behold a cosmic event that has enthralled humankind for millennia, inspiring story, song, and mythology from time out of mind.

Michael J. Caduto is a writer, ecologist, and storyteller who lives in Reading, Vermont. He is the author of "Through a Naturalist's Eyes: Exploring the Nature of New England." 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 Michael J. Caduto



Fighting for a cause

When I was growing up, my father loved to watch boxing on the weekends. I don't remember him ever attending any in-person matches, but he would spend hours scrutinizing fights on television.

Since he controlled the dial, I watched a lot of boxing by default. I got to know the major fighters and their stats and eventually looked forward to particular matches. He loved that I was following the sport, so part of the appeal for me was knowing that I was pleasing him.

My favorite memory of watching fights with my dad was his tendency to become part of the match. He would sit fixated on the television screen with his fists tightened in his lap and then, out of nowhere, his shoulder would lurch forward like he was throwing a punch at a competitor's head. Sometimes he would recognize his out-of-body experience and settle down, but other times he was apt to come right out of his recliner to yell at the screen.

Like all true fans, my dad had his favorite fighters and those he despised. He was not a fan of Muhammad Ali, mostly because of Ali's ego. But he also looked down on Ali's conscientious objection to the Vietnam War (my dad was a veteran and if someone acted unpatriotic, they became the enemy). However, he was an enthusiastic follower of Marvelous Marvin Hagler, often likening him to a warrior in the style of the Roman gladiators.

There was a brief period when I attempted to watch professional wrestling (thinking that it was a compatible endeavor), but my father shot that down, referring to it as a "non-sport" filled with a bunch of overweight actors. So, while other boys my age enjoyed the rise of Hulkamania, I snubbed my nose at it out of respect for my father.

My father passed away in 1989 and unfortunately, never saw the rise of Mixed Martial Arts, which he likely would have loved.

The modern era of MMA was ushered in with the founding of the Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC) in 1993. Conceived as a no-holds-barred tournament to determine the most effective martial art, the early UFC events featured fighters from various disciplines, including boxing, karate, wrestling, and jiu-jitsu — all competing in a single elimination format.

Those early fights were spectacles (go back on YouTube and watch some of those matches — it's insane). I remember being curious, but not overly interested. In my mind, there was something about the art

form of boxing that superseded the rash thuggery of MMA.

As MMA gained popularity, concerns about fighter safety and sportsmanship prompted regulatory bodies to impose rules and regulations to govern the sport. This led to the adoption of weight classes, time limits, and restrictions on techniques such as eye gouging and groin strikes. Additionally, advancements in training methods and cross-training among different martial arts disciplines led to the emergence of well-rounded fighters capable of excelling in all aspects of combat.

In the early 2000s, MMA exploded into the mainstream consciousness, thanks in part to the success of fighters like Randy Couture, Chuck Liddell, and Tito Ortiz, who became household names and helped to legitimize the sport in the eyes of a judgmental public.

Television deals, pay-per-view events, and lucrative sponsorship deals further propelled MMA into the spotlight, attracting a diverse fan base from around the world.

Today, MMA is a global phenomenon, with promotions such as Bellator MMA, ONE Championship, and the Professional Fighters League (PFL) hosting events in countries across every continent. The sport continues to evolve, with athletes continually pushing the boundaries of what is possible in hand-to-hand combat.

This week's feature, "Road House," focuses on a fictional ex-MMA fighter who gets hired to clean up a tourist bar in the Florida Keys. Unfortunately, there's a developer nearby who wants to see the business fail so he can swoop in and buy the property.

Obviously, this is a modern reimagining of the classic 1989 film of the same name. While the original "Road House" (starring Patrick Swayze) failed to make a big splash at the box office, it did eventually become a cult classic, making it worthy of this remake.

This new version stars a ripped Jake Gyllenhaal and the notorious Conor McGregor. Gyllenhaal plays the lead beautifully (almost comically) while McGregor's character is about as over-the-top as you can get. All in all, it's campy and aggressive, but also a lot of fun.

If it's been a while since you've thrown a punch or you're just in the mood for a good barroom brawl, then this is the film for you. It's high on the testosterone, but low on the intellect, which really doesn't matter for a distraction of this type.

A belligerent "B-" for "Road House," now available to stream on Amazon Prime.

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



The Movie Diary
By Dom Cioffi



Bumps in the sun, *au naturel*

I came over the crest, and my heart skipped a beat. I wasn't ready for this kind of greatness. Who really was expecting something that I don't remember witnessing since I was a child? A little one at that. But there it was, laid out in all its glory for everyone. Well, at least everyone who was brave enough to conquer the sea of moguls.



Living the Dream
By Merisa Sherman

Yep, that's right. The corporation chose not to groom Needle's Eye on Monday, and it was one of the most beautiful sights I had seen in a long time. I am not a bumper, but I can appreciate a beautiful field of moguls and have a blast while attempting to make it from the top of Needle's Eye — you know, from the original double ramp — to the bottom without stopping.

And since it was my birthday, we had to do it twice. Although I will say that I would have made much nicer turns on the bottom of the second run if we had taken just a wee little break somewhere along the way... But that's not quite our style. It's go and then rest on the chairlift. I'm saying that in four more years, when I hit 50, it will be okay to stop midway on a run that isn't last chair.

But back to the moguls. They were everywhere! After years and years of meticulously groomed terrain, the corporation finally let Mother Nature have her moment and just exist for a few days. Don't get me wrong, I love a beautifully groomed trail, too. I even dated a groomer for a few years and spent

many nights riding along while he mowed down anything in his path. But there is something to be said about a field of snowy bumps in all their glory.

And I understand that a lot of folks cannot handle ungroomed terrain. I get it. My body is screaming at me this morning for my overzealousness over the past few days. But part of life is seeing the world as a challenge and stepping up to the plate. In Team PomPom, we talk about skiing and crazy, weird things. How getting thrown off balance is the only way to get better. If we just stick to the groomer trails that we're used to, then all we do is get old. And having just turned 46, that frightens me.

I've been broken, where I cannot ski anything but a groomer for months. And you know what? I have lots of fun doing that. But we haven't had an ungroomed Needle's

Part of life is seeing the world as a challenge and stepping up to the plate ... getting thrown off balance is the only way to get better.

Eye in decades. That's like tens of years. So it's about time that the corporation gave us a little something to play on. I'm not one of those folks with a "stop the brutal grooming" bumper sticker on my car, but could you imagine how the heat from the groomer plowing the moguls would only have firmed up the trail and given us a morning foot massage? Ugh. What a waste of all that powder!

I couldn't get to the resort on Sunday
Livin' the Dream → 33

Challenges and Critters

Building our Killington Dream Lodge, Part 6

We were making progress on Dad's Killington dream lodge, but it was slow going with lots of delays, often due to frequent weather changes. Whenever it rained, water leaked onto the floor. When it was bitter cold, ice carpeted the back room. With electricity in our basement at last, extension cords snaked around the room. It was a miracle we weren't electrocuted by all the live wires on our wet basement floor.

After our incident on the outdoor two-seater (it broke with Mom and me sitting in mid-air), the weather began turning colder, so Dad bought a camping potty chair. Mom hung a curtain just past the beds and placed the new john in the back room's far end. It felt like a luxurious 5-star hotel to sit and ponder in privacy indoors.

Another joy was our animal encounters—one of the things I love most in Vermont. Near the main road to Killington, myriad creatures showed up in our woods and sometimes even entered our home—at times, a mixed blessing, but always enlightening. It is a gift to live in Vermont.

A baby mouse fell from her nest right into Mom's suitcase. I was ecstatic. Mom was horrified. "Now I know why you chose the bottom bunk," I said.

I rescued the newborn and gave her a home in a tiny box with a bed inside. I fed her warm milk with Pablum cereal in an eye dropper every two hours. She accompanied me wherever I went. Unfortunately, that very week, my Girl Scout troop climbed Mount Mansfield, Vermont's
Meditation → 33



Mountain Meditation
By Marguerite Jill Dye



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← **Meditation:**
from page 30

highest peak. Due to her feeding times, I carried my baby mouse along, warmly wrapped up in my breast pocket. I wasn't certain if it was the wind, altitude, or chill that did her in. I was heartbroken by my tiny friend's demise. She never even opened her eyes. We held a funeral with a song and a prayer and buried my mouse in her box in our yard.

When a chipmunk snuck into our basement back room, our black Lab, Star, went beserk. She started to chase him. He ran under the beds. Star leapt above, from bed to bed. At the end of the room, they turned around and began their race again.

One night, when we arrived quite late, Star barked and barked and wouldn't stop. We finally spotted, high in the corner, behind our new potty chair curtain, a fairly large porcupine. There was no way to coax it outside, even when a professional tried. "We'll have to shoot it to remove it," he insisted.

We were devastated.

We never discovered how the creature got in. What a tragic and sad weekend that was.

The next critter that hopped into my life was a tiny brown toad I found in the grass. I adopted and adored Frisky the toad. For several weeks, Frisky traveled back-and-forth between New Jersey and Vermont with us. His cozy home was a little box where I often arranged fresh leaves and grass. He drank from and swam in a bottle cap. I fed him assorted insects I

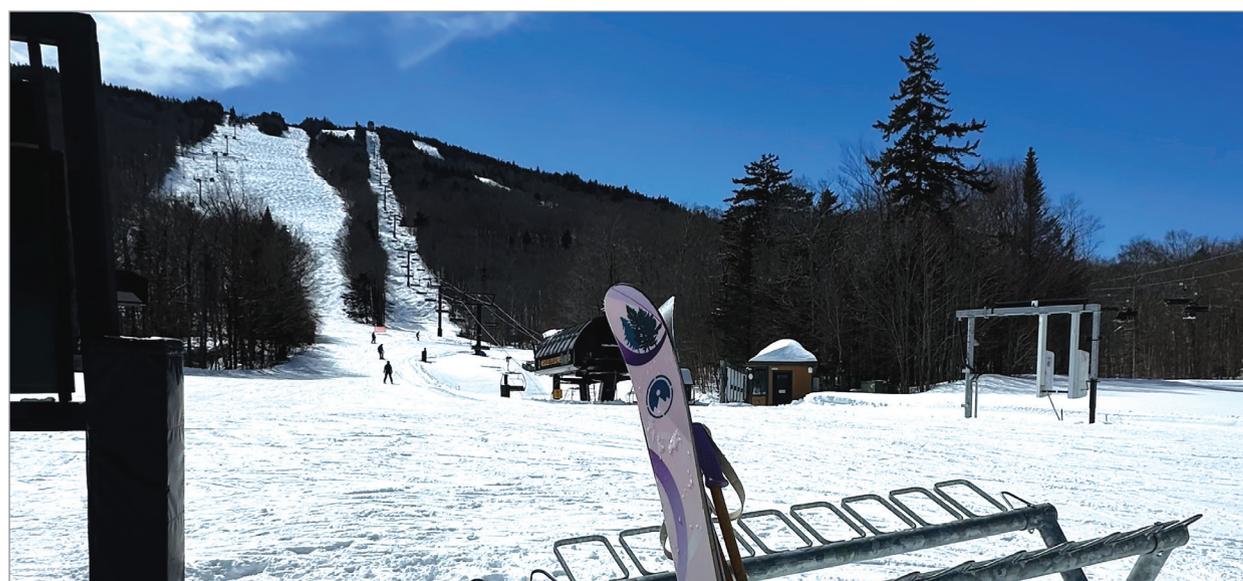
found. Frisky was a fun companion (until he escaped and leapt away), but nothing could possibly replace our dog Star.

Black Star of Highland, our Labrador retriever, followed me everywhere much of the day, always ready for adventure. She also followed Mom at meal time and Dad as soon as he headed outside. Wherever the action was, Star was there, retrieving branches we heave-hoed down the hill, galavanting in our woods, fetching Route 100 spring water, and keeping watch on every road trip.

When we ate indoors, Star waited at the table, watching for tidbits to fall to the floor or for a handout from her admirers. She was crazy about dog biscuits and everything else (except dill pickles). My brother Billie taught Star to stay put with a tidbit on top of her nose. "On guard" was the command he gave. As she patiently waited, her nose slowly rose until the treat fell or Billie said, "Go." Then she tossed it up high into the air and caught it in her mouth, of course.

There is nothing like a Lab. I'm grateful Billie brought her home when she was only 8 weeks old, in spite of Mom's protests. (She never owned a dog growing up and had no idea what she'd missed.) Star was my best friend and loyal companion. She read my mind, and I talked to her. Star understood my extreme sensitivity and lovingly ushered me through my childhood.

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



By Merisa Sherman

← **Living the Dream:**
from page 31

(that's a different column for a different day), so Monday was my bluebird day, and I skied myself into the ground. I got flipped around backwards and upside down on Ovation Headwall and still skied until my legs were shaking. And, honestly, quite a bit beyond that. Skier's left of Superstar was filled with snow, and you could play up the sides of the whales like riding a wave. We skied all around and had to come back to Needle's because you cannot turn your back on the gift of a field of blue bumps.

And they were just the right size, without cliffs on the back of them. It looked more like Mary Jane and Snowbird; an entire football field turned on an angle and filled to the brim with

beautiful, soft bumps. Every long-time Killington skier I spoke with remembered the years when the double was part of the trail and the conversations

Thank you for giving us a few days of bumps in the sun. So we could feel like the kids we once were. For letting Killington just exist for a while. It was beautiful

that would happen from lift to trail. It was a vibe, everyone all together ripping those bumps and then slowly making their way up the double. I didn't even remember those days until I came over the roller, and it triggered a memory long since buried.

My dad, he would have loved it. We would have spent hours lapping

Needle's, stopping at the Jerk, and then heading up for more. So thank you, Killington, for giving me a couple of runs in the bumps with my dad for my

birthday. For bringing us back to the 1980s of Killington, if only for a few days. I know it can't stay that way; there are lots of folks who want everything flat, but thank you for giving us a few days of bumps in the sun. So we could feel like the kids we once were. For letting Killington just exist for a while. It was beautiful.

Merisa Sherman is a long-time Killington resident, local Realtor, KMS coach, town lister, and member of the Development Review Board. She can be reached at femaleskibum@gmail.com.

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Shai and the Green Village: A treehouse sanctuary in the heart of Playa

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



Tales:
Riviera Maya
By Bruce Bouchard

This is a story about how the power and beauty of an eco-village in the jungle outside of Playa came to influence first the aesthetics and later the ethos and spiritual direction of a special destination in this tourist mecca, The Green Village, and the story of the two men who made it happen.

But, first, let's back up... The primary character in this story is the single-named Shai. After four years of serving in the Israeli military (mandatory service), Shai, at age 22, set out to travel to the U.S. and Latin American countries. He quickly adapted to the vibe and the culture of many Latin countries, but when he arrived in Playa del Carmen in 2006, he had found his new home. He set up shop selling cosmetics on the storied Fifth Avenue, working with a friend from Israel, Ran, on the sales staff. During his time in Playa, Ran had perused an investment opportunity and was the owner of a four-story townhouse on Calle 20 (central Playa), a multi-unit rental property in the rapidly growing tourist destination. It was called The Green Villa. Over the years of successfully running the property up from 2016 to 2018, a dream began to emerge about changing the business model from a straight-up business rental property into something more, a combined hostel or hotel with wider community-based offerings.

During this period, Ran took Shai to a place he had discovered just out on the northwestern edge of Playa, in the jungle: an ecological off-the-grid village, an evolved community with homes and shared structures conceived and built out of the natural habitat and informed by Mayan rituals. It was clearly a "sanctuary place." This collective of evolved thinkers named their pueblo Sacbe, Mayan for "Lime Road." In the Mayan Civilization, the roads were constructed out of limestone, which was illuminated by the moon, allowing for travel both by day and by night between their cities. It was evident that highly skilled builders and artisans had dug deeply into their imaginations to "build and decorate" both indoor and outdoor buildings, common spaces, and private dwellings. It was as if, like the fauna of the jungle, the buildings had grown through the jungle floor from seeds planted by the Maya.

An idea evolved: to bring this place of sanctuary, this vibe of

Sacbe, into the city. The Green "Villa" was to be re-branded The Green "Village." Ran was at a point where, in order to achieve this dream, he needed investors. Shai was invited in, and he readily accepted, and their shared passion for a new model, both physically and emotionally, was now about to become a reality. Shai followed by bringing in another two investors. With capital now secured, plans began slowly to emerge, and the buildout began in earnest just before the pandemic.

There was another event at Sacbe that was to shape Shai's future. He had discovered that regular "healing place" ceremonies, called Temazcals, were offered at Sacbe. Conducted without stimulants or substances, these hot rock "cleansings" were curated inside of a tightly confined yurt, utilizing the four elements (earth, water, wind, and fire), and were fashioned to rid demons and blockage in the service of enlightenment. With a long-term relationship ended, Shai was confronted with some difficult challenges. His Temescal cleansing was profoundly freeing and led to an entirely new way of being. He had breakthroughs in physical and mental wellbeing, he began practicing yoga, eating carefully and mindfully, and even committed to walking barefoot at all times (my tender feet cringe at the thought), transforming himself like the transformation of the building — and was ever more committed to helping move the new project through to the finish line.

Building and expanding the hotel commenced. Highly talented artisans were engaged, and the concept, born of their time at Sacbe (sustainable construction incorporating elements from the habitat), was now about to become a reality. The Green Village construction and renovation evolved as imagined: a hostel, an apartment rental facility, expanding the number of beds, and the first steps toward realizing the community meeting place. The four-story winding staircase in the center of the building was transformed into a tree-house staircase. A stunning entry door, made in India, was granted to them by a Sacbe resident and became the much-admired new front door of the Green Village. Decorative marvels inspired by the jungle began to appear on walls and behind the bar in the new, expanded kitchen, punctuating door frames and windows throughout. Traction and propulsion kicked in and helped the partnership through the period

of Covid. An organization, The Yoga Group, approached Shai about a residency. The roof, with its wonderful views, had been transformed into an outdoor classroom, which was a perfect fit for the two entities, and yoga classes were instituted by masters from Canada, Russia, Italy, Mexico, and elsewhere. Other classes quickly followed: dance (salsa and ecstatic dancing), sound therapy, tantra, etc. Weekly films were added, screened onto the wall across from the kitchen. and the newly branded Green Village emerged from Covid as a vibrant "community place" —

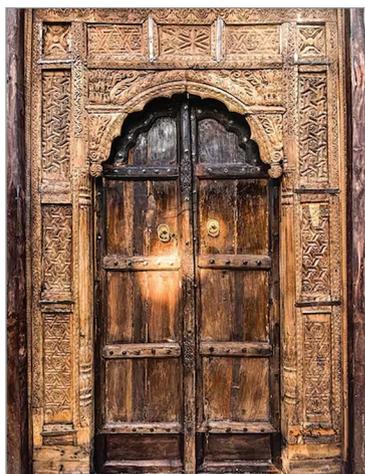
truly a place of sanctuary.

The full effect of the inside of the Green Village today is that of a townhouse renovated into a tree house, with the entry level functioning much like a warm ground floor of a home: a front door registration desk, a Japanese garden to the left of the entry, a kitchen, a dining room, lounging areas, libraries, and even a small indoor wading pool — all areas adorned with decorative touches inspired by the homes and common places in Sacbe.

In addition to the expansion of the facility and the added classes, the village became a home for students traveling abroad, with annual groups from Denmark filling the facility to capacity. Shai hopes to capitalize on this new energy and attract small conferences to the village. One thing is for certain: it will be a vibrant future for the many-faceted Green Village.

Having now spent time with Shai, including a trip to Sacbe in the jungle two weeks ago, I know him to be an egalitarian man of the people, a seeker, a conduit—in possession of a fine, elastic mind and a wisdom beyond his years. Yet another terrific new friend, with years more to come.

Author's note: Should you find your way to Playa del Carmen, be certain to stop at the Green Village, have a seat with a juice drink, absorb the vibe, and say hello to Shai, "from Bruce, in Vt."



By Bruce Bouchard

The front door was crafted in India.



By Bruce Bouchard

Pack, lead artisan, at Green Village in the heart of Playa.



By Bruce Bouchard

The Green Village yoga tribe smiles and poses as a group.



By Bruce Bouchard

Interior common space at Green Village sets the right mood.



By Bruce Bouchard

The "guardian" of The Garden at Green Village stands guard.

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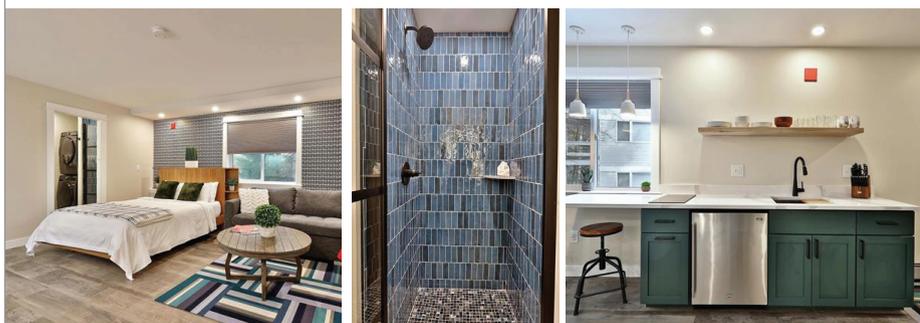
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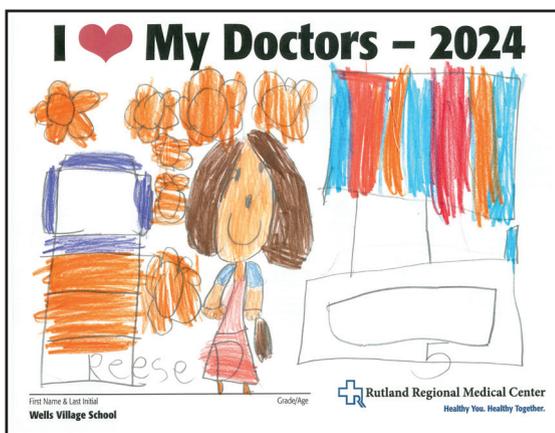
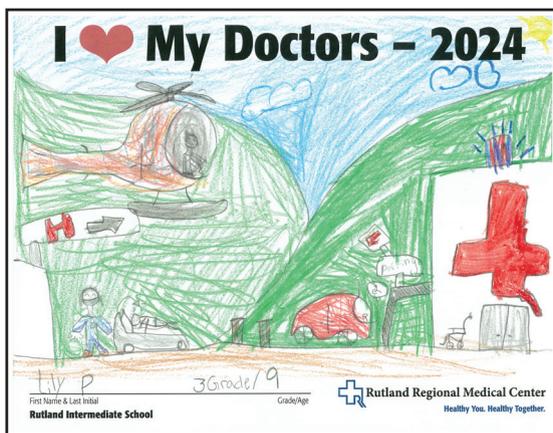
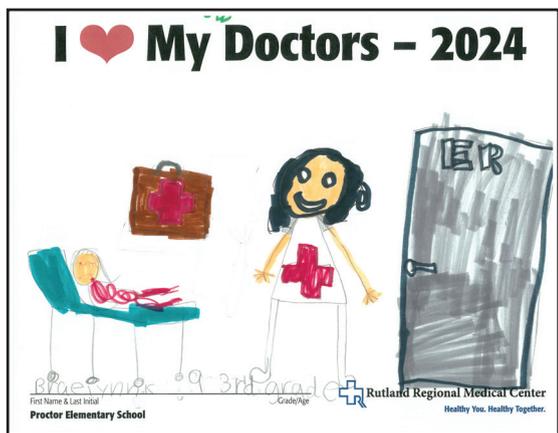
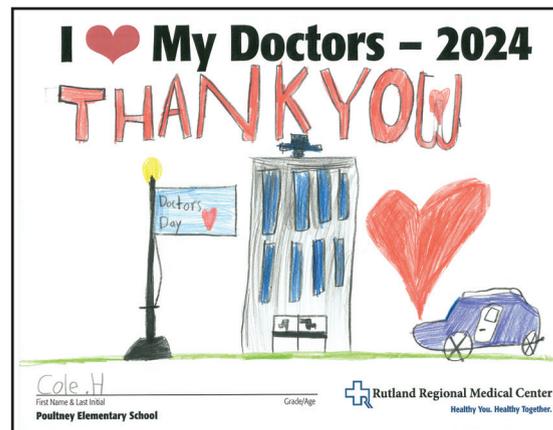
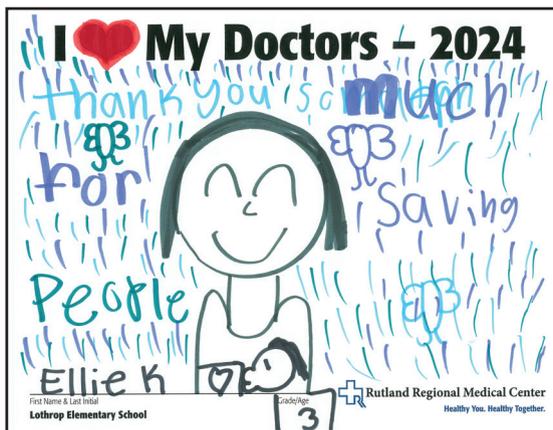
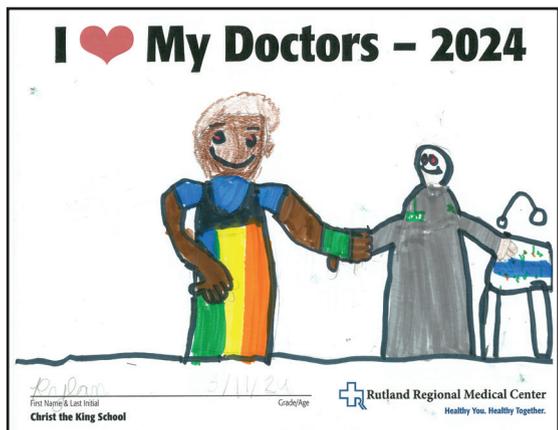
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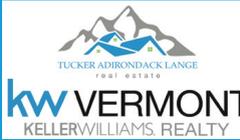


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Pruning fruit trees, it's not too late

By Debra Heleba, UVM Extension community horticulture director

This time of year, when plants are normally in their dormant stage, usually finds gardeners conducting late-winter pruning of apple and other fruit trees. However, recent warmer temperatures may have encouraged many trees to prematurely wake up, causing gardeners to ask, "Is it too late to prune?"

The answer is no, it's not too late. In fact, waiting until the end of the winter to prune your fruit trees helps protect them from winter injury, so March is a great time to prune, even April if you're at a higher elevation. Apple trees have several stages of bud growth that orchardists use to properly time disease and insect sprays.

Trees that have recently broken dormancy are in the "silver tip" stage when buds turn from a dark brown to a fuzzy-looking silvery gray. Home orchardists should prune their apple and pear trees in this stage, before the tips turn green, to avoid diseases such as fireblight. Delay pruning cherry, peach and plum trees until a little later, just before they bloom until about two weeks after petal fall (again to avoid diseases).

Annual pruning of tree fruit is important to the health of your home orchard. Pruning allows the building of the tree's structure to support a heavy load of fruit later in the season and into the future. It also allows light and air flow into the tree, which are important for healthy growth and for limiting diseases.

As a general rule of thumb, aim to remove no more than one-third of the tree's branches in any given year. Pruning is a balancing act because, with each branch you remove, you are reinvigorating the tree but are also pruning away potential fruit.

First, remove any dead, broken and diseased branches. Next, you will want to prune any branches that cross or rub together. Apple and pear trees are typically pruned to maintain a central trunk with branches radiating around the trunk, again allowing for air and light to penetrate the tree.

Remove suckers, which are the vertical shoots coming out of the ground, as well as "water sprouts," the vertical shoots on branches.

Aim to keep branches that are angled 45 to 60 degrees from the trunk but remove downward leaning branches and those with tight angles. You also will want to remove shaded branches, those located directly underneath other branches and branches located directly across from one another.

When making a pruning cut, you need to cut the branch just beyond the collar. This is the area that looks wrinkled as it comes from the trunk. This will allow the cut to mend properly. Stubs can be an entry for disease. Painting the wound is unnecessary.

For more information, visit: go.uvm.edu/pruning.

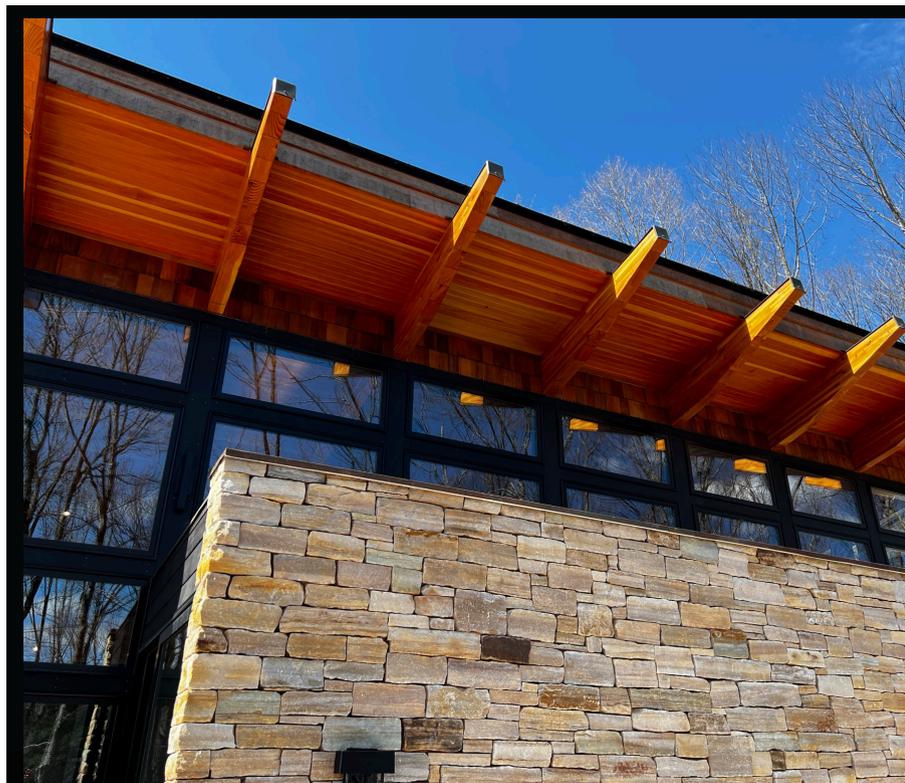
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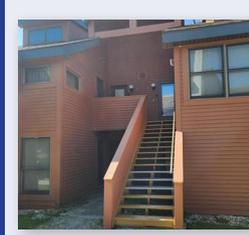
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By Ashlee Marie/Pexels

The ever-popular Easter lily, sold as a potted plant or cut flowers, symbolizes rebirth, new beginnings and hope.



By Deborah J. Benoit

Tulips, available in an array of colors, make a beautiful cut-flower bouquet to give as a gift or to decorate a home at Easter.



By Deborah J. Benoit

Tulips, a symbol of rebirth, are a classic spring-blooming flower, often gifted to someone special around Easter time.

Easter flowers: what's in your bouquet?

By Deborah J. Benoit, UVM extension master gardener

It's no surprise that the Easter lily (*Lilium longiflorum*) is the most popular floral gift for Easter giving, but did you know that, contrary to its name, it isn't a spring-blooming flower?

When grown outdoors, they bloom during the summer. Commercial growers go through a carefully timed process to coax them to bloom at the proper time each spring.

Easter lilies are commonly sold as a plant, but their white, trumpet-shaped flowers often take center stage in cut flower arrangements. They symbolize rebirth, new beginnings and hope.

After the holiday, potted Easter lilies can be planted in your garden after all danger of frost has passed. Be sure to introduce them to the outdoors over the course of several days by bringing them out for a while each day, gradually increasing the number of hours.

Easter lilies are hardy in U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Hardiness Zones 5-11, possibly Zone 4, if protected from winter temperatures by sufficient snow cover and a generous layer of mulch. Choose a sunny location with soil that drains well. The leaves will eventually yellow and die back in the fall.

As beautiful as they are, be aware that every part of an

Easter lily can cause stomach upset in dogs if eaten and is highly poisonous to cats. That includes the yellow pollen that is easily shed. If you have pets, be sure to keep Easter lilies well out of their reach.

In addition, the pollen can permanently stain fabric. An easy way to prevent the spread of pollen is to simply remove the anthers (the yellow part of the flower that produces pollen).

Of course, Easter lilies aren't the only flower popular for Easter gift giving.

Daffodils (*Narcissus*) are one of the first flowers to emerge as winter ends and are true harbingers of spring. They appear in cut flower bouquets and as potted plants at florists around this time of year. Their bright yellow, trumpet-shaped blooms represent rebirth and are a popular gift for Easter.

Daffodils are hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 3-8. While bulbs are traditionally planted in the fall, potted daffodils can be transferred to the garden after flowers have faded. Simply deadhead the flowers and allow the greenery to continue to grow until it dies off naturally. Remove from the pot and plant in the garden once temperatures have warmed and the ground is workable.

Like daffodils, tulips (*Tulipa*) are a classic spring-blooming flower. They're available in a rainbow of colors and can be found at florists as cut flowers or potted plants. The egg-shaped flowers can represent rebirth and love.

Tulips are hardy in USDA Hardiness Zones 3-7. Potted tulips can be transplanted in the garden in the same manner as daffodils. Like daffodils, they're toxic to dogs and cats if eaten.

You may already be familiar with other holiday cacti—Thanksgiving cactus (*Schlumbergera truncata*) and Christmas Cactus (*Schlumbergera bridgesii*)—but have you heard of the Easter cactus (*Rhipsalidopsis gaertneri*)? Its flowers come in shades of red, orange and pink. It's easy to care for and generally considered pet friendly.

Like other holiday cacti, Easter cactus is actually a succulent. Treat it to bright, indirect sunlight and water when the soil feels dry. It's hardy only to USDA Hardiness Zones 10-12, so while it can spend warmer months outside (avoid hot, direct sunlight), be sure to bring it back indoors before there's danger of frost.

Whether you receive Easter flowers as a bouquet, a potted plant or a mixed-bulb planting, they're a wonderful way to celebrate and a sure sign of spring.

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