



KILLINGTON RESORT TURNS 65, CELEBRATES

Killington Resort turns 65 years old this Wednesday, Dec. 13. The resort will host a celebration for the big milestone with a cake from Dreammaker Bakers at 3 p.m. in the K-1 Lodge. All are invited to the party! (With 7 inches of new snow Monday, the Canyon Quad is expected to make its debut Wednesday, too.)



SKI BUM LEAGUE BEGINS

Friends and local rivals will compete against each other in a race down Highline Trail on Wednesdays.

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LOCAL RELEASES FIRST ALBUM

Shrewsbury singer/songwriter Silas Hamilton just released his first album, "AllTheWays".

Page 16

Rosemary's names new chef

By Katy Savage

Cooking has taken Eric Ley all over the world. Ley, a Rutland native, was a personal chef for 10 years, traveling with families to private islands, houseboats on Lake Powell in Utah, to major cities around the U.S. and on private planes.

Twelve years ago, Ley, 55, was serving caponata and lamb-chop with a pomegranate mint glaze to the Dalai Lama at Red Mountain in Aspen, Colorado.

Then, he was a private chef for actor Robert Downey, Jr., catering to each of Downey's family members' different dietary needs — one of his children was gluten free, one was vegetarian, Ley remembers.

"You have to be a culinary contortionist, sometimes you have to do culinary yoga," Ley said.

Ley cooked for economist Alan Greenspan, who served as the 13th chairman of the Federal Reserve from 1987 to 2006. Ley was there when Greenspan discussed the advent of Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac around a dining table.

"Alan Greenspan was sitting at the table talking to these people, saying what a great idea it was," Ley remembers. "The conversation that was happening right in front of me was pretty wild."

Serving meals to his clients gave Ley a unique perspective into the lives of people he served.

"I played a nurturing role," he said. "It's just interesting the way food touches people and then invokes memory and feeling. It's not just a job. I'm here to feed people."

Ley moved back home eight years ago to be close to his aging mom. He worked at The WhistlePig Pavilion in Stowe before becoming the chef at the Middlebury Inn. He's now starting a new role as chef at Rosemary's Restaurant in Killington.

Chef Ley → 6

"It's just interesting the way food touches people and then invokes memory and feeling. It's not just a job. I'm here to feed people," Ley said.



Courtesy Eric Ley

Eric Ley smiles as the Dalai Lama blesses him in Colorado.



Courtesy Downtown Rutland Partnership

A group laughs together during the Jingle Bell Shop event in Downtown Rutland last Thursday.

Jingle Bell Shop promotes local businesses, community

By Sarah Calvin

On Thursday night, Dec. 7, downtown Rutland came alive during the first iteration of the Jingle Bell Shop, a festive night of community that encouraged consumers to shop local this holiday season. Featuring 24 Rutland businesses, the event paired each shop with a Vermont food or beverage vendor. Tickets to sample the local beers and spirits were \$25, and each ticket came with a commemorative glass. Many businesses also offered door

prizes and raffle giveaways. "66 cents of every dollar spent local stays local," said Tiffany Saltis, executive director of the Downtown Rutland Partnership, the event's organizer. "That [money] stays within your community: supporting these small businesses, feeding families, creating jobs. The list goes on with how incredibly powerful it is for dollars to stay local because it goes into the future of your community." The Jingle Bell Shop is a

twist on Sip & Shop events the Partnership has put on in the past. Whereas Sip & Shop caters exclusively to those who enjoy a drink, the Jingle Bell Shop included non-alcoholic drinks, food, entertainment, and plenty of sales to encourage the whole family to come out. Local music store Mountain Music gave customers a \$5 off coupon, GreenSpell Plant Shop offered a 2-for-1 deal on air plants, and sandwich

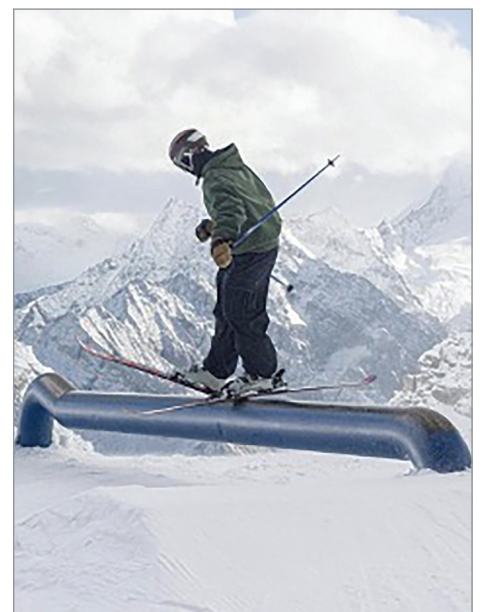
Jingle Bell Shop → 5

KMS 16-year-old Ella Andrews named to 2024 U.S. Youth Olympic Freeski Team

U.S. Ski and Snowboard recently selected the Freeski Slopestyle/Big Air Team to represent the United States at the next Winter Youth Olympic Games. Ella Andrews (from Killington, Vermont and racing with Killington Mountain School) was the only East Coast racer to be named to the Freeski Slopestyle/Big Air Team roster. She will be joined by Ellie Derosier (from Bend, Oregon racing with Park City Ski & Snowboard), Kathryn Gray (from Crowley Lake, California, and racing with Mammoth Mountain Freeski Team) as well as Jack Rodheaver and Henry Townsend (both from Park City, Utah). They will be coached by Leah Stroud.

Nearly 2,000 of the world's most promising young winter athletes will take part in the 4th Winter Youth Olympic Games (YOG) held Jan. 19-Feb. 1, 2024. The games will be held in the Province of Gangwon in the Republic of Korea.

Youth Olympic Team → 26



Submitted

KMS's Ella Andrews makes U.S. Team roster.



TOWN OF
KILLINGTON
VERMONT

PLANNING COMMISSION
PUBLIC HEARING NOTICE

PROPOSED AMENDMENTS TO THE TOWN OF KILLINGTON
ZONING BYLAWS and KILLINGTON ZONING MAP

The Killington Planning Commission will hold a public hearing on amendments to the Town of Killington Zoning Bylaws and the Town of Killington Zoning Maps on
Wednesday, January 3, 2024, at 7:00 p.m.
at the Public Safety Building, 800 Killington Road, Killington, Vermont.
The hearing will also be held remotely via Zoom. The link to join remotely is <https://join.zoom.us/j/86571279632> or by call in +16036299029,86571279632.

This public notice is given pursuant to 24 V.S.A. Section 4444. The principal purpose of the proposed zoning bylaw amendments is to provide standards for permitting and regulating cannabis establishments within the Town of Killington. These amendments will affect every geographical area of Killington. The Town of Killington Zoning Map has been amended to provide 2 Commercial Districts — one of which is labeled the Killington Basin Commercial District and one of which is labeled the Route 4 Commercial District.

- The section headings affected by the proposed zoning bylaw amendments are:
- SECTION 131 — DEFINITIONS
 - SECTION 302 — CONDITIONAL USE — CANNABIS ESTABLISHMENTS

The full text of the proposed Town of Killington Zoning Bylaw Amendments may be found at the Town Clerk's office, 2705 River Road, Killington and on the Planning Commission page of the Town's website KillingtonVT.com.

Dated at Killington, Vermont this 11th Day of December 2023.
Lisa Davis Lewis, Town Planner, Town of Killington, Vermont



TOWN OF
KILLINGTON
VERMONT

Reminder to all Short-Term Rental owners:
Registration is past due!

The Short-Term Rental of a dwelling unit within the Town of Killington requires a STR Registration License, which is issued by completing an application online (<http://KillingtonVT.com>) and paying the permit fee based on # of bedrooms in each unit.

STR Registrations run from Nov 1 - Oct. 31
and need to be renewed each year by Nov. 15.
The gone guided for renewing will mail Jan. 18, 2024.

If you are still short-term renting and you fail to renew your registration by Jan. 18, 2024, you will be sent a certified letter informing you that you are in violation of the Town's STR Zoning Regulations. You will then have 7 days to register, or you will be subject to fines of \$200/day.

- A Short-Term Rental is defined as a furnished house, condominium, or other dwelling unit or self-contained dwelling unit rented to the transient, traveling, or vacationing public for a period of fewer than 30 consecutive days and for more than 14 days per calendar year.
- Dwelling Unit Capacity for a Short-Term Rental is two occupants per approved bedroom plus two additional occupants. For example, a 3-bedroom dwelling can be rented to eight guests (3 bedrooms = 6 occupants plus 2 additional occupants = 8). The occupancy of condos is determined by VT Act 258.
- An inspection report with occupancy approved from the State Division of Fire Safety is required for STRs with an occupancy of greater than 8 guests. The Rutland Fire Safety office can be reached at 802-279-0946 to answer questions you may have and to set up an appointment.
- The designated operator (the owner may be the designated operator) must be available by phone at all times that the Short-Term Rental is in use.
- Parking by STR guests must be off-street. On-street parking is not permitted.
- STRs with an occupancy of 16 or fewer guests are allowed in all zoning districts.
- Failure to secure an STR Registration or advertising a Short-Term Rental for more than the approved maximum number of occupants (guests) are violations of the Zoning Bylaws and will be enforced.

For more information, visit: bit.ly/KillingtonSTR

With Honoree Fleming's killer still at large, community rallies to raise reward money

By Tiffany Tan/VT Digger

Two months after a retired college dean was fatally shot at a Castleton rail trail — and with no suspect identified — a local resident has spearheaded raising reward money to help solve the homicide case.

Honoree Fleming, 77, a former dean of education at what was then Castleton State College, was shot in the head while walking along the D&H Rail Trail on Oct. 5. The following week, police released a sketch of a man they described as “a person of interest” in their investigation. But no suspect has since been identified in what investigators characterized as a random shooting.

Vermont State Police spokesperson Adam Silverman said Thursday that detectives continue to investigate Fleming's killing and that the case remains a priority. Silverman declined to provide specific up-

dates “to avoid releasing information that could compromise the investigation.”

Meanwhile, Castleton residents, along with Fleming's family and friends, have raised at least \$23,000 in reward money for whoever can help officials arrest and convict her killer. Mark Brown, a longtime Castleton resident, started the effort last week by pledging \$5,000 from his Brown's Auto Salvage business and asking the town government to match the amount.

The Castleton Selectboard agreed to allot \$5,000 for the reward fund and hopes to earmark it each year, as needed, said Town Manager Mike Jones. The effort has since drawn more pledges and donations, including from Ron Powers, Fleming's husband, who gave \$5,000 through an online crowd-

Fleming → 9

Pawlet library director's abrupt termination leads to questions from the community

By Katy Savage

Shortly after the Pawlet library director was given a raise and recognized by the Vermont Library Association, she was fired, leading to an outcry from residents at a library board of trustees meeting on Dec. 7.

Residents asked the board for transparency.

Resident Martin Kravitt predicted the town would

face a legal battle.

“You went ahead and fired her, I believe without cause.”

The library board of trustees unanimously voted to dismiss Library Director Lyndsi Barnes with a vote of “no confidence” following an executive session on Nov. 7.

The trustees listened to concerns from residents at a

meeting on Dec. 7, but said they would not be speaking on the matter.

“On advice of counsel, we will not be answering questions or giving an explanation,” library president Harley Cudney said.

Barnes, who also attended the meeting, explained she was informed via email Library leadership → 6

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Killington drivers run afoul of new speed limit

By Curt Peterson

Last Friday, Dec. 8, law enforcement officers stopped 11 drivers for speeding on Killington Road, all traveling at over 50 miles per hour in spite of the posted 30-mile-per-hour speed limit. Seven drivers received summonses, Killington Police Chief Whit Montgomery told selectmen Monday, Dec. 11.

When the speed limit on Killington Road was reduced from 35 mph to 30 mph, Dec. 6, Montgomery told the Mountain Times there might be a "period of adjustment" — a modicum of leniency while people got used to the new limit.

The chief says the town of Killington is unique, because many of the drivers on Killington Roads are new or occasional visitors to the community.

"Because they aren't here day-to-day, it's very hard to educate them about our speed limits and other laws," Montgomery said. "Each stop is potentially a new motorist to educate."

But, he also said, the violators are a mixture of locals and visitors. Most people have slowed down, but there are always "outliers" who disregard the posted speed limits.

Town Manager Michael Ramsey said he had heard complaints that the Killington Road speed limit signs are too small to be noticed, and larger signs have been ordered. The replaced signs will also be used on East Mountain Road where the speed limit will be adjusted in the New Year.

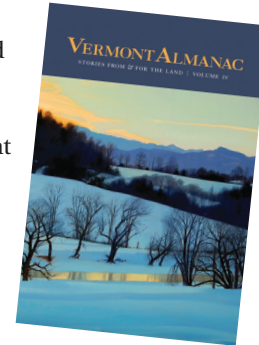
Montgomery said his department has three "radar signs" that flash an oncoming vehicle's speed as it approaches, and they have ordered more. Not only are the signs "pretty effective," they also gather data that helps plan KPD's use of its limited resources.

"The signs report a vehicle count, highest speeds, lowest speeds and average speeds over periods of time," Montgomery said. "We have a good idea when and where to patrol

New speed limit → 26

Volume IV of Vermont Almanac is published

The fourth edition of Vermont Almanac has been published and shipped to bookstores before the holidays. The book features all new stories about and by Vermont farmers, writers, loggers, artists, scientists, poets, thinkers, and doers. More than 50 Vermonters contributed stories to Volume IV.



Remember the Christmas storm last December? The freaky warm January that was 12 degrees above the 20th century mean? The severe May frost that decimated apple crops, the Canadian smoke in June, the epic floods in July and August? The book provides a record of and a context for the crazy weather.

In Volume IV you'll also learn how to make paper snowdrops, compensate in a recipe for various-sized eggs, and about a foolproof way to kill potato beetles in the garden.

Schools wrestle with issue of accused youth

By Marin Howell/Addison Independent

When juveniles were accused of pulling the trigger in two recent fatal shootings just north in Addison County, the spotlight fell on the various questions and complexities that arise when prosecuting crimes committed by minors.

Among those questions: How do Vermont schools educate students who've been accused of violent crimes?

Vermont students, even when facing criminal charges, are entitled to a public education. However, parents and community members may have concerns about students who have been accused of crimes returning to their children's classroom.

"It's putting parents in a position that's uncomfortable. It's putting our children in a position that's uncomfortable," a local parent told the Mount Abraham Unified School District Board at a Nov. 21 meeting, where community members raised concerns about a student who recently joined the district and is believed to have committed a violent crime. "We're having to make decisions that are just really hard, and I know that's life, but please weigh that when you think about this."

The Independent reached out to several Vermont school districts and state officials to learn more about how these situations are generally handled.

Fortunately, such cases are rare and are typically evaluated on a case-by-case basis. Officials also emphasized that school-age Vermonters have a right to a public education, and that constitutional right is not revoked when students are incarcerated or facing criminal charges.

"A student has a right to education and cannot be excluded from receiving education services without due process, which is provided in local policies in addition to state law," Lindsey Hedges, a public information officer for the Vermont Agency of Education, told the Independent. "There are a few different approaches that

Many Vermont school districts abide by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law that safeguards the privacy of student education records. Thus, school officials weren't able to discuss situations involving specific students, but spoke generally.

a Vermont school district could take when dealing with students accused of crimes or who may pose a safety concern. These approaches must also take into consideration special education requirements as applicable."

Schools' approaches

The Independent spoke with a handful of Vermont school districts about how, given the guidance provided in state law, school districts decide how to educate students who have been accused of crimes or who might pose other safety concerns within the learning community.

Many Vermont school districts abide by the Family Educational Rights and Privacy Act, a federal law that safeguards the privacy of student education records. Thus, school officials weren't able to discuss situations involving specific students, but spoke generally about how such cases are addressed.

"The number one priority is assuring the safety of our students and staff and our continuous improvement plan

focuses on safe, healthy schools and social-emotional health," Julia Maguire, communications coordinator for the South Burlington School District, told the Independent.

Maguire referenced her district's policies and procedures on student conduct and discipline, which outline the responsibilities of students in contributing "to a safe and productive learning environment," and of administrators in responding to student misconduct.

Addison Northwest School District Superintendent Sheila Soule said that instances of students facing criminal charges or safety concerns are "an extremely rare occurrence" in the

Vergennes-area school district. The district's top priority is ensuring the safety and well-being of its students, she said.

"Our district is committed to creating a safe and inclusive learning environment for all students," Soule said. "In instances where a student is facing accusations or safety concerns, we follow a thorough and fair process that takes into account the individual circumstances of each case. We work closely with law enforcement and other relevant agencies to ensure that our response aligns with legal requirements and best practices."

The Addison Central School District's policy on student conduct outlines the responsibility of each student to contribute to a safe and productive learning environment in school. The policy also states that the school principal, along with educational staff, will develop an overall discipline plan in accordance with state law.

According to the district's policy, Youth behavior → 31

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OBITUARY

Stella Elizabeth Sarandrea, 72

Stella Elizabeth Sarandrea, age 72, of Chittenden, Vermont, passed away peacefully on Nov. 27, 2023, at Rutland Regional Medical Center. Born in Utica, Stella spent the majority of her life in the Oneida area of New York, where she graduated from Oneida High School with the Class of 1970. She furthered her education at the American Banking Institute and embarked on a fulfilling career as an accountant and banker. She successfully ran the mainframe at Oneida Valley National Bank and later worked for AMSA armored car service. She retired from The Roman Catholic Diocese in Albany, New York.

On April 18, 1970, Stella married the love of her life, James T. Sarandrea, at St. Patrick's Church in Oneida. Their union lasted an incredible 53 years, a testament to the enduring

Sarandrea → 7



Submitted

Stella Elizabeth Sarandrea

Rutland County Head Start to open Early Head Start infant, toddler program this winter

Rutland County Head Start, which operates within the Rutland Community Programs division of Community Care Network (CCN), announced Dec. 5, the implementation of its new Early Head Start program designed to provide high-quality care for infants and toddlers.

"Rutland County Head Start has long recognized the increasing need for quality infant and toddler services in Rutland County, and we are so excited to be able to now offer this essential program to families in our region," said Donna Barrow, director of Rutland County Head Start. "Quality early childhood care and education is vital to the successful development of a child's social and emotional skills, and is paramount to laying the groundwork for continued future success throughout a child's educational path."

The new Early Head Start program, which will be hosted at Rutland County Head Start's Meadow Street and Discovery Center facilities in Rutland beginning in late-December, will offer 27 openings for children ages birth to 3, in addition to the 45 existing openings currently offered to children ages 3 to 5 through the traditional Head Start program.

Leveraging improved classroom environments made possible through grant funding provided by The Bouse Trust and Let's Grow Kids — including cribs and rest areas, indoor and outdoor play areas and spaces for parents to engage with teachers and family advocates, the Early Head Start program will function around the Creative Curriculum model, the leading and top-rated whole-child curriculum to

support infants, toddlers, preschoolers and their caregivers.

Additionally, in collaboration with trained professionals from CCN's Rutland Mental Health Services, Early Head Start will be offering attending families a range of supplemental self-care and parenting support services including the Circle of Security program, the Parents and Babies Stress Management program and other specialized parent and child treatment options.

CCN is comprised of Rutland Mental Health Services and Rutland Community Programs. The programs of Community Care Network serve more than 3,000 people each year throughout Rutland County across the areas of behavioral health, developmental disabilities, substance use

"These events...directly get people into their shops, their restaurants, and it creates new customers," said Saltis.

recovery, senior and volunteer, and early childhood education services.

"A hallmark of Head Start and Early Head Start is a holistic approach spanning health and safety, education, nutrition and family wrap-around services, all delivered by loving, committed caregivers and teachers," said Barrow.

Dick Courcelle, chief executive officer of Community Care Network, emphasized both the vision and need for the Early Head Start program in the Rutland area, as well as the importance of community support during its development.

Head Start → 7

Remembering Verlene Peck Belden, 91

Verlene Peck Belden, 91, passed away peacefully on Dec. 9 after a courageous 10-year battle with Alzheimer's, surrounded by her loving family and enjoying the view of Lake Bomoseen.

Verlene was born on Dec. 2, 1932, and grew up in Londonderry, where she attended grade school. Her mother died after a long illness when Verlene was 13, and her father passed away the next year. As the oldest of three children, she took on caring for her family at an early age. She carried this sense of responsibility and strong work ethic with her throughout her life. She graduated from Chester High School in 1950 and attended Bryant College in Providence, Rhode Island. After first meeting on the school bus during high school, she married her high school sweetheart, Bruce Kent Belden, on Feb. 3, 1951. Bruce and Verlene spent the last 42



Submitted

Verlene Peck Belden

summers on Lake Bomoseen and owned a winter home in Naples Florida for 35 years. They were to celebrate their 73rd anniversary in February.

Verlene and Bruce began their family in an old 24-foot trailer while they worked and lived at the Belmont Drive-In Theater in Bellows Falls. They then had the opportunity to work at a new up-and-coming ski area called Mount Snow, in Dover. During their Mount Snow days, they also built and operated a 30-guest inn, the Sundown Lodge, in West Do-

ver. Verlene was the innkeeper while raising four young children. Seeing an opportunity in the ski industry, Bruce and Verlene led a group of investors and purchased Pico Ski Area in 1964. For 23 years, Verlene was instrumental in the growth and prosperity of Pico as she managed the business office. Bruce was a hands-

Belden → 9

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Courtesy of the Downtown Rutland Partnership

← Jingle Bell Shop: from page 1

shop Hand Carved by Ernie greeted guests with a complimentary reuben slider.

The Jingle Bell Shop is beneficial for businesses, too. Many customers find businesses they didn't even know existed, and end up coming back with friends.

"These events...directly get people into their shops, their

restaurants, and it creates new customers," said Saltis. "We've had people tell us that they've been really interested in checking out a business, so this gives them an opportunity to go someplace for the first time. [The owners of Hand Carved by Ernie] said that a person

"These events...directly get people into their shops, their restaurants, and it creates new customers," said Saltis.

that had attended one of these events came back the next week to have lunch there. It really does create lifelong relationships with new customers and businesses."

Frog Hollow Farmstead in Hubbardton is one of those small businesses enjoying the opportunity for connection. Owner Jason Reinke set up shop inside Pyramid Holistic Wellness Center and offered customers a sample of his family's homemade crackers,

cheese, and granola. Made primarily with ingredients the Reinke family either grows or forages for, their food is an authentic taste of Rutland County.

"It was fun to meet people," said Reinke. "We get to talk to people in a more one-on-one fashion which we really enjoy... so we keep doing it. Keep coming back"



Stay Healthy This Winter

"This is viral season so having great hand hygiene is key. We want to encourage everyone to stay healthy by washing their hands for at least 20 seconds with soap and water and avoid touching their face at all costs. We also encourage community members to get vaccinated for influenza and COVID. People 60 or older should consult with their provider for the RSV vaccine."

Nkiruka A. Emeagwali, MS, MD, PhD
Pulmonary & Critical Care Medicine



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← Chef Ley: from page 1

ton — a role he started Nov. 13. “I grew up in the area, so this has always been part of my life,” he said.

Ley’s cooking roots started in Vermont. He grew up in an Italian household and remembers helping cook sauce and meatballs as a 9-year-old child.

“I often hovered around the kitchen to see what was going on,” he said. “I’d do whatever.”

He soon started making his own meals. If he stayed home sick from school, his mom knew he was better when he started experimenting in the kitchen.

“My mother would be like, so you’re going to school tomorrow,” Ley said.

Ley attended the culinary program at Stafford Technical Center while in high school. “It’s what came to me,” Ley said. “I was at a loss when I was talking to my guidance counselor. I didn’t know what career path I wanted. I was checking the vocational culinary program and after a conversation with him, he said ‘it sounds like’ you’re right for that.’ Forty years later, I’m still loving it.”

Ley is hands on with his food — preparing meals like a floral arrangement (another favorite hobby of his). He cuts vegetables to make them aesthetically pleasing.

“It’s art more than it is a meal,” he said. “It’s just filling my interests, my soul.”

Ley plans to serve elevated comfort food, including “clean straightforward flavors and approachable food at fair price” at Rosemary’s.

For Ley, it feels like he’s coming home. He grew up hiking the Long Trail and Deer’s Leap. He remembers stopping at Rosemary’s on his way through to grab a stew and a genesis.

“It was always a thing,” he said. “It’s my life. It’s been my life,” he said. “I can’t expect that it’s going to be that for everybody. But I want (people I work with) to feel my enthusiasm. I want them to be as excited about the dishes as I am.”

Mauch takes the helm at VSC

By Peter D’Auria/VTDigger

Elizabeth Mauch, the president of Bethany College in Lindsborg, Kansas, will be the next chancellor of the Vermont State Colleges, trustees announced last week.

Mauch will step into the position on Jan. 1, replacing outgoing chancellor Sophie Zdatny. In that role, Mauch will oversee the two institutions that make up the state colleges system: Vermont State University and the Community College of Vermont.

“This is a critical time to shape the future of public higher and continuing education in Vermont, as higher education rapidly evolves and changes across the country,” Mauch said in a Dec. 29 press release.

“I look forward to collaborating with state and community leaders, our institutions and their teams, and our faculty, staff, and students to build a thriving Vermont State Colleges system that continues to transform lives and communities across the state,” she said.

Mauch has spent three years as the president of Bethany College, a private Lutheran institution with roughly 750 students as of the fall of 2022. She has also held faculty and leadership positions at Pennsylvania’s Bloomsburg University.



Submitted

Elizabeth Mauch will take over as the next VSC chancellor. She starts Jan. 1.

Rep. Lynn Dickinson, R-St. Albans Town, the chair of the Vermont State Colleges board of trustees, touted Mauch’s “impressive experience in bringing strategic and visionary approaches to leadership” in the press release.

“The board is confident in Mauch’s ability to implement ongoing progress and secure continued support of system-wide transformation,” Dickinson said.

Vermont State University has spent

years undergoing a series of structural changes in response to financial struggles. The institution, also known as VTSU, formally launched this summer through the merger of Castleton University, Northern Vermont University, and Vermont Technical College.

This fall, administrators announced a slate of wide-ranging cuts across VTSU’s multiple campuses. Those cuts have stoked anger amid faculty, staff

VSC → 7



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UVM's Community News Service to expand reporting in central Vermont with grant

Lily Doton hired to manage student reporting partnership at VTSU-Castleton

UVM's Community News Service, a pioneering student reporting program that provides professional-level reporting to local news partners across Vermont, is expanding coverage in central Vermont thanks to a grant from the Vermont Community Foundation. The VCF Hills & Hollows Fund will support a 2024 reporting collaboration between Vermont State University - Castleton and local news outlets including The Rutland Herald, Lakes Region Free Press and Mountain Times.

"Local news outlets need more local stories and area students interested in communications careers need experience. This partnership helps fulfill both needs," said David Blow, award-winning journalist and Communications professor at VTSU-Castleton. "My hope is that students get energized from being published and making an impact on their communities."

Recent Castleton graduate Lily Doton has been hired to serve as the editor of this initiative, guiding students in their coverage of Rutland County's distinct culture, environment, community happenings and leaders. As an undergraduate, Doton was a reporter, copy editor and managing editor of the Castleton Spartan student newspaper. She has a degree in media and communications.

"I am so excited to be a part of the Community News Service and to expand the program to include student journalists here in central Vermont," said Doton. "I'm looking forward to exercising and improving my own journalistic skills and hope that this can create opportunities for current students to do the same."

Founded in 2019, UVM's Community News Service provides local and hyperlocal reporting (in print, audio and video) to community papers at no cost. Students work under the direction of professional editors and reporters, gaining hands-on reporting and writing skills and engaging closely with Vermont communities. Since its founding, CNS has provided hundreds of news stories - including breaking and investigative work - to dozens of news outlets across Vermont.

The success of CNS also inspired the establishment of the national Center for Community News at UVM in 2022, which is working to grow and strengthen news-academic partnerships like this one across the country.

UVM's Community News Service continues to grow in its partnerships with news outlets and schools across the state, opening new doors to young people who want to live and work in Vermont, and helping to sustain a thriving landscape of local news.

Head Start: from page 4

"Rutland County Head Start is known for high-quality programming, and the Early Head Start program too will be based on best practices and the highest quality standards of care, which are crucial to healthy development and learning," said Courcelle. "We are incredibly thankful for the seed funding provided to help kickstart this new program, as well as the strong backing we received from Vermont's congressional delegation, namely Senator Bernie Sanders, Senator Peter Welch and Representative Becca Balint, which underscored the important role Head Start plays in supporting family stabilization and school readiness for children and families here in Rutland County."

For more information, visit: rutlandcountyheadstart.org or rmhscn.org.

VSC: from page 6

and students, some of whom have called for the elimination of the chancellor's office as a cost-saving measure.

But trustees have rebuffed that demand. "Proposing to cut the Chancellor's Office is neither serious nor reasonable," Dickinson argued in a Nov. 28 opinion piece for VT Digger. "With two statewide institutions, a shared services organization, and an even greater demand for nimble and strategic leadership, the chancellor's role is essential to the success of the state colleges system and securing continued progress of the ongoing transformation."

Mauch told the Seven Days newspaper that she and her husband wanted to move to Vermont to be closer to their daughter, who is a first-year student at Middlebury College. They recently bought a house in Cornwall.

Library leadership: from page 2

Nov. 7 that she had been dismissed "without consideration, explanation or due process."

"I still have not heard from the board providing me any reason for my dismissal," she said, while reading from a prepared note. "The manner in which the library board has managed this dismissal is unacceptable."

Barnes, who formerly worked at the New York Public Library, moved to Pawlet with her family and was selected among seven candidates as the library director two years ago.

The termination happened just after the board voted to give a raise to the director.

On Nov. 3, the Vermont Library Association named Barnes a "one of the remarkable librarians...who have made significant impact within their local communities."

"We were particularly impressed with your creativity and committed focus of your seed library, tech time sessions, after school nature club and listing of community connections on your website."

"The manner in which the library board has managed this dismissal is unacceptable," former Pawlet Library Director Lyndsi Barnes said.

The dismissal baffled residents.

The Select Board received 20 written letters from community members, saying Barnes spearheaded projects, including a seed library, and received numerous grants.

Sue LaPorte said the library has become more welcoming under Barnes' leadership.

"The library board has overstepped their authority and treated our faith in them with disdain," LaPorte wrote in a letter.

Residents asked the board for transparency.

"No matter the reasoning behind the firing, due process is still required,"

Brooke Hughes-Muse wrote in a letter.

While most of the letters were supportive of Barnes, a few residents raised concern about Barnes' direction.

Lucy Norman said Barnes "appeared to lack respect for library employees and volunteers, for community traditions, and, since she was so often not present at the library, for the regularity our community expects."

Sarandrea: from page 4

strength of their love. Stella's devotion to her family was unwavering, as she embraced her roles as a loving wife, mother, and grandmother.

Stella's life was characterized by strength, kindness, and a genuine positive attitude. Her caring nature extended beyond her family, and she consistently placed the well-being of others before herself. An animal lover and nature enthusi-

was baking cookies with her granddaughter, Bree, creating fond memories that will be treasured forever.

Stella is survived by her devoted husband Jim, her son Jimi (Beth), and granddaughter Bree. She is also survived by her two brothers, Frank and Jake, and three sisters, Sharon, Mayme, and Ella, along with many nieces and nephews. Also her two kittens, Mischief and Frisky.

A woman of many talents, Stella was a passionate gardener who found solace in nature. She enjoyed camping, biking, and wasn't afraid to speak her mind.

ast, Stella found joy in the simple pleasures of life, always expressing gratitude for what she had. Calm and enduring, her loving demeanor left a lasting impact on all fortunate enough to know her.

A woman of many talents, Stella was a passionate gardener who found solace in nature. She enjoyed camping, biking, and wasn't afraid to speak her mind. She loved playing with her kitties and spending time with her many beloved pets throughout her life. One of her cherished activities

Preceded in death by her sister Alvina, her Aunt Marie, and her mother Dorethea Schmidtko, Stella's memory was honored at Malecki's Funeral Home in Sheril, New York, on Friday, Dec. 1. A remembrance ceremony followed.

The family requests that donations be made in Stella's name to the Rutland County Humane Society, reflecting her love for animals. This gesture serves as a fitting tribute to a woman whose warmth, strength, and generosity touched the lives of many.

Other residents said Barnes would not let homeschoolers use the library basement.

Sara Rodich said the library appeared closed when it should have been open and she overheard Barnes arguing with staff.

"A library is the heart of a community and Pawlet Library was feeling incredibly cold this last year," Rodich said.

Kat Zimmel said Barnes prevented her from using the library for homeschool and a handwork circle group without paying a fee.

"It is astounding how a librarian and especially a director so invested in community outreach - could be so non-inclusive and downright unwelcoming to our little homeschool and handwork circle community," wrote Zimmel.

Assistant Librarian Adelle Santwir is leading the library in the meantime. The trustees unanimously voted Dec. 7 to raise Santwir's salary to \$22.05 per hour for the interim time.

The trustees also discussed holding a warned meeting, with public comment, to include an executive session with counsel as soon as it could be arranged.

NRB to host online public meeting on Act 250 legislative study

The Natural Resources Board will host an online public meeting to present its draft legislative report “Necessary Updates to the Act 250 Program.”

The online public meeting will be held Thursday, Dec. 15 from 5:30-7:30 p.m.

Act 182 of 2022 and Act 47 of 2023 directed the Natural Resources Board with reporting to the House Committees on Environment and Energy and Ways and Means and the Senate Committees on Finance and Natural Resources and Energy on “necessary updates to the Act 250 program,” on or before Dec. 31, 2023.

In June, the NRB and its facilitation team convened a stakeholder Steering Committee to help the NRB design and implement a robust process for stakeholder input and build consensus among stakeholders with divergent perspectives.

Under the terms of Act 182 and Act 47, the NRB’s report to the Legislature shall include:

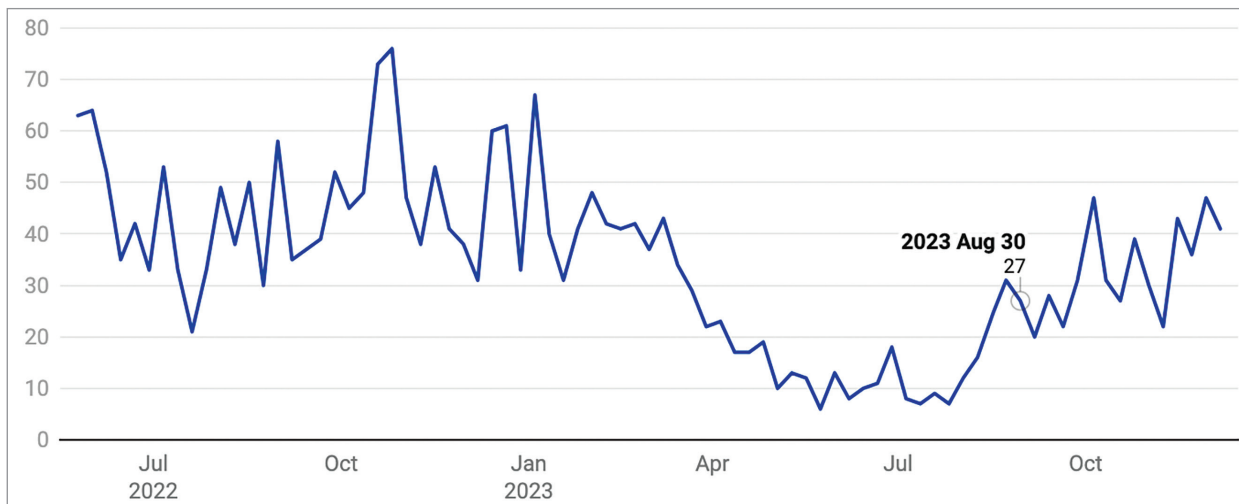
1. How to transition to a system in which Act 250 jurisdiction is based on location, which shall encourage development in designated areas, the maintenance of intact rural working lands, and the protection of natural resources of statewide significance, including biodiversity. Location-based jurisdiction would adjust the threshold for Act 250 jurisdiction based on the characteristics of the location. This section of the report shall consider whether to develop thresholds and tiers of jurisdiction as recommended in the Commission on Act 250: the Next 50 Years Report.
2. How to use the capability and development plan to meet the statewide planning goals.
3. An assessment of the current level of staffing of the Board and District Commissions, including whether there should be a district coordinator located in every district.
4. Whether the permit fees are sufficient to cover the costs of the program and, if not, a recommendation for a source of revenue to supplement the fees.
5. Whether the permit fees are effective in providing appropriate incentives.
6. Whether the Board should be able to assess its costs on applicants.
7. Whether increasing jurisdictional thresholds for housing development to 25 units would affect housing affordability, especially for primary homeownership, and what the potential impact of increasing those thresholds to 25 units would have on natural and community resources addressed under existing Act 250 criteria.
8. A proposed framework for delegating administration of Act 250 permits to municipalities.

Public input and feedback on draft recommendations will be incorporated into the report.

More information on the report can be found at necessary updates to the Act 250 Program on the NRB website. Questions or comments may be submitted to the NRB general inbox. Deadline for submission is Dec. 15.

The meeting can be accessed at nrb.vermont.gov/virtual-public-meeting-12-14-23.

How to transition to a system... which shall encourage development in designated areas.



By Erin Petenko/VTDigger, data from Dept. of Health

Weekly Covid-19 hospital admissions in Vermont

Chart shows how many people were newly admitted to a hospital in Vermont for Covid-19 each week. Note: the hospital admissions count for the week of Oct. 4, 2023, was revised down from 64 to 47.

Vt sees post-Thanksgiving Covid outbreaks in schools, long-term care facilities

By Erin Petenko/VTDigger

Seven long-term care facilities and one school reported Covid-19 outbreaks in the week following Thanksgiving, an uptick from the weeks prior to the holiday, the Vermont Department of Health reported Wednesday.

Although the health department noted in their weekly report that overall Covid levels remained “low,” the outbreaks come at a time when Vermont has typically seen a surge in holiday-related transmission.

The long-term care outbreaks led to 17 Covid cases among residents and 21 cases among staff, according to John Davy, an epidemiologist from the health department. None of the cases have led to hospitalizations. “While we can’t predict what might happen, from what has been reported to us these seem to be well-managed,” Davy said via email.

Vermont also had at least one school-related outbreak at the Lake Champlain Waldorf School in Shelburne. Emily Bayer-Pacht, the head of school, said via email that the administration decided to close the lower grades this Thursday and Friday after nine faculty members tested positive for Covid.

Combined with two staff members who were absent for unrelated reasons, the

elevated compared to the summer, while data points like emergency room visits

The department reported eight additional Covid deaths, bringing November’s total up to 19, a decrease from October’s 25 deaths. In total, 1,075 people have died of Covid in Vermont since the beginning of the pandemic.

In a separate report, the department said that flu activity was “minimal,” with emergency room visits for flu-like illness remaining far below the previous flu season.

About 17% of Vermonters are up to date on the latest Covid vaccine, according to the department. It also reported that 29% of Vermonters have received this year’s flu vaccine.

For more information, visit: HealthVermont.gov.

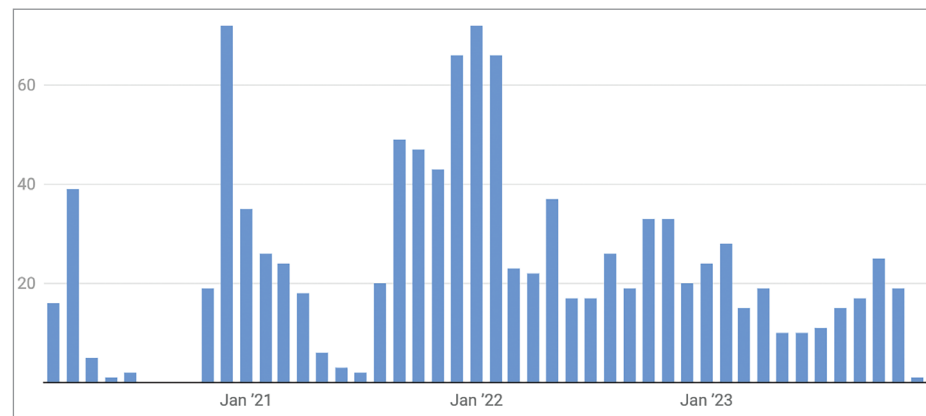
About 17% of Vermonters are up to date on the latest Covid vaccine... 29% of Vermonters have received this year’s flu vaccine.

school didn’t have enough staffing to run its early childhood education and elementary school programs, Bayer-Pacht wrote. She added that she hopes the closure “will also slow the spread of illness in our community.”

Davy described the overall picture of Covid in Vermont as “mixed,” with some metrics, like hospitalizations, seeming

for Covid-like symptoms have stayed relatively low. Wastewater data was also mixed, with some testing locations reporting rising Covid levels and others reporting flat or declining levels.

The health department reported 41 hospital admissions for Covid in the past week, roughly in line with the average for the previous four weeks.



By Erin Petenko/VTDigger, data from Dept. of Health

Monthly Covid-19 deaths reported in Vermont

Chart shows how many have died from Covid-19 each month since the pandemic began. Note: the most recent month is a partial total.

← **Fleming:**
from page 2

funding campaign that Brown organized. Powers, 82, who has met Brown only once, said he was surprised by Brown's initiative and stunned by the reward amount he'd offered. "Dean and I decided on the spot that we had to match it," Powers said in an email, referring to his 42-year-old son.

When asked whether he'd considered putting up a monetary reward to help police solve the case, Powers said his thoughts had

"He stole the sense of safety and security that everyone in the town of Castleton has come to enjoy," Brown, said.

been consumed by how to live without his life partner. She was killed on their 45th wedding anniversary.

"In the days and weeks following this atrocity I wasn't thinking about much of anything except Honoree and bracing myself for living on without her," Powers said. "I'm still pretty much the same. But I'm glad it's in the works," he said of the reward fund.

Powers said he and Fleming had walked the D&H Rail Trail together many times over the years, but that she'd gone alone on the day she was killed. "I will never stop regretting that I didn't walk beside her to defend her or die with her," he said on social media last week.

Brown, who has owned Brown's Auto Salvage since 1976, said he initiated raising the reward money because he wanted to help

his community recover from the distress of knowing someone was shot to death in broad daylight at a popular walking trail.

"He stole the sense of safety and security that everyone in the town of Castleton has come to enjoy," Brown, 65, said of Fleming's attacker. "We want to make sure that people know that if you're going to commit a crime in the town of Castleton, the whole community is going to get behind it. We're not going to look the other way."

Brown is hoping the monetary incentive will encourage someone with information about Fleming's killer to come forward. "This

is a horrible crime and someone needs to be held accountable for it," he said. "We're hoping that that happens soon."

Castleton Police Chief Peter Mantello echoed state police remarks about the case's current status, saying there have been no significant developments since the person of interest's sketch was released in mid-October.

Powers has written about the death of his younger son, Kevin, by suicide in 2005, after struggling with schizophrenia for three years. He said he derives strength and comfort to go on each day from his surviving son, Dean, who was also diagnosed with schizophrenia and has been undergoing treatment.

"He has had more than his share of knocks in life, but he is a lion," Powers wrote. "And he's the biggest reason I'm not giving up."

← **Belden:**
from page 4

on operator, which meant Verlene was the go-to person in the early years while he was out climbing lift towers and trouble-shooting wherever needed. The ski area phone even rang in their home so she could answer at all hours, fielding questions and giving daily snow condition reports late at night.

Verlene loved to give back to her community. She was a member of the Fair Haven Congregational Church and volunteered for years as the church secretary. She organized church suppers and fundraisers, helped create biblical gardens, and more. She was also a volunteer docent at the Nature Conservancy of Southwest Florida in Naples, Florida. Verlene and Bruce enjoyed countless sailing adventures that began with their first wooden boat on Shelburne Bay. They raced in the Lightning class regattas on Lake Bomoseen and sailed extensively in the Gulf of Mexico, from Key West to St. Petersburg and all points in between, often with the Marco Island Sailing Club. Verlene was an excellent skier and tennis player, avid gardener and was the biggest fan of all her children's and grandchildren's activities. She was also an excellent hostess. She loved to have a good time and was always the first one out on the dance floor, the life of the party.

More than anything, she loved her time with family. In addition to other travels, she and Bruce drove and/or flew out West and to Alaska several times to spend time with

children and grandchildren. Summers on Lake Bomoseen with her grandchildren and their winter visits to Naples, Florida brought her much joy. Verlene was blessed to have such a fulfilling life journey and will be greatly missed.

She is survived by her devoted husband of over 72 years, Bruce; their four children: Deborah, Leslie (Roger), Kent (Bonnie) and Kurt; their seven grandchildren; Lindsay, Chelsea, Justin, Carly (Ty), Kipp, Pyper and Luca; three great-grandchildren; Jonah, Boden and Ryder, and her cat Sybil. She is also survived by siblings Oliver Peck and Lucille Stone and her nephew Brian Fitzgerald. Verlene was predeceased by her grandson Seth Holden, son-in-law Jerry Dixon, sister-in-law Kaye Peck, and her parents, Hazel and Raymond Peck.

The family would like to extend their profound gratitude to the staff at Bayada, Bayada Hospice, At Home Senior Care, and all the individuals who helped care for Verlene over the years.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation to the Alzheimer's Association of Vermont at alz.org/vermont or to BAYADA Hospice at 190 S Main Street Suite 2 in Rutland in honor of Verlene. Calling hours will be held at the Clifford Funeral Home on Friday Dec. 15 from 4-6 p.m. A funeral service will be held Saturday Dec. 16 at the United Church of Benson at 1 p.m. Burial will be at the family plot in Benson.



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GUEST EDITORIAL

Who's to blame for rising education spending?

By Rep. Erin Brady, Rep. Rebecca Holcombe and Rep. Monique Priestley

Editor's note: Rep. Erin Brady, of Williston, is an active public school teacher; Rep. Rebecca Holcombe of Windsor-Orange 2, is the former Vermont Secretary of Education; and Rep. Monique Priestley, of Orange-2, is the tri-partisan Rural Caucus clerk.

Governor Scott recently described an average projected increase in education property taxes of almost 18% as “unacceptable” and asked school boards to control costs. We agree that people across the state are worried about affordability, from higher tax rates to out of control housing costs. But school boards cannot control state level drivers of higher cost any more than they can solve the evils of poverty on their own.

We hope to work with the Governor to tackle state level drivers of that education spending. As one superintendent told the Valley News, many of the factors behind growing school budgets are out of the control of boards, including skyrocketing health insurance costs, our housing crisis, and cost shifting from state to local budgets for a host of human services. We would add use of public school budgets for what amounts to private benefits.

Here are a few ways Governor Scott could meaningfully reduce property tax burdens:

Lead on health care reform

Health care spending consistently grows faster than education spending. One in five dollars Vermonters spend is spent on health care. School districts face a 16% increase in health care premiums this year — an increase twice the rate of inflation. These increases occur year after year and Vermont increases outstrip national increases, burdening employers and individuals across the state — not just school districts. Sadly, 40% of insured Vermonters under age 65 (much of our workforce) are underinsured, meaning their health care costs exceed what their incomes can bear. Schools cannot fix our health care crisis. The Governor can join the legislature in working on the sustainability of our health care spending, a process the legislature began with Act 167.

Focus resources on development of workforce housing

Housing shortages drive up housing costs, locking seniors in homes they struggle to afford and locking young families out of the housing market. That means fewer kids in our schools, higher costs per pupil, and skyrocketing tax rates. In a vicious cycle, higher tax rates make it even less likely families will move in. Governor Scott should lead on developing municipal infrastructure that supports smart development including municipal wastewater systems in the least affordable communities, conditional on development of climate-friendly affordable housing. This would lower the cost of housing development and make higher density possible — where it makes sense. In turn, this development refills our schools, builds our tax base, lowers per pupil tax rates, and addresses our workforce crisis.

Fund state agencies so school districts don't have to pay for state cuts

Our mental health crisis doesn't go away when the Governor cuts state budgets, as he effectively proposes this year by capping the state mental health department's budget at 3% growth — a number half the rate of inflation. Cutting state resources for mental health services displaces these costs onto already strained schools — the payers of last resort. Adequately funding state mental health services both keeps people healthy

Education spending → 12



Everyone has been naughty by John Darkow, Columbia Missourian

LETTERS

No one wants to see a bear in their kitchen

Dear Editor,

Down in Montpelier, groups are actively trying to persuade legislators to ban the use of dogs to hunt bears. They either don't realize or don't care, that their goal would make us all much less safe. Everybody loves to see bears.

These amazing creatures are fun to watch in the wild. But no one wants to see a bear in their kitchen and that is what is at stake here.

A wheelchair bound New Hampshire woman was attacked in her own kitchen by a bear in search of food. The attack cost her an eye! While there are only a few of these types of incidents, each one of them was a terrifying ordeal involving older ladies and even a child in his own backyard. Bears are large and potentially dangerous wild animals, and their main function in life is to find food and to create more bears.

Bears have a powerful sense of smell, which brings them into the smells that come from our kitchens,

cookouts, backyards, parks, and campgrounds. They can be unpredictable when food is at stake. And they can easily become habituated to getting their food in these places where we don't want them.

Hunting bears using dogs helps keep all Vermonters safe.

That's where hunters come in. The barking and baying of the hounds is like a siren to the bears, teaching them that being close to people is not where food is easy to find. Bears that are pursued by hunters with hounds become conditioned to flee the presence of people, and that is exactly what diminishes the potential for dangerous encounters.

A prohibition on hunting bears with dogs will remove this deterrent, and put people, most likely children and the elderly, more at risk, not to mention our pets and farm animals. Only a few people

Bears → 11

Leave Santa vegan cookies

Dear Editor,

Greetings from the North Pole! As the holidays approach, I wanted to share some exciting changes happening in Christmas preparations this year.

In the spirit of embracing sustainability, I am delighted to announce that our beloved reindeer will be retiring to a beautiful sanctuary. They have served tirelessly, guiding my sleigh through snow and stars for years, and it's time for them to graze peacefully and bask in the care they deserve.

In their place, we will be introducing a new, eco-friendly electric sleigh. This change aligns with our commitment to reducing our carbon hoofprint and taking steps towards a greener, more sustainable future.

But that's not all! This year, I've made a personal choice to embrace a vegan lifestyle. In doing so, I encourage families around the world to join me in spreading kindness to all beings. Instead of the traditional

Vegan → 12

Thanks for your support of ESBR

Dear Editor,

It is with deep gratitude that the Ludlow Expeditionary School announces another successful fundraiser to help support the school. For its Giving Tuesday 2023 Campaign, ESBR once again had several anonymous (“Angel”) donors offer a Matching Fund Challenge of up to \$7,000 to be doubled. Thanks to the support of many wonderful believers in this cause, ESBR efforts raised \$8,688. This means the \$7,000 will be donated by the Angel Donors, bringing the grand total of funds raised for the school from the Giving Tuesday 2023 Campaign to \$15,688.

ESBR is extremely grateful both to the match challenge donors as well as the numerous generous supporters who made sure this opportunity was achieved. The school continues to communicate updates with the Vermont State Board of Education so as to renew the one-year Independent Approval for

ESBR → 12

CAPITOL QUOTES

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy met with President Joe Biden at the White House Tuesday, Dec. 12, to discuss the impasse in Washington over more aid in the war with Russia. He also met with lawmakers on Capitol Hill.

“We will continue to use the tools at our disposal to promote accountability for Russia’s crimes in Ukraine and those who finance and support Russia’s war machine,”

Secretary of State **Antony Blinken** said in a statement.

“I think there is a perception around the world that no matter how much you help or don’t help, Ukraine, Ukrainians are going to win,”

Oleksandra Ustinova, the chair of a temporary special commission set up to handle the flow of military aid into the country, told CNN.

“If he gets the help he needs, he will win. If we lose, Putin wins, and this is very, very dangerous for the United States,”

Senate Majority Leader **Chuck Schumer** said, calling Zelenskyy’s meeting with lawmakers on Capitol Hill Tuesday “very powerful.”

“What does it mean in the future when the United States says, ‘We’re on your side?’ Does it mean anything if we walk away from Ukraine? I don’t think so,”

said Senate Majority Whip **Dick Durbin**, D-Ill.

COMMENTARY

Vermont can’t afford to shortchange our children

By Don Tinney

Editor’s note: Don Tinney is a longtime English teacher at BFA-St. Albans and president of Vermont-NEA, a union representing 13,000 educators in the state.

At a time when our state’s children need us more than ever, Gov. Phil Scott this week returned to his same, tired rhetoric about why we can’t give our public schools — and the people who learn and teach in them — the support they need.

With the release of the Vermont Department of Taxes’ annual projection of education property tax rates Nov. 30, the governor pounced on the idea that local taxpayers and school boards need to impose radical cuts that, in the end, are harmful for our state’s children. Indeed, with his gloom-and-doom rhetoric, the governor is trying to scare taxpayers instead of offering solutions that will give our state’s children and our public schools the resources they need to address huge, long-standing issues.

Vermont is recovering from a global pandemic; dealing with the mental health crisis; struggling with an out-of-control drug addiction problem; facing the consequences of deferred school facility maintenance; and grappling with uncontrollable price increases from our for-profit healthcare system. The governor’s solution to addressing those challenges is the same as it’s always been during

his nearly eight years in office: we must cut the resources available to our kids because Vermont can’t afford it.

But let me flip that notion on its head. Families with a child struggling with mental illness cannot afford to be without mental health services. Students traveling to school cannot afford to be without qualified school bus drivers who will get them to school safely. Our children and youth faced with colds and flu

Gov. Scott wants to coddle the state’s rich at the expense of the state’s children...

cannot afford to be without the primary health care provided by school nurses. Struggling readers cannot afford to be without the support and instruction provided by a qualified educator. And students cannot learn in school buildings that are in dire need of repair.

Yes, education spending is increasing, and, yes, that might mean higher taxes. For years, however, we’ve learned that those tax increases fall harder on working Vermonters than they do on the state’s wealthiest. There are two reasons for this. The property tax, which is inherently regressive, costs a typical family more than it does the state’s wealthiest. And those same people have for years not been paying their fair share in income taxes.

But while Gov. Scott wants to coddle the state’s

Support education → 12

← Bears: from page 10

in Vermont hunt bears with dogs. And only a few people in Vermont oppose allowing them to do so. The rest of the people benefit from the deterrent that hunters create that helps keep our bears wild and less likely to wander where they don’t belong.

I’ve been working with and enjoying dogs my entire life. When I was 12 years old, I started running hounds with older houndsmen who inspired my interest and taught me not only about hounds but to respect the forests and everything in it. It was those experiences which made it possible for me to obtaining a BS degree in Animal Science from the University of Georgia and to be posted to the U.S. Army Combat Tracker Dog School. I’ve spent thousands of hours behind the dogs in the woods here in Vermont and all over New England. I am also a

Registered Maine Guide who understands wildlife behavior.

Together my life experiences have taught me the responsibility of taking care of and maintaining a well-trained pack of hounds, and the importance of keeping our wildlife wild.

In our society we have choices, we’re so prosperous as a nation, most of us don’t have to hunt for food. We can go to the grocery store or restaurants for our meals. But some of us choose to practice time honored traditions like hunting and fishing. We spend our spare time outdoors, where we pass on our respect for the land and wildlife to our own kids just as we learned when we were young. Our lifestyle teaches responsibility. The records show just how safe hunters are in the woods, and our dollars provide the

lion’s share of funding for wildlife management and habitat in Vermont.

A small subset of sportsmen and women love to hunt with dogs. Raising them and training them are enormous parts of our lives, and we invest thousands of hours and dollars into our beloved hunting companions. Investments such as GPS collars that help us keep hunting dogs where they belong.

Along the way, hunting bears using dogs helps keep all Vermonters safe, even those who don’t appreciate that fact. We don’t all have to agree with each other, and we don’t all have to do the same things, but we do need to learn to tolerate our differences. Allowing sportsmen and women to hunt bears with dogs provides public safety that is worth it for all of us.

Jim Harris, Fairlee

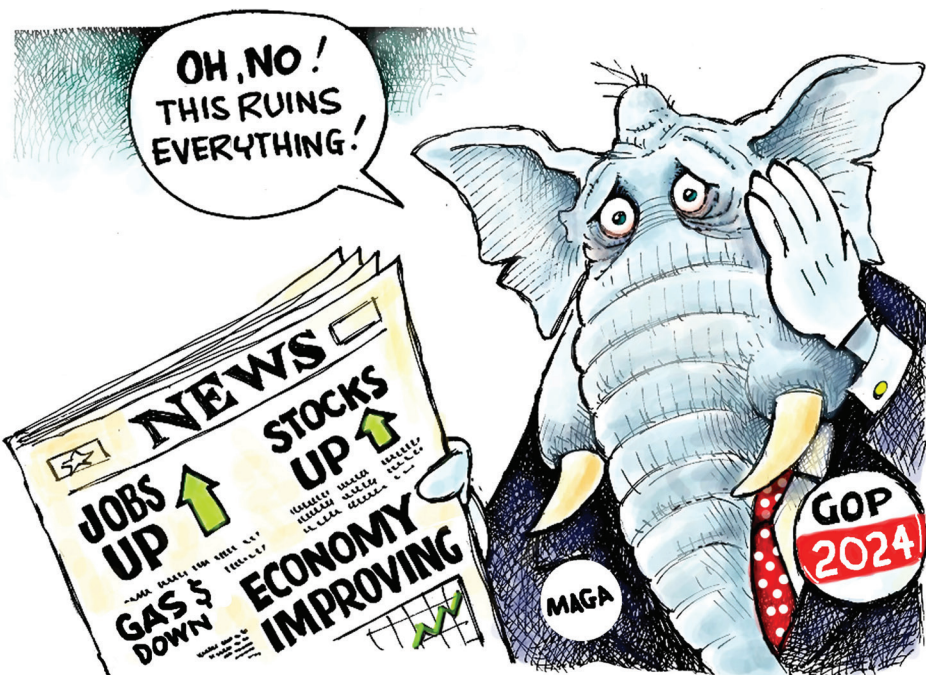
CARTOONS



Taylor Swift named Time's Person of the Year by Dave Whamond, Canada, PoliticalCartoons



The cost of war by Arcadio Esquivel, Costa Rica



U.S. econ positive news by Dave Granlund, PoliticalCartoons

← **Education spending:**
from page 10

and reduces our education property taxes.
Address unfunded school infrastructure liabilities

The Scott administration is aggressively testing school classrooms for PCBs, without realistic state investment in mitigation and without a coherent plan for what to do when PCBs are found. This is closing classrooms across the state and forcing school districts to fix these classrooms on their own, driving higher education spending. They have spent millions of dollars on loud filters that fill hallways, and yet recorded PCB levels are sometimes higher after so-called "mitigation" spending. Districts already face hundreds of millions of dollars of deferred investments in failing infrastructure. This problem screams for state leadership. The House took a first step by passing H.486. The Governor must get behind this bill and comprehensive approach.

Confront private school vouchers

Private school vouchers drive up tax rates for everyone — in order to pay for private benefits for the few. Prior to 1991, the academies were public schools in statute and they were

held to the same rules as public schools. Now, out of all taxpayer-funded private schools in Vermont, only Thetford Academy and The Sharon Academy commit to open enrollment and the higher quality standards the State Board of Education applies to public schools. While public schools are asked to hold the line, Vermont sends public school dollars to elite prep schools in other states and other countries, driving up the per pupil cost in our own schools. Public money is for public education, not private benefit. Any voucher to a school that doesn't serve a public purpose makes everyone pay more so a handful of people can have taxpayer-funded benefits that most children cannot access.

Enough is enough

We are all worried about affordability. If the Governor is serious about affordability, he'll step up on health care reform. He'll respond strategically to our housing crisis. He'll adequately fund state agencies, so that public schools don't pick up the bill for state cuts. And, he'll ensure the public education fund is used to provide excellent, equitable, and accessible public education for all children.

← **ESBR:**
from page 10

next school year, a feat like this is tremendous momentum moving forward. Opportunities such as the Matching Fund Challenge allows the school to expand and thrive, sustaining a school in this community which has always been a foremost goal. Every bit helps and everyone's contributions are visible within a unique setting such as ESBR. Thank you again everyone for the support, ESBR looks forward to sharing further exciting news in the near future.

Further information on ESBR is available at esblackriver.org. If you would like to learn more about the school or get involved, please contact Gary Blodgett, chair of the board, at gblodgett@esblackriver.org or 802-558-3147. Giving Tuesday 2023 link is available at the Expeditionary Committee Facebook Page. Donations can be made on the ESBR website or by mailing a check to P.O. Box 485, Ludlow, VT 05149.

*Marissa Selleck,
ESBR secretary*

← **Vegan:**
from page 10

cookies and milk, I kindly ask children to leave out vegan cookies and plant-based milk.

I understand change can be unexpected, but I hope these adjustments will inspire a sense of togetherness for our planet and its inhabitants.

Christmas is a time of love, generosity, and making the world brighter for all.

With festive cheer,
Kris Kringle a.k.a. Santa Claus (a.k.a. Lisa DeCrescente, Odenton, Maryland)

← **Support education:**
from page 11

rich at the expense of the state's children, there is a way to ensure students and schools aren't short-changed.

We've long advocated for eliminating the residential education property tax in favor of an education income tax. And we fully endorse efforts to raise taxes on households making more than \$500,000 a year, a move that will generate almost \$100 million annually.

Sadly, the governor has signaled that both of those options are unacceptable to him. He'd rather play the same, tired tune. How refreshing it would be if the governor would be looking at ways to unlock badly needed revenue from those Vermonters who can most afford it. Simply put, instead of complaining about the cost of doing right by our state's students and public schools, the governor could be calling on the state's wealthiest to pay their fair share so that all Vermonters can thrive.

Our public schools have enjoyed widespread support from local taxpayers year-after-year for centuries. Our public schools remain among the best in the nation and are treasured hubs of their communities. They are also critical in the maintenance of our democracy, and crucial in ensuring that our state's children can grow up to be happy, healthy, and engaged adults.

Rather than be a true partner in making sure our children get the resources they need and deserve, Phil Scott wants to scare local taxpayers and school boards into doing less.

Doing less when our needs demand more makes no sense.

While we know that the governor is unlikely to change his tune, we hope legislative leaders call his bluff and work this session on behalf of the state's children. We cannot afford to shortchange our future.

WORDPLAY

DECK THE HALLS WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards

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

ANGEL
 BELLS
 BOUGH
 CHRISTMASTREE
 DECORATE

DISPLAY
 FIREPLACE
 GARLAND
 HOLLY
 INFLATABLE

MANTEL
 MENORAH
 MISTLETOE
 NUTCRACKER
 ORNAMENTS

POINSETTIA
 SANTA
 SLEIGH
 SNOWMAN
 STAND

STOCKINGS
 STRINGED LIGHTS
 WINDOW
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SUDOKU Solutions → 21

How to Play

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

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

Level: Intermediate

CROSSWORD PUZZLE Solutions → 21

CLUES ACROSS

- Mimic
- Payroll firm
- Perform in a play
- Opine: ___ philosophical
- Crony
- Political action committee
- 1991 Wimbledon winner
- Affirmative
- Exclamation of disgust
- Action of connecting
- A way to calm
- Especially fine or decorative clothing
- Walked proudly
- Group of people related through male heir
- Supplemented with difficulty
- Soft touch
- Erases
- Spanish river
- A princess can detect it
- Clouds of gas
- A way to get through
- Part of a book
- Southwestern US state
- Fields where rice is grown
- Area in Ghana

CLUES DOWN

- Inspiring
- Put into a box
- Breathes out proudly
- Pacify
- Patriotic society for women
- Fell down
- Clothing
- Dishwasher detergent brand
- Former French republic
- Single lens reflex
- Men's fashion accessory
- Consumed
- Marry
- ___ up: intensifies
- Body of water
- People of southern Benin

		1	2	3		4	5	6		7	8	9			
			10				11				12				
13	14						15				16	17	18		
19					20				21	22					
23										24					
			25							26					
27	28	29							30			31	32	33	
34												35			
36			37	38	39	40			41	42	43	44			
				45						46					
47	48	49								50			51	52	53
54										55					
56								57	58				59		
			60					61					62		
			63					64					65		

- Decorate a cake with frosting
- Snag
- Yearly tonnage (abbr.)
- Records brain activity (abbr.)
- Car mechanics group
- Brought up to snuff
- ___ faire: Economic approach
- Phil ___, former CIA
- Affixed
- Period of adolescence
- Substance
- Danced
- Baked without its shell
- Parts per billion (abbr.)
- Satisfaction
- Balkans river
- Christmas carols
- Partner to tonic
- "The Godfather" character Johnny
- Swiss river

Guess Who?

I am an actress born in New York on December 12, 1970. I began my career as a child model and eventually segued into acting. I've been in films with Robert DeNiro, David Bowie, Tom Cruise, and Jennifer Aniston. Much of my work has garnered critical acclaim.

Answer: Jennifer Connelly

WEDNESDAY

12/13

Early Literacy Playgroup

10 a.m.-Noon. Weekly. Fox Room, Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. For 2-to-5-year-olds. Rutland County Parent-Child Center's Miss Allie, a certified teacher, leads a literacy-based playgroup. Light snacks will be provided, along with crafts, songs, games, and more. To register, email allie.griffiths@rcfcc.org. rutlandfree.org or 802-773-1860.

Winter Story Time

10:30-11:15 a.m. Fletcher Memorial Library, 88 Main St., Ludlow. Best suited for ages 5 and under. Free. Story Time is a weekly routine featuring early literacy activities, stories, songs, and crafts or science exploration. It's an opportunity for children to socialize and caregivers to connect. fmlnews.org or 802-228-8921

Blood Drive - Gift of Life Marathon (GOLM)

11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Elks Lodge #345 Hall, 44-46 Pleasant St., Rutland. Free. Maximize your blood donation and help more patients. Enter GOLMWINTER at redcrossblood.org to schedule an appointment. Visit redcrossblood.org/rapidpass to streamline your donation experience and save time. redcrossblood.org

Cribbage for Adults

3-5 p.m. Weekly. Hartland Public Library, 153 Route 5, Hartland. Free. Join a group gathering of adult cribbage players at the library's meeting room. hartlandlibraryvt.org or 802-436-2473

Michelob Ultra Ski Bum Race Series

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Weekly. Killington Resort. The Michelob ULTRA Ski Bum Race Series is a weekly race that takes place on the Highline ski trail every Wednesday from Jan. 3 to March 1, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Visit the Killington Ski Club before your first race to claim your bib number & shirt. killington.com. Join us for the Michelob ULTRA Ski Bum registration party, 4-7 p.m. at Mogul's Sports Pub, 2630 Killington Road, Killington. \$60 per individual. Enjoy Michelob ULTRA specials and complimentary appetizers for Ski Bum participants.

Tales to Tails: Kids Reading to Dogs

5-6 p.m. Weekly. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St, Rutland. Free. Join some of our favorite Therapy Dogs in the Children's Room to practice your reading. Perfect for beginning readers, there is no better audience to practice on. Info: rutlandfree.org or 802-773-1860.

Sip-n-Dip Painting Date Night

6-8 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Instructor: Sally Hogan, instructor. \$35 per person includes all supplies. Perfect for a date night or just out with friends. Attendees follow along with an instructor and leave with a finished acrylic painting. BYO wine. Image: Summer fireflies. Must pre-register: chaffeeartcenter.square.site. chaffeeartcenter.org.

Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' at Northern Stage

7:30 p.m. Ongoing to Dec. 31. Northern Stage, 74 Gates St., Hartford. \$19 - \$69. On Christmas Eve, bad-tempered, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge thinks it's business as usual. But unbeknownst to him, spirits are congregating to take him on a journey of rebirth through his past, present, and future in this production reimagined by Producing Artistic Director Carol Dunne. Tix, performances, details at northernstage.org/a-christmas-carol/

THURSDAY

12/14

Blood Drive - Gift of Life Marathon (GOLM)

11:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Elks Lodge #345 Hall, 44-46 Pleasant St., Rutland. Free. Maximize your blood donation and help more patients. Enter GOLMWINTER at redcrossblood.org to schedule an appointment. Visit redcrossblood.org/rapidpass to streamline your donation experience and save time. redcrossblood.org

Storytime!

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

Toddler Story Time

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

Ukulele Group

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

Play Bridge!

2 p.m. Weekly. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Beginners are welcome to observe. normanwilliams.org or 802-457-2295

S.T.E.A.M. Activity: Garlands

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

Board Game Night

5-7 p.m. Hartland Public Library, 153 Route 5, Hartland. Free. Brighten winter evenings with board games and enjoy hot cocoa. This month, we'll be playing Scrabble and Wingspan, a strategic game about birds. hartlandlibraryvt.org/calendar/ or 802-436-2473

Advent Night Prayers

7-8 p.m. Mission Farm, 316 Mission Farm Road, Killington. Free. Join us in person or via Zoom for an evening of Advent night prayers at the Chapel, Mission Farm. missionfarmvt.org/events or 802-422-9064

Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' at Northern Stage

7:30 p.m. Ongoing to Dec. 31. Northern Stage, 74 Gates St., Hartford. \$19 - \$69. On Christmas Eve, bad-tempered, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge thinks it's business as usual. But unbeknownst to him, spirits are congregating to take him on a journey of rebirth through his past, present, and future in this production reimagined by Producing Artistic Director Carol Dunne. Tix, performances, details at northernstage.org/a-christmas-carol/

FRIDAY

12/15

Blood Drive - Gift of Life Marathon (GOLM)

9 a.m.-4 p.m. Elks Lodge #345 Hall, 44-46 Pleasant St., Rutland. Free. Maximize your blood donation and help more patients. Enter GOLMWINTER at redcrossblood.org to schedule an appointment. Visit redcrossblood.org/rapidpass to streamline your donation experience and save time. Get a \$10 Amazon.com gift card by email when you donate before December 17. redcrossblood.org/amazon

Artery at Chaffee Art Center

10 a.m.-Noon. Weekly. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$10-\$20. Adult group for connection and inspiration. Painting in all mediums welcome. Participants will work on their own pieces. When possible, a 30-minute focus on technique will be held. Must pre-register. chaffeeartcenter.org or 802-775-0356

Story Time at the Library

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

Photos with Santa

3-4:30 p.m. Rutland County Sheriff's Department, 88 Grove St., Rutland. Free. Come and get your photo taken with Santa! Printed copies will be available the next day for free pickup at our office. Bring a small donation for local families in need. Seeking clothing (new and unworn), toys, gift cards or non-perishable food items. A donation is not required to get photos. allevents.in/rutland/photos-with-santa/200025880116150

Blue Cat Music Series: Erin Powers

6-9 p.m. Fridays through December. Blue Cat Bistro, 575 Main St., Castleton. No cover. Live performances. 802-468-2791

An Evening of Wintertime Songs

7 p.m., doors open at 6:30 p.m. Merchants Hall, 40-42 Merchants Row, Rutland. \$15 general admission, first come-first served. The Vermont Theatre Lab presents a family-friendly evening of live music by 18 entertainers from Rutland County. Admission includes holiday themed refreshments. WinterTimeSongs.BrownPaperTickets.com

Christmas at the Grange

7 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Rd, South Pomfret. \$20 students/seniors; \$25 adults. Join us for a fun-filled evening of Christmas songs and holiday Broadway Hits. Josh D. Smith presents a concert with familiar musical treats and unexpected surprises. Starring Kelly Berman, Allie Seibold, and Michael Seltzer. artistreevt.org

'It's a Wonderful Life'

7-9 p.m. Stone Valley Arts, 145 E. Main St., Poultney. Free. The timeless 1946 American Christmas supernatural drama film, directed by Frank Capra. James Stewart stars as George Bailey. A suggested donation of \$5 is appreciated. stonevalleyarts.org.

Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' at Northern Stage

7:30 p.m. Ongoing to Dec. 31. Northern Stage, 74 Gates St., Hartford. \$19 - \$69. On Christmas Eve, bad-tempered, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge thinks it's business as usual. But unbeknownst to him, spirits are congregating to take him on a journey of rebirth through his past, present, and future in this production reimagined by Producing Artistic Director Carol Dunne. Tix, performances, details at northernstage.org/a-christmas-carol/

SATURDAY

12/16

Santa Comes to Original GeneralStore

9 a.m.-12 Noon. The Original General Store, 3963 VT 100, Pittsfield. Meet Santa at the store. thegeneralstore802.com

Rutland Winter Carnival

10 a.m.-2 p.m. City of Rutland Recreation Dept., 134 Community Dr., Rutland. Free. Pictures with Santa, ornament making, cookie decorating, face painting, bounce house, and loads of fun. Presented by Peak Performance Allstar Cheer and Dance. allevents.in/rutland/winter-carnival/200025884034707

The Vermont Farmers' Market

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Howe Center, Suite 92, 1 Scale Ave. (off Strongs Avenue), Rutland. Free. The Vermont Farmers' Market has moved indoors for the winter. One of the largest and most diverse farmers' markets in Vermont, it was the first to operate 52 weeks out of the year. Find seasonal harvest, winter veggies, handcrafted gifts and more. vtfarmersmarket.org

Storytime!

10:10-10:45 a.m. Saturdays. Hartland Public Library, 123 Main St. Free. Themed reading, crafts, experiments, and games for preschool and early elementary aged kids. hartlandlibraryvt.org or 802-436-2473

'A Cup of Dreams' by local author Lindsay Courcelle

10:30 a.m. Shrewsbury Library, 98 Town Hill Road, Cuttingsville. Free. Lindsay Courcelle will read and sign her new picture book, "A Cup of Dreams: Chamomile." Join her for this special treat. shrewsburylibrary.org or 802-492-3410

Make & Take Saturday Kids' Class

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

Rutland Railway Museum & Model Club

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

'IT'S A WONDERFUL LIFE'

FRIDAY 7 PM



← **Calendar:** Email events@mountaintimes.info from page 14

Drop 'n' Paint

Noon-2 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$25. All ages. All materials will be set up and ready for you with a choice of 3 images you can paint. Includes use of: canvas, paint, brushes, easel, smock. Youth must be accompanied by an adult. Must pre-register. Info and registration: chaffeeartcenter.org.

Miss Lorraine's School of Dance presents 'The Nutcracker'

1 and 6 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$25 & \$35. Experience the magic of this holiday favorite ballet performed by area dance students. paramountvt.org

Holidays in Mount Holly

2-3 p.m. Mount Holly Community Historical Museum, 7 Maple Hill Road, Belmont. Free. A low-key family celebration with refreshments, carol singing, and Santa giving gifts to children. The menorah will be ready for the Festival of Lights. "May light win over darkness everywhere this festive season." mhcv.org/events/christmas-in-mount-holly-jn7ry

Christmas at The Grange Theater

2 & 7 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. \$20 students/seniors; \$25 adults. Join us for a fun-filled evening of Christmas songs and holiday Broadway hits. Josh D. Smith presents a concert with familiar musical treats and unexpected surprises. Starring Kelly Berman, Allie Seibold, and Michael Seltzer. artistreevt.org

Woodstock Vermont Film Series: 'Close to Vermeer'

3 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum Visitor Center Theater, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. \$15 person/\$12 Billings Farm member. Join the Woodstock Vermont Film Series for a screening of "Close to Vermeer," a documentary about the largest Vermeer exhibition ever at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The film follows curators, conservators, and experts as they shed new light on the elusive Dutch Master. Tickets available at Billings Farm & Museum's website. billingsfarm.org

Catholic Mass at Our Lady of the Mountains

4:30 p.m. Saturdays. The "Little White Church," 4173 US-4, Killington. Call the church office to confirm mass times, 802-457-2322. (Christmas Eve Mass will be celebrated at 7 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 24.)

Mount Jolly-Days

5 p.m. Belmont Village Green, 7 Maple Hill Road, Belmont. Free. Celebrate the season with Christmas carols, stories, a tree lighting, a visit from Santa, and tasty treats! yourplaceinvermont.com/event/mount-jolly-days/

Skate with Santa & Mrs. Claus

5:30 p.m. Giorgetti Athletic Complex, 2 Oak St. Extension, Rutland. Free admission and \$2 skate rentals. Come skate with Santa and Mrs. Claus at this annual event.

Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' at Northern Stage

7:30 p.m. Ongoing to Dec. 31. Northern Stage, 74 Gates St., Hartford. \$19 - \$69. On Christmas Eve, bad-tempered, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge thinks it's business as usual. But unbeknownst to him, spirits are congregating to take him on a journey of rebirth through his past, present, and future in this production reimagined by Producing Artistic Director Carol Dunne. Tix, performances, details at northernstage.org/a-christmas-carol/

SUNDAY
12/17

Service of Lessons and Carols

10 a.m. Grace Congregational UCC, 8 Court St., Rutland. Join Grace Church choirs for a service of lessons and carols during Sunday morning worship. Experience the story of the promise of the Messiah and the birth of Jesus through readings, anthems, and familiar carols. gracechurchvt.org.

Children's Christmas Party

1-5 p.m. Calcutta's, 87 Fox Lane, Ludlow. Free. Fox Run Golf Club hosts its annual Christmas Party with Santa giving gifts to children, holiday games, crafts, and cookie decorating. Free family buffet. foxrun.org

Woodstock Vermont Film Series: 'Close to Vermeer'

3 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum Visitor Center Theater, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. \$15 person/\$12 Billings Farm member. Join the Woodstock Vermont Film Series for a screening of "Close to Vermeer," a documentary about the largest Vermeer exhibition ever at the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam. The film follows curators, conservators, and experts as they shed new light on the elusive Dutch Master. Tickets available at Billings Farm & Museum's website. billingsfarm.org

Making Merry: A Christmas Carol Open Studio

3-5:30 p.m. Former Crow's Corner Bakery, 73 Depot St., Proctorsville. Free event featuring workshops, wreath and ornament making, and hot chocolate tasting. cavendishhistoricalsociety.org

Charles Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol'

3 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$30, \$35. A powerful story of redemption, Charles Dickens' classic tale of Christmas has enchanted audiences the world over with its simple message of the joy of giving. paramountvt.org/event/charles-dickens-a-christmas-carol

Christmas Concert

4:30 p.m. Brownsville Community Church, 66 Brownsville-Hartland Road, Brownsville. Free concert featuring holiday music. brownsvilleumc-vt.org

Town of Brandon Reverse Parade

5-6 p.m. Central Park, Brandon. Free. Drive through town and marvel at the decorated homes, lights, music, displays, elves, the Grinch and Santa. brandon.org

Sunday Night Drive-through

Lighted Display
5-7 p.m. Fabian Earth Moving, 1441 Pleasant St., West Rutland. Free. Meet Santa, Mrs. Claus, and their friends, and drive through Fabian's lavish Christmas display of lights. members.rutlandvermont.com

Christmas with Shannon

7-9 p.m. Brandon Inn, 20 Park St., Brandon. Free concert, donations accepted. Enjoy an evening of great music with Brandon Idol winner Shannon Wright and local songstress Jess Crossman. Beverages and desserts available for purchase. brandon.org

Dickens' 'A Christmas

Carol' at Northern Stage

7:30 p.m. Ongoing to Dec. 31. Northern Stage, 74 Gates St., Hartford. \$19 - \$69. On Christmas Eve, bad-tempered, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge thinks it's business as usual. But unbeknownst to him, spirits are congregating to take him on a journey of rebirth through his past, present, and future in this production reimagined by Producing Artistic Director Carol Dunne. Tix, performances, details at northernstage.org/a-christmas-carol/

MONDAY
12/18

Baby and Toddlers Rock

10-10:30 a.m. Weekly. Fox Room, Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. A music and pre-literacy program for children 0-24 months. Children and caregivers love this program, join us and see why. rutlandfree.org or 802-773-1860.

Killington Bone Builders

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

Art Bar - Open Craft Time!

3:30-4:30 p.m. Mondays. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. Craft supplies galore - work on any project you want! Browse our craft books for ideas. We'll occasionally provide a specific craft or have special supplies available. rutlandfree.org or 802-773-1860.

Poetry Group

4-5:30 p.m. Every other Monday. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Are you 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

Brandon's Winter Wonderland

4:30 p.m.-7 p.m. Brandon Inn, 20 Park St., Brandon. Join us for a walkable Winter Wonderland behind the historic Brandon Inn. Paths let you view up close some of the most stunning decorations found anywhere. Entertainment announcements to follow. While this is a walkable display, those with handicapped placards are welcome to drive carefully through the back driveway of the Inn. brandoninn.com



MISS LORRAINE'S SCHOOL OF DANCE PRESENTS 'THE NUGRACKER'

SATURDAY, 1 & 6 PM

TUESDAY
12/19

Baby Story Time

10:30-11 a.m. Weekly. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. This story time features short stories, interspersed with songs, finger puppet plays, free play, and more. It is geared for children ages birth to 20 months and will run for about 20 minutes. normanwilliams.org or 802-457-2295

Stories on a String

10-10:30 a.m. Weekly. Fox Room, Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. Join Ms. Helen of Green Mountain Music for interactive storytelling and songs for all ages! No registration is required, free to all. Geared for ages 2 and up. rutlandfree.org or 802-773-1860

Italian Film Series

4-6 p.m. Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Join local Italian language instructor Veronica DeLay for a screening of Italian films with English subtitles. normanwilliams.org or 802-457-2295.

Plymouth Holiday Party

5:30 p.m. Plymouth Municipal Building, 68 Town Office Road, Plymouth. Free. Children (K-12th grade & under) and their parents are invited to enjoy the season of giving, refreshments, and each child will receive a toy.

Dickens' 'A Christmas Carol' at Northern Stage

7:30 p.m. Ongoing to Dec. 31. Northern Stage, 74 Gates St., Hartford. \$19 - \$69. On Christmas Eve, bad-tempered, miserly Ebenezer Scrooge thinks it's business as usual. But unbeknownst to him, spirits are congregating to take him on a journey of rebirth through his past, present, and future in this production reimagined by Producing Artistic Director Carol Dunne. Tix, performances, details at northernstage.org/a-christmas-carol/

Longest Night Service

7 p.m. Grace Congregational UCC, 8 Court St., Rutland. Join Grace Church in the Chapel for a time of inspiration and encouragement. gracechurchvt.org.

Silas Hamilton releases his first album, 'All The Ways'

Local Shrewsbury singer/songwriter Silas Hamilton just released his first album, "All The Ways". I had the pleasure of interviewing Silas to hear about the album and to see what he has going on, plus I got to preview it as well. I thoroughly enjoyed all nine tracks but do have a few favorites. Silas plays every instrument on the album and sings all the lyrics. He produced it as well. More on that in the article below. I would call this a folksy, easy-listening album and by that I mean it has a chill vibe. You can kick back on a summer day, lying in a field listening to this album or chill on the couch and unwind with this album.



Rockin' the Region
By Dave Hoffenberg

The album kicks off with a bluesy, cool vibe song, "Gotta (Find a Li'l Something Out)." It has strong vocals with a good mix of instruments. Track 3, "Mr. Liddy," starts with a Richard Nixon speech and the song grooves on Watergate in a cool way. This song is Silas' favorite to play live. Track 4 is "Feeling one In by the News." What a great title with all that's going on in the world today. This song is strong on fiddle and has Silas harmonizing with himself, which I find to be really cool. That happens frequently since this album is 100% Silas. It's like you're

supposed to be depressed by what the song talks about but you can't be with this song, nor the album. I really dig Track eight, "Patient Intake Forms." It's another with those great harmonies. This song has Silas asking questions and answering them too. The album ends with "Ramen Song," an upbeat song with groovin' bass licks. It's a great title too.

Silas has been working on this album since last February but some of the tracks have been a long time coming. He said, "Songwriting goes in waves so some of it came pretty quick but my songwriting is pretty sporadic. If I have time and I'm nice and relaxed, I'll start playing and if something comes up that I want to explore more, I'll follow it to wherever it leads."

Silas said the album has a story to tell but it's really just a collection of all of his musical influences from the past few years. Silas has a folk background, playing bass with Gypsy Reel the past few years and that Irish traditional music. He also lived in Colorado where he played a lot of bluegrass. He said, "I have some nods to that but the rest of it is just my take on what I find interesting musically and how my songwriting has evolved." Gypsy Reel was Silas' first band which he

joined right after he got his driver's license. He said, "They showed me the ins and outs. I'm 24 now so I've played with them a third of my life." He replaced Mark Harding, who is a great musician, so he had some big shoes to fill and by the sounds of it, he filled them quite well. Silas did a rock 'n' roll camp with Mark about 12 years ago.

Silas moved out to Colorado in 2021 to join a band with Alex Graf (guitar, vocals) and Tony Holmquist (mandolin, vocals). Silas' dad lived out there too so he had some family ties. Silas said, "Both Alex and Tony are great musicians. We really enjoyed playing with each other. We were playing a
Hamilton → 20



By Carrie Phillips
Silas Hamilton, local Shrewsbury singer/songwriter, has just released his first album, "All The Ways," in which he plays every instrument on the album and sings all the lyrics.

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Dec. 24 10 am Family Christmas Service with Festival Brass, Choir and Nativity

8:30 pm Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with Musical Prelude at 8pm

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[MUSIC Scene]

By DJ Dave Hoffenberg
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WED
12/13

KILLINGTON

6 p.m. Mountain Green – Nick Bredice
6 p.m. Rivershed – James Joel

LONDONDERRY

7 p.m. New American Grill – Sammy B

LUDLOW

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

POULTNEY

7 p.m. The Poultney Pub – Open Mic with Danny Lang

QUECHEE

6 p.m. Public House Pub – Chris P

THURS
12/14

BRIDGEWATER

CORNERS
5 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Nick Bredice

KILLINGTON

5 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Duane Carleton

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

6 p.m. Mountain Green – Nick Bredice

6 p.m. Rivershed – Chris P

6 p.m. The Foundry – Liz Reedy

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

POULTNEY

6 p.m. The Poultney Pub – Vinyl Night with Ken

QUECHEE

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

RUTLAND

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

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

FRI
12/15

BARNARD

7 p.m. First Universalist Church – Winter Carols

BOMOSEEN

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

CASTLETON

6 p.m. Blue Cat Bistro – Erin Powers

KILLINGTON

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

5 p.m. Last Run Lounge at Pico – Nick Bredice

6 p.m. Rivershed – Rob Pagnano

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

7 p.m. Liquid Art – 9th Annual Ugly Sweater Party for Charity with DJ Dave and DJ Mike C

7 p.m. The Foundry – Zach Yakaitis

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

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Coming Alive

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

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

POULTNEY

6 p.m. The Poultney Pub – Breanna Elaine

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Sammy B

RANDOLPH

7:30 p.m. Underground Listening Room - The Steppes w/ Probable Cause

SOUTH POMFRET

7 p.m. Grange Theatre – Christmas at the Grange

STOCKBRIDGE

7:30 p.m. Wild Fern – Heather Lynne

SAT
12/16

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – Comedy Night with Hannah Dickinson

KILLINGTON

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

6 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Duane Carleton

6 p.m. Rivershed – Live Music

6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Sammy B

6 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

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

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – Coming Alive

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

POULTNEY

7 p.m. The Poultney Pub – Ugly Sweater Party with Deep Dive

QUECHEE

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

RUTLAND

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

SOUTH POMFRET

2 p.m./7 p.m. Grange Theatre – Christmas at the Grange

STOCKBRIDGE

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

WOODSTOCK

2 p.m. Town Green – Winter Carols

SUN
12/17

BRIDGEWATER

CORNERS
3 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Nick Bredice

KILLINGTON

12 p.m. Rivershed – Brunch with Live Music
5 p.m. The Foundry – Jazz Night with the Summit Pond Quartet

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tee Boneicus Jones

6 p.m. Rivershed – Trivia

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

STOCKBRIDGE

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

MON
12/18

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton

5:30 p.m. Mary Lou's – BAK'n

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

LUDLOW

6 p.m. Off the Rails – Sammy B

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

TUES
12/19

KILLINGTON

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

6 p.m. Rivershed – Nick Bredice

LONDONDERRY

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

LUDLOW

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

PITTSFIELD

7 p.m. Town Hall – Acoustic Music Jam

POULTNEY

7 p.m. The Poultney Pub – Bluegrass Jam

QUECHEE

5 p.m. The Public House – Jim Yeager

RUTLAND

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

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Courtesy Downtown Rutland Partnership

Downtown holiday window contest 2023 voting is now open

Last chance for votes on your favorite storefront display is Dec. 22

Stroll through downtown Rutland and enjoy beautiful holiday decor in downtown shops and restaurants. Three guest judges will choose their favorites in various holiday-themed categories. The public will have a chance to decide the People's Choice award. Winners will be announced on a sponsored Facebook post on Dec. 28.

One vote per person. Vote below or voters can scan the code on the flyer in windows using their smartphone camera and clicking the link.

Voting is now open. Vote ends Dec. 22. For ballot and more information, visit: downtownrutland.com/windowcontest

Michelob Ultra Ski Bum Race Series is a great chance to live it up on the mountain

Wednesday, Dec. 13 from 4-7 p.m.—KILLINGTON—Mogul's Sports Pub on 2630 Killington Road in Killington will hold a registration party this Wednesday for the Michelob Ultra Ski Bum Race Series, coming to Killington Ski Resort. Every Wednesday from Jan. 3 to March 13 from 10 a.m.-2 p.m. skiers, snowboarders, and Telemark skiers from the local area will compete against each other in a race down Highline Trail to determine the ultimate Ski Bum.

The race and after-party are open to registered competitors only, though racers may bring guests to any after-party for a \$5 fee (cash

only). Each party will be from 4-6 p.m.

In addition, there will be a training course section on Upper Highline (conditions permitting) from 10 a.m.-noon to help contestants get warmed up and dialed in for the race.

Also, to spice things up a bit more during race day, there will be additional weekly contests such as Time of the Day to keep things fun and exciting.

Racers can register online any time after the registration party. Visit Killington Ski Club before your first race to claim your bib number and shirt. Registered teams can have

a maximum of five contestants at \$60 per individual (no team rate); must be 21 years of age or older.

Included in the registration fees are 11 races, featuring a duals format in the finals for qualifying racers, and a 2023/24 Ski Bum t-shirt. Each competition is followed by an after-party. Racers will have access to a free food buffet along with drink specials, weekly raffles, and prizing. Video will be played of everyone's runs at each party and later posted on our Facebook page.

For up-to-the-minute results, head to live-timing.com. For more information, visit:killington.com. Register for the race at: tfaforms.com/5031319.

Schedule:

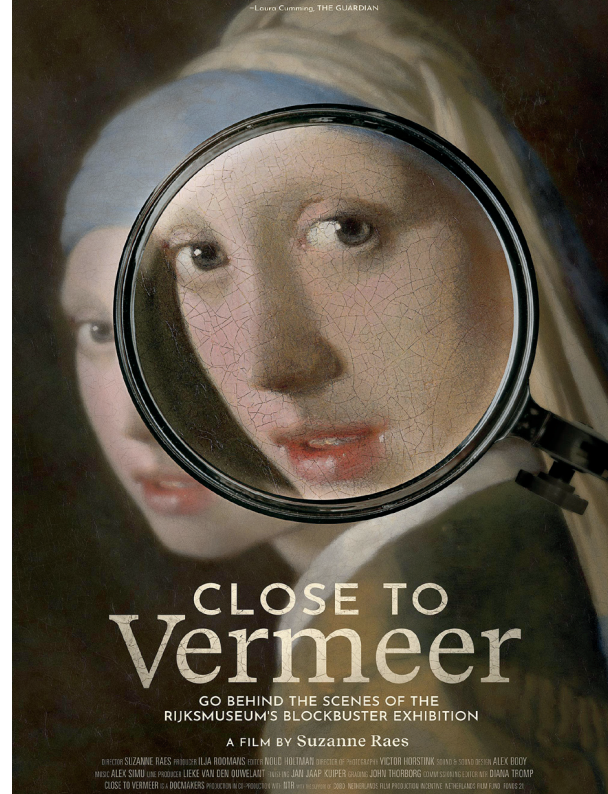
- Registration Party: Dec. 13 at Mogul's Sports Pub, 2630 Killington Road
- Race #1: Jan. 3, at Casey's Caboose, in partnership with Base Camp
- Race #2: Jan. 10, at Killington Distillery, in partnership with Peak Performance
- Race #3: Jan. 17, at Domenic's Pizzeria, in partnership with First Stop Board Barn
- Race #4: Jan. 24, at McGrath's Irish Pub, in partnership with Surefoot
- Race #5: Jan. 31, at The Lookout Tavern, in partnership with Forerunner Ski Shop
- Race #6: Feb. 7, at Sushi Yoshi, in partnership with Aspen East
- Race #7: Feb. 14, TBA
- Race #8: Feb. 21, TBA
- Race #9: Feb. 28, TBA
- Race #10, March 6: at Killington Distillery
- Final: March 13, at K-1 Lodge, in partnership with Michelob ULTRA



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BROC Community Action serving Rutland and Bennington Counties works to create prosperity for all. We provide hope, opportunity, and a path forward out of crisis or poverty, so our neighbors and community thrive. BROC Community Action seeks an experienced finance or accounting professional to serve as our Finance Director. The position will direct and oversee the financial activities of the organization including preparation of the annual budget, preparation of financial reports, oversee audits, create financial forecasts, and monitor and evaluate the activities of all assigned financial and administrative functions. This role supervises a team of 3 staff members and works closely with BROC Community Action's CEO, leadership team and Program Managers.

We are seeking a candidate with a minimum of a Bachelor's degree in Business Administration, Accounting, Finance or a related field and 5 years of relevant experience, or a combination of education and experience from which comparable knowledge and skills are acquired. Candidates should have strong supervisory and leadership skills with the ability to develop and communicate the mission, vision, and goals of BROC Community Action. Candidates should have effective verbal and written communication skills, excellent analytical and organizational skills.

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Hamilton:
from page 16

mix of old-time bluegrass and jazz because Alex is a big jazz guy." The band is called Tone Dog. They played some festivals and released a couple singles. Silas added, "We still play now and then but they both have jobs, and I live in Vermont [laughing]." He also played with a band in the Durango area called, Birds of Play who were more of an Americana band than traditional bluegrass. Silas said, "It was the summer of 2022. I got to go all around Colorado and Montana with them, up to Washington state and Idaho."

They did the infamous Telluride Bluegrass Festival and placed second. He also got to play fiddle with High Country Hustle, a high energy bluegrass group out of Durango as well. He played many major festivals with them. Silas said he gigs most with the bass but plays the fiddle too.

He moved back to Vermont to be closer to family plus he really likes Vermont. Silas grew up in Shrewsbury so he has a lot of family and friends in the area. There's a lot of music in his family since his mother is a music teacher and his dad plays the fiddle. They both used to play in the Salt Ash Serenaders. His musical influences include Chris Norman, a Nova Scotia flautist, on his traditional side and then later on he got into Crosby, Still, Nash and Young and The Grateful Dead. Silas is a full-time musician so you might see him solo, or duo, or with the trio Spintuition he formed in 2017, with Gypsy Reel or in a four-five piece bluegrass band. However you see him play, you won't be disappointed.

Spintuition is Silas (Guitar, Piano, Fiddle, guitar, piano, fiddle, vocals, feet), ... (fiddle, vocals, feet), ... (accordion, piano, vocals). They started as a contra band playing contra

dances, which they still do, but have also crafted sweet arrangements of traditional songs into their repertoire for concerts. They have released an album, "7 Year Flood", won the Young Tradition Vermont contest in Burlington and got to play at the New World Festival. They recorded the album at Mount

Silas has had quite the variety in his musical journey. In 2019 he toured with Northern Harmony, a renowned polyphonic choir.

Hollywood Studios which is owned by Claudine Langille from Gypsy Reel.

Silas has had quite the variety in his musical journey. In 2019 he toured with Northern Harmony, a renowned polyphonic choir. He went to England, France and Spain on a two-

month tour with 14 other singers. He said, "It was a really great experience. Staying with hosts showed me you can do music, grassroots, and make it work"

For Silas' solo album, he recorded it all at his home. He said, "My goal was to spend as little money as possible. I did the best with what I had. I mixed it and mastered it myself. I played all the instruments on it, pretty much completely home grown." On the album, Silas plays Acoustic, electric and 12-string guitar, keyboard, fiddle, mandolin, bass and percussion.

The album is available on Spotify, Apple Music and on his website www.silashamilton.com.

You can find him on Facebook at Silas Hamilton Music and Instagram @silasplays. He'll be playing solo at the Blue Cat Bistro in Castleton next Friday, Dec. 22 from 6-9 p.m. and he'll have CDs available to purchase.

Silas likes what he does and said, "It's one of the few occupations you can really bring smiles to people's faces. The excited babble of chatter before and in-between sets in the show, like if it's a packed house and people are excited to be there, that excites me."

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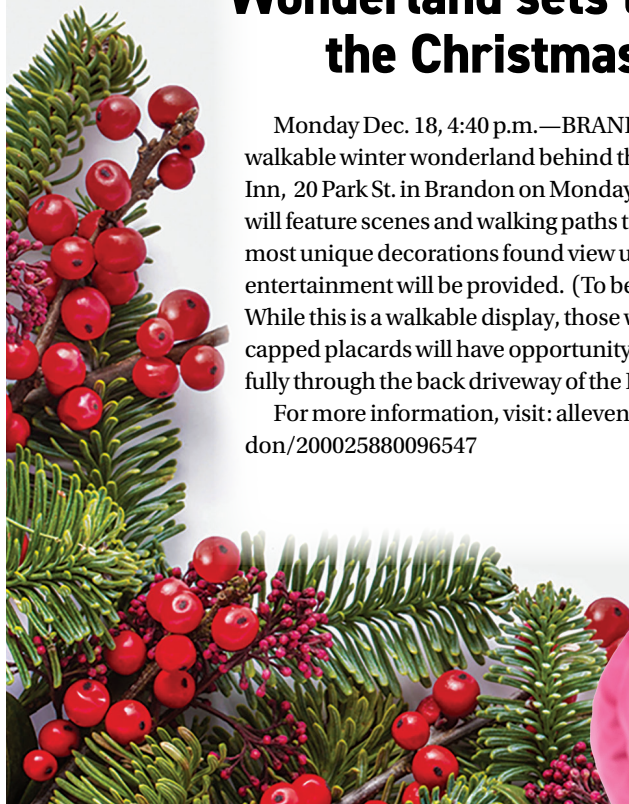
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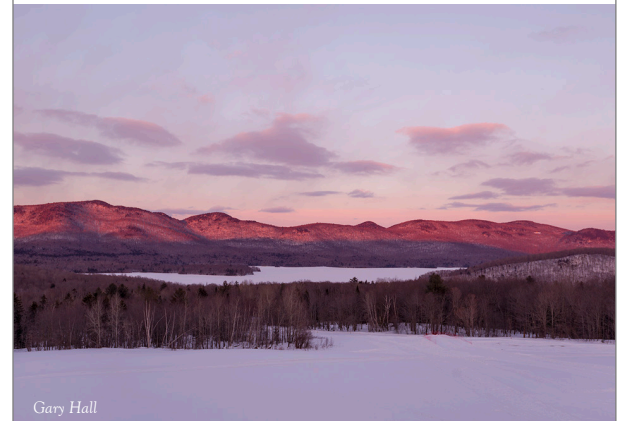
Brandon's Winter Wonderland sets the tone for the Christmas spirit

Monday Dec. 18, 4:40 p.m.—BRANDON—There will be a walkable winter wonderland behind the historic Brandon Inn, 20 Park St. in Brandon on Monday. This festive display will feature scenes and walking paths to view some of the most unique decorations found view up close. Live entertainment will be provided. (To be announced.) While this is a walkable display, those with hand-capped placards will have opportunity to drive carefully through the back driveway of the Inn.

For more information, visit: allevents.in/brandon/200025880096547



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Sherburne UCC "Little White Church," Killington, VT

Solutions From page 13

Crossword

	A	P	E		A	D	P		A	C	T						
	W	A	X		P	A	L		P	A	C						
S	T	I	C	H		P	R	O		P	S	H	A	W			
L	I	N	K	A	G	E			P	L	A	C	A	T	E		
R	E	G	A	L	I	A			P	A	R	A	D	E	D		
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Sudoku

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

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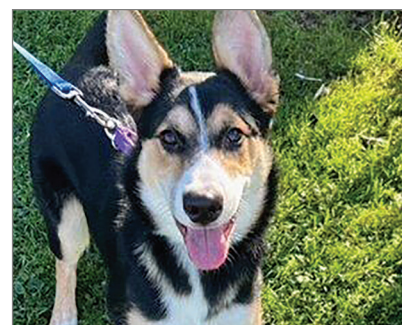
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Cosmic Catalogue



Aries March 21 - April 20

A life bereft of meaning and purpose is merely existence. Are you alright with that? I strongly doubt it. This week, you're offered the chance to rethink your position on life in general, the direction it's heading as well as your professional life. If something is no longer satisfying you, you may begin the journey of a fun existential problem to solve – to find the meaning of your life and live it accordingly.

Leo July 21 - August 20

This week is your week to remember just how much you like to have fun. It's not just about remembering either, but about actually having fun. Let loose your inner child, your inner creative genius or your inner romantic. Whatever it is you feel motivated by and passionate about, pursue it without compromise. The confidence boost this will give you may reignite a dying fire. Once rekindled, you'll be better positioned to negotiate.

Sagittarius November 21 - December 20

The New Moon in your sign happens just once a year. This week is your week to embark upon any New Year / New Me goals. Even if you're not in the position to go all in just yet, it would still be wise to map out your plans in some fashion. There is immense power in just making a decision. You can figure out the details between now and mid-January. For now, just decide.

Taurus April 21 - May 20

You were born to do more than just pay bills and die. If it feels as though your life has been reduced to that, then you may need to rekindle your fire. A New Moon in one of your money zones is ideal for you to refresh your financial goals as well as your perspectives. A new outlook may be just what you need to turn a stuck or stagnant situation around.

Virgo August 21 - September 20

It's your family life that is under the cosmic spotlight now. What kind of energy would you like to harness within your domestic life in 2024? Would you like more joy, more fun or would you like to improve your family relationships and dynamics? Whatever it is, nothing starts until you're willing to change your perspective on what the current situation is. Compromise is possible, but you need to be practical about things first.

Capricorn December 21 - January 20

The sooner you fall behind, the longer you have to catch up. Not only is it the time of year for many people to wind down in preparation for the holidays, your stars also suggest you do the same thing. While there may still be so much to do, your soul needs rest. Do what you need to in order to recharge your batteries. Your time to charge henceforth will begin soon enough.

Gemini May 21 - June 20

What is your philosophy on relationships? Whether you're single or partnered, you can expect this is going to shift. You may discover what you once wanted you no longer do, or what you thought you didn't want could now be possible. So much is changing for you in this area so start considering what your ideal life and with (or without) whom and what that might look like. It all begins with changing your mind.

Libra September 21 - October 20

Your curiosity about the little improvements you can make in your life is set to pique. This may mean learning something new or embarking on new daily rituals that give your routines more meaning and purpose. While you may not have the energy for another thing, chances are that what you are seeking is also seeking you. Energy feeds energy, so if that feels like the lacking component, do something that you know will feed your spirit.

Aquarius January 21 - February 20

This week is one of your social peak weeks of the year! Parties and events with friends and colleagues will keep you so busy that you may not be spending much time at home at all. For some Aquarians, this may pose a problem on the home front. If that's the case, just be clear and up front about where you're going and whom you're with to avoid any crossed wires or confusion.

Cancer June 21 - July 20

It's time to renew your attitude in respect to the things you'd rather not do. We all have mundane tasks and obligations we either do willingly or we avoid. This week, give some thought to how you want these tasks to take shape in 2024. Can you continue them or can you delegate or delete them? Also, expect a few miscommunications in a key relationship about this too. Negotiation of responsibilities is needed.

Scorpio October 21 - November 20

Chances are you're feeling quite motivated by the idea of a new financial goal or money making opportunity. This week offers you the opportunity to implement new ideas and action when it comes to the way you earn, spend and save. Consider where you'd like to be this time next year and take the appropriate action now. Even the smallest adjustments can lead to big changes. Do what you need to do to feel more confident about cash.

Pisces February 21 - March 20

While you may be ready to wind down your work for 2023, you may in the process of thinking about what you'd like to achieve professionally throughout 2024. If you're not working, you might like to think in terms of your overall life direction. What would you like to implement now that could see you move in the direction you'd like to be? Take a risk. Make a move that's right for you. Fortune favors the brave.



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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.

Great sacrifice

There are times in life, when in order to get to an ideal destination, you have to traverse through places you'd rather not endure. Life, at times, can seem like a continual cost-benefit analysis.

In order to have X, you must compromise on Y. In order to compromise on Y, the desire for X has to be worth it. Once those negotiations have taken place and agreements have been made, the journey begins.

You can choose to be a naysayer and say that the destination cannot be reached. That the cost is too great or too difficult. Or, you can choose

to never give up on your ideals. Don't be naive to the practical means necessary to attain it. That seems to be a missing component. Everyone wants the end point without realizing what it actually takes to get there.

Any dream or goal worth achieving requires blood, sweat, tears and great sacrifice. Anyone who thinks they can avoid that is a fool. This week encourages you to rethink your position. If you're not willing to be a part of the process, you do not get to dictate the outcome. Be careful what you wish for if you're not willing to pay the price.



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall

Winter to me

The wind howls,
The trees sway,
The cold icy air whistles,
Then all is still.
The snow begins to fall,
Making everything sparkly and white,
Falling silently,
Fluffy white snow fills the land.
The icy air returns,
Forming the frost,
Little swirls and twists,
Filling up all the icy windows.
All this making the world beautiful,
This is winter to me.



Poetry Is Power
By Bree Sarandrea

Gifts from the heart

It's that time of year once again when we think of our dear family and friends. What would life be without special people who touch our souls and warm our hearts?

Gift giving in many cultures is an honored tradition. It certainly is in ours. We live in a materialistic, throw-away society where objects are highly valued and buying is easy, 24/7 regardless of bank accounts.

What is the most treasured gift we can give? Can it be found in a mall or on Amazon? Yes, maybe, but there are other choices. Perhaps gifts could be seen as extensions of ourselves that needn't always be bought...

A precious object we love or find may remind our dear one of how precious they are. It might be a beautiful stone or seashell, or a treasure passed down for generations that we're certain they will like. I realize, sometimes, a gift must be purchased, but whenever possible a personal dimension adds uniqueness to our gift.

Is a present more special if we make it ourselves, with our own hands, minds and

hearts? What gift would best let them know how we feel? What might encourage our

dear one the most? Are they in need of a guffaw and laugh to reawaken their *joie de vivre*? Would a joke, poem or prayer touch their heart? To be remembered is loved by all.

Our presence in person is irreplaceable but distance can make that far too difficult. That's why a call, FaceTime or letter has to do until we're together. To hear or read words from the heart, expressing what they

mean in our life, can lift a soul out of depression, fill them with happiness, confidence and comfort. A Christmas or Hanukkah card with a message that's written by hand is a personal touch.

I've given my husband, son and grandchildren colorful coupon books I've made with outings and adventures in exciting locations, favorite activities, picnics, treats; even a back rub, a walk hand in hand, a heart to heart talk, or a favorite meal... (My husband keeps his coupons by our bed to

Mountain Meditation → 27

Otters among us

In winter, river otters head upstream into the uplands, seeking areas of fast-moving water that remain open—at least open enough for an otter to slip into a stream in pursuit of fish. You might catch a brief glimpse of an otter along one of these smaller streams, as I did years ago with my 2-year-old daughter on the East Branch of the Ompompanoosuc River.

I found signs of otters the next year a mile upriver, as I stood on a rock in the middle of a frozen waterfall. While taking pictures of the icescape, I spotted otter tracks in the thin layer of snow, leading to an open patch of water. Lines of four paw prints showed the tell-tale gait of an animal cantering, with dashes between each series of prints made by the otter's long, fat tail. Then, *plop!* the tracks ended at a hole in the ice.

Like many other members of the Mustelidae family, including weasels, river otters have high metabolism. They need to eat 15 to 20% of their own weight each day. If, when it gets cold, prey becomes scarce in their warm season range, otters move. They are always hunting, traveling from marsh to beaver pond, and up rivers to tributaries. You might identify them from the way they move: a hobby-horsing gait, pushing forward from their back legs, often using their long bodies as springs, which makes their backs compress upwards before releasing. On snow, they will alternate between running and sliding.

On a pound-for-pound basis, otter fur has thermal protection akin to that of a northern fur seal. But air wicks away less heat than denser water, so in the bitter cold, the otters spend most of their time out of the water, husbanded calories. When it gets truly cold, when all the waters in the woods freeze hard, otters can starve for lack of access to the fish beneath. In the coldest times, they stick near marshes and areas of thick water grasses so they can punch through the rotten ice that forms there. Otter mortality in winter is high. Only about half will survive and return to lower waters in the spring; thin, but now playful in the revelry of open hunting waters and a more social existence.

The females will look for a natal den to birth one to three pups. Those young will stay in that den for two months before the mother moves them to one of several dens

closer to water. There, they'll learn how to swim and hunt. Otter pups learn the best local hunting practices from their mothers. Ecologist Megan Isadore, who studies river otters north of San Francisco, found one

otter who figured out how to hunt brown pelicans. The next year, Isadore observed the otter teaching her pups these unique hunting strategies—which are now being shared with new generations.

In Isadore's study area, where the temperatures don't vary much between seasons, river otters don't change habitats seasonally, and the pups remain with their mothers

for almost a year. But studies conducted here, in northern inland climates, where winter food is scarcer, show family groups typically break up – which some speculate is an adaptation to cover more territory, increasing the likelihood of survival.

I take my kids a longer way to school sometimes, by a backwater where two mother otters return each year with pups. (This detour sometimes causes my children to arrive late, and my daughter, now 13, has suggested that I stop on the way home instead.) The otters may frequent this oxbow because it's rife with invasive brown crayfish, introduced decades ago by the usual vector: bait buckets. An otter will hold a crayfish straight upwards in its mouth and let gravity push the food down its maw as it rhythmically crunches.

At this site, the otters stay until the ice thickens enough to prevent them from breaking new hunting holes. One group typically leaves a week before the other. In December, it's easy to spot where the otters have been, as their splashing builds ice rims around these holes. Then, one cold morning, the last mother is gone. In the night air, she moved overland, seeking the falling water that will keep the creek open. The pups will hunt the bottoms for a few more days, and then they, too, will move on.

Tig Tillinghast helps run a forest management software firm out of Thetford, Vermont. He is a frequent photography contributor to Northern Woodlands. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org.



The Outside Story
By Tig Tillinghast



Something smells funny

For reasons likely buried deep in my DNA, I have always had an acute sense of smell. While my other senses have been ravaged by time, my olfactory awareness has maintained a high-level status.

My mother also had a great sniffer, which posed considerable problems for me and my two brothers as she was always acutely aware when we were being deviant. As a high-schooler, I'd come through the door and within seconds she'd be commenting on the smoky waft emanating from my jacket. I'd then have to go into a long explanation about the bonfire I was at or the friend who smoked a cigarette in the car. (Because I would never do anything that involved smoking!)

My sense of smell was on high alert this past weekend at one of those big box bookstores that I wandered into looking for Christmas presents. I'm pretty much done my holiday shopping, but I'm always on the lookout for another worthy gift.

I traversed the store and came up empty handed, but then remembered that a magazine was always a good stocking stuffer, so I headed to that end of the building.

The magazine section of this store took up the entire end wall; it was possibly the largest conglomeration of magazines I'd ever seen. (Who says print is dead!)

I started at the lefthand side and began scanning the available periodicals. I was about 10 seconds into this process when I suddenly caught the first whiffs of a very off-putting smell. I scrunched up my nose as if to cleanse my nasal palate, and then continued. But the smell remained.

That's when I scanned the people nearby. The only individual in close proximity was a young college-aged woman who was curled over a magazine on the bench in front of me. She didn't appear to be dirty or particularly revolting, but nevertheless, I moved away.

I worked my way down the rack into the sports section and once again, caught wind of the same putrid smell. This time there was an elderly gentleman sitting close by. He wasn't dressed that poorly, but his hair was a bit of a mangled mess, so I immediately attributed the distasteful smell to him and moved away.

However, I no sooner moved down the line of magazines when the smell became even stronger. Another individual was sitting there but since she had a large Starbucks drink in her hand, I assumed it couldn't be her.

At this point, I was so put-off by the smell that I turned away from the magazine rack fully planning to leave. And that's when I caught sight of what was assuredly the cause of the odor.



The Movie
Diary
By Dom Cioffi

Sitting nearby was an elderly woman, her gray hair in dreads, her clothing somewhat tattered. She was hunched over a magazine flipping through the pages. She could have easily been the sole cause of the smell but next to her was a baby carriage that contained two small, mangy-looking

dogs. One dog peered up at me as I was scanning the scene; the other was on its back, dead asleep with all four paws in the air.

As soon as I realized that I was staring, I walked just far enough away to disguise my obvious voyeurism. I stood to the side of a nearby bookshelf and grabbed a book off the rack, pretending to be interested. I then proceeded to take in everything I could about the scene.

People fascinate me, especially ones that are distinctly different—and this woman and her dogs certainly qualified as different. The air still smelled putrid but now that I knew the root cause, I was less concerned.

The woman paid little attention to her pups but instead was engrossed in her magazine. I caught a faint mutter coming from her lips. She was obviously in good spirits about something because her visage looked vibrant and jovial. I then noticed the magazine she was consumed with: it was a holiday issue from one of those home and garden periodicals. I watched her for a few more minutes and then walked away.

For the rest of the day, I wondered what sort of memories were being conjured up from that magazine she was consumed with and what might have led to her turning away from all social norms.

In this week's feature, "Leave the World Behind" starring Julia Roberts and Ethan

Hawke, we find a family on vacation who suddenly realize that the world is technologically breaking down and that all social norms are about to implode.

This was an interesting film with hints of M. Night Shyamalan. The acting was great, with the storyline being very contemporary in its intrigue. It's obviously meant as a reflection on our current social and racial struggles, so if you're sensitive to that, you may want to pass. Otherwise, it's a lot of fun to consider.

A trippy "B" for "Leave the World Behind," now available to stream on Netflix.

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



Sing with all the colors of the mountain

You can see the stars overhead, twinkling against the shimmering clouds in the night sky. There are moments of clear, but this is Vermont. The clouds move about as they will, blocking different constellations throughout the evening. Almost as if by drawing your focus to different moments in the night sky, they are creating their own story and introducing you to different characters along the way.

Chances are that although the sky is alluring, your attention is more focused on the snow at your bases as you glide forward and upward. Or the pine trees laden with the weight of snow that glistens in the moonlight. In fact, as your eyes adjust, the entire world seems lit up in the darkness. Your whole existence changes and you become nocturnal.

Unless you're at the resort or on a multi-use trail, there's no need for a headlamp. As Mother Nature lights up the snow through reflections, you change with it and the experience can be slightly overwhelming. Your ears, once focused on the constant buzzing of modern life, now hear the howls

of wolves in the distance, the movement of snow in the trees just beyond and perhaps the rustling of leafless bushes just ahead.

You are merely an animal now, maneuvering through the woods just like any other. A part of the natural experience, rather than a human projecting your will onto it. Whatever nature has in store for you this evening, that is what you will experience. You are, in fact, surrendering your human advantage. Your eyes and ears have not developed for a pure night existence.

But you can adapt. You can submit to nature and you can learn.

It is humbling, to walk through the woods at night. To let Nature guide you on a path of her choosing. That's not to say that you shouldn't have your technological advancements like a map, compass and headlamp in your backpack, but take a moment to put them away. You can always find yourself later. Take a well known path and experience it at night without science and learn to trust yourself and listen to your surroundings.

Get to know the nature around you and

Livin' the dream → 26



Livin' the Dream
By Merisa
Sherman

Christmas in the 1950s

It's almost Christmas and as I look back I realize how the holiday is very different in today's world.

When I was a child in the '50s, downtown Rutland was bustling with shoppers who had numerous stores from which to select Christmas gifts. The windows were beautifully decorated for the season and most stores were open at night as the holiday drew near.

And what would Christmas be to a child without a visit to Santa? He could be found on the third floor of the Economy Store on Merchants Row. An exciting part of getting there was taking the elevator. You didn't push a button but were taken up there by the elevator operator. You left with a candy cane and high hopes that what you told Santa you wanted would be under your tree on Christmas morning.

You could also have contact with Santa through a local radio station. Late in the afternoon on weekdays they read letters that children had written to Santa. I listened every afternoon at the appointed time hoping to hear mine. I was one happy girl when that happened. Our radio, by the way, was a floor model that was like a piece of furniture!

I don't remember anyone having an artificial tree. It was the real thing or nothing! We always got our tree from a home on Route 7 north where Mr. Twitter's is now located. Balsam was our tree of choice.

Colored lights could be found on just everyone's tree. All white lights weren't popular like they are today. The lights were large in size and were on a string covered with cloth wire. They were hot to touch after they had been on awhile.

Every ornament on our tree was breakable so they were carefully stored at the end of the season and were handled with care the following year as they were placed on the tree.

A new package of tinsel icicles was purchased every year and they glowed as the lights shone on them.

We had electric candles in the downstairs windows that were taped to the sill. In keeping with the season the light bulbs were green. The light by our front door also had a green bulb. There were boughs in our window box which is a tradition I still have. However, I have gone a step farther and have minia-

ture white lights on the boughs. I am OK with breaking the tradition of colored lights!

It's funny how little things can often be a favorite memory. My mother had three wax "holiday caroler" candles. They were dressed in choir robes that were red on the bottom with white tops. They were only about 3 inches tall. They were placed on a table for decoration and were never lighted. When my husband, Peter, and I moved into my family home I mistakenly put them in

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Looking
Back
By Mary Ellen Shaw

HomeShare Vermont partners with Thompson Senior Center in Woodstock

HomeShare Vermont and Woodstock's Thompson Senior Center have joined forces to bring more Vermonters access to the homesharing model.

"This partnership will open new doors to folks in our area and we can't wait to make the connections with HomeShare Vermont," said Deanna Jones, exec. director at The Thompson Senior Center.

With this partnership, HomeShare Vermont's coverage will expand into the majority of towns in Windsor County and reach into Rutland County. "We are excited to work with the team at The Thompson Senior Center," HomeShare Vermont Executive Director Connor Timmons said. "We know the benefits of homesharing for older Vermonters,

including companionship, help with chores, potential rental income and generally the ability to stay in their home longer when they become hosts. This new venture will help more Vermonters and create meaningful relationships between hosts and guests."

For more information visit: Homesharevermont.org.

← New speed limit: from page 3

and show our presence."

In addition to speed limit signs and officer presence, weather, traffic, the day of the week and the time of day help control the amount of speeding.

The department now has three full-time officers, including the chief, and a fourth is in a long-term training and certification process that takes eight months to complete. And often only one of the officers is on duty.

Montgomery says on busy weekends when there can be up to 20,000 visitors, their resources are stretched very thin, and the officers have to respond to other calls as well as monitor speeding.

Killington's goal in speed limit enforcement isn't to produce revenue, the chief said. The purpose is to make the town's

Montgomery's message: "Please have respect for our... speed limits for the sake of everyone's safety."

roads safer for pedestrians and other vehicles. The fines levied are more about driver education than fundraising.

Montgomery's message: "Please have respect for our residents, our visitors, our businesses, our pedestrians and our speed limits for the sake of everyone's safety."



Submitted

Ella Andrews, 16, racing with Killington Mountain School, has been selected to compete with the U.S. Youth Olympic Team.

← Youth Olympic Team: from page 1

of Korea, which hosted the Olympic Winter Games PyeongChang 2018.

When asked what the opportunity to join the U.S. Youth Olympic team means to her, she said: "Earlier this year I got the opportunity to compete at Junior Worlds for the United States and it was an absolute honor. To be selected again to represent my country at the Youth Olympic Games is a dream come true and I could not be more excited! Competing against athletes from different countries is a completely unique experience and I feel incredibly lucky. Traveling to South Korea and being able to do the

sport I love with so many new people who share that love is something special that I'm sure I'll remember for the rest of my life."

Ella Andrews recently returned from FIS Freeski Junior Worlds in Cardrona, New Zealand, where she qualified for finals in both Slopestyle and Big Air, coming in ninth overall in both events. Though this was her first international competition and first opportunity to represent the U.S., 16-year-old Andrews has been competing in U.S. Ski and Snowboard Association (USASA) events since she was 7 years old and has a long list of

accomplishments including:

- 9 medals in slopestyle, half-pipe, rail jam, and skiercross at USASA Nationals
- Overall USASA Nationals Champion in 2017, 2019, and 2023
- 5 gold medals at U.S. Ski and Snowboard Futures Tour Slopestyle and Big Air

She will compete in this year's U.S. Ski and Snowboard Revolution Tour upon returning from Korea.

Follow her on Instagram @eleanor_andrewsss or livestream the YOG at: olympics.com/en/gangwon-2024.

← Livin' the dream: from page 25

feel the earth moving underneath you. Really feel the green mountains rolling underneath you, the small nuances of the hills beneath your feet. The world was not created flat and smooth, it is filled with such small nuances that it almost seems unreal. How can something that looks so smooth from a distance be so variable? Let yourself feel the earth through your skis, or split board or drift boards or snowshoes or yak tracks or microspikes or even your bare feet.

Listen to the earth through your feet. Feel the variable terrain underneath you, connect with the world. It tells a story. A tree rotted and left a hole centuries ago and it has been gradually filling in over time. Perhaps a rock got pushed by the root of a tree and is only now coming to the surface. A new bush is starting to grow and the ground is pimpling above it, waiting to pop. And all this is covered in snow. Can you feel what is underneath it?

Listen to the earth through your feet. Feel the variable terrain underneath you, connect with the world.

If you cannot do it at the slow pace of walking or skinning, how do you expect to feel and adjust to those micro changes while you are skiing or snowboarding? If you cannot stand in the lift line and feel the variable terrain how will you make the adjustments when you are moving? One of the reasons I love skinning so terribly much, is that it helps develop a deeper relationship with my equipment and the mountain underneath me. If you cannot feel, how can you react?

Anyone can ski fast. It's what I tell my young athletes all the time. The speed numbs your feet, preventing you from dealing with the intricacies of the terrain. Instead of dancing with the mountain, you are merely skimming over it. Missing it. Chances are, your skis aren't even really touching the snow and you haven't noticed a single detail of the world underneath you. You are blind, you are unfeeling, you are numb.

But if you slow down and actually accept the challenge that the mountain has laid at your feet, if you can adjust to all the variables that are presented to you — you will find the dance, you will develop a relationship with the mountain and you will become fast through efficiency and skill.

As I tell my young athletes, only a truly good skier can ski slowly, manipulating their equipment in collaboration with the snow underneath. Only a truly good skier or snowboarder can have a conversation with the mountain, can listen to what is being said and react accordingly. Only a truly good skier can dance with the mountain. Only a truly good skier can sing with all the voices of the mountain.

← Looking back: from page 25

the attic with other holiday items that my mother had in a box. When I took them out the next Christmas the heat had melted them! Vermont Country Store came to my rescue when I found them in their catalog. Although they are not the originals, their tradition lives on! Now they are safely stored in a dining room cabinet and used for decoration only... just like 70 years ago.

As I unpack ornaments for our tree each year there is a special memory when I see the one that has a "W" taped to the bottom of it. Apparently my mother put the initial of my last name (Whalen) on the ornament when I took it to school for our classroom tree. She was probably instructed to do that so that each student would get back the correct ornament. When I put it on our tree every year I take a step back in time to the 1950s.

After my parents took the ornaments and lights off the Christmas tree each year my father would pile up a big mound of snow near our front door. The tree was put into it and stayed there until the snow melted. All good things must come to an end!

Have a wonderful Christmas making fond memories that you can enjoy looking back at some day.



By Marguerite Jill Dye

← Mountain Meditation: from page 24

cash in now and then.)

To create your own coupon present think of your loved one's interests and passions then write or type a description of each item on colorful paper or decorate with markers. A gift of coupons may just add that "je ne sais quoi" to the season.

And so, dear friends and editors at the Mountain Times, thank you for reading the columns I've been writing about my recent spiritual experiences. Sharing this journey and my deepest sentiments means more to me than you'll ever know. I wish you blessings this holiday season and throughout 2024!

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

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WINTER SEASONAL RENTAL MENDON 1 Bedroom fully furnished apartment close to Pico and Killington. No pets. 802-558-6738.

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By Brooke Geery

Killington Resort donated 25 toy wagons stuffed with goodies for Teddy Arbo's annual Holiday Toy Party earlier this month.

Killington Resort delivers a wagonload of gifts for Teddy's Holiday Toy Party

By Brooke Geery

Teddy Arbo's annual Holiday Toy Party is an ever-growing tradition in the Killington community. What started as a dinner party in 1986 where guests were asked to bring toys instead of a side dish has grown into something much bigger.

The 37th annual party was held this year at The Foundry on Dec. 2.

"The purpose of my event is to raise awareness and help people in need for the holidays," said Arbo. "It benefits veterans and people without the means for food and toys, and we want to support anyone who needs it."

In the past 10 years, the event has gone from raising around \$10,000 a year to much, much more, all thanks to individual donors who bring toys, local businesses donating items to be auctioned off, and generous cash donations. In the past two years, over \$100,000 has been raised and 2,000 toys have been donated.

Killington Resort is one of the largest single donors to the event and each year. This year, members of the leadership and management team at Killington assembled 25 toy

wagons which were stuffed with goodies and generously donated, all ready to be played with. This annual exercise is not only a great way to give back, but also a team-building experience and opportunity for Killington's senior staff to be involved in the community, the resort stated.

Along with the toys collected at the party, the wagons

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were hand-delivered to local organizations this week including The Upper Valley Haven, Rutland Country Parent Child Center, The Dodge House, The Open Door Mission, Rutland County Women's Network and Shelter, Sherburne United Church, United Way of Rutland County

and Play for Your Freedom. The money donated will also be given out to these causes. Those who may need a hand this holiday season are encouraged to reach out to any of the above organizations for help.

Arbo would like to thank everyone in the community for making this event a huge and continued success and encourages all to save the date. Next year's Holiday Toy Party is set for Saturday, Dec. 7, 2024.

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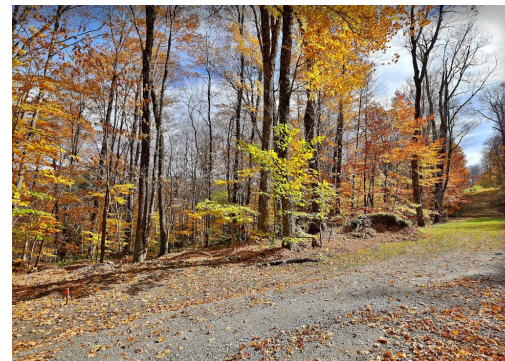
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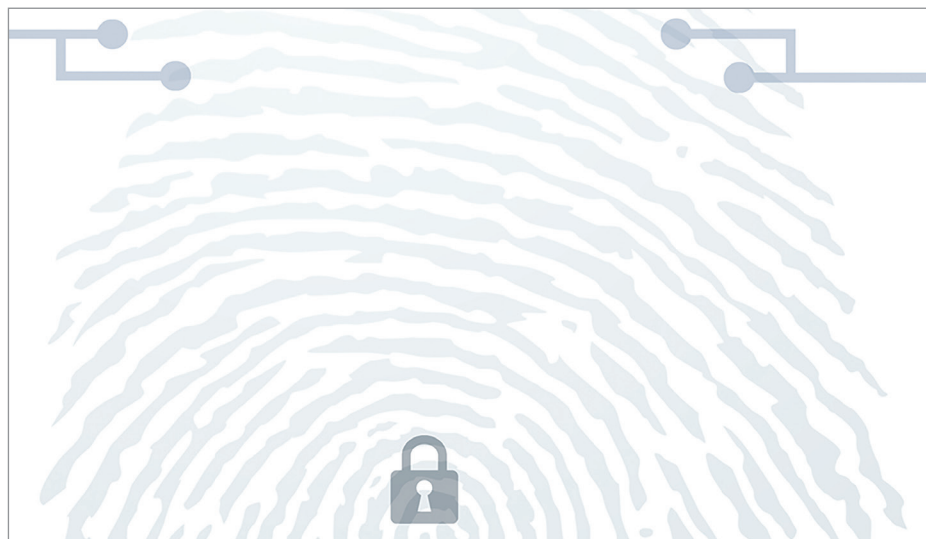
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← Youth behavior: from page 3

that plan will include provisions for the suspension or expulsion of students who engage in misconduct “on school property, on a school bus, or at a school-sponsored activity when the misconduct makes the continued presence of the student harmful to the welfare of the school community,” as well as misconduct that occurs outside of those spaces and in which “direct harm to the school can be demonstrated or where the misconduct can be shown to pose a clear and substantial interference with another student’s equal access to educational programs.”

Parent concerns

The Mount Abraham Union School District (MAUSD) board at its Nov. 21 meeting heard from a handful of community members who expressed concerns about a student who recently joined the district and who is believed to have been involved in a shooting crime.

One parent asked how she and other parents could be reassured about the situation and how it’s being handled.

“Whatever the scenario is, there is going to be mental health concerns around this issue, and do we get to be reassured that there’s things in place for this child, there’s a structure around it of some sort,” she asked the board. “I feel like we need something, if we’re sending our kids daily, I think any parent would want some reassurance that’s above some generic response that could just be any situation, any day. This is very unique, and I think we’re deserving of something that’s a little bit more tailored to the situation.”

Another community member provided a different perspective, stating she remains confident in the school’s ability to keep students safe. She noted her grandchild attends school with the student in question and encouraged those with questions or concerns about the situation to reach out to school officials.

“That’s the first thing I did when I found out. The child was there for several weeks before we even had it pointed out to us. They kept our kids safe in those weeks, why would that change just because we now know about it?” she said. “I send my kid

every day, whether there’s someone there that’s been accused of murder or not. When we put our kids in public school, we trust them to keep our children safe. That’s what I have done and what I’ll continue to do.”

Robinson Elementary School Principal Edorah Frazer also spoke at the Nov. 21 meeting. She shared with the board and those in attendance information about the various safety measures in place at the elementary school.

“The safety situation in any elementary school is dynamic, it changes day to day,” Frazer said, adding that school officials are trained to adapt to changing circumstances.

Safety measures at the elementary school include ongoing relationships with a variety of community partners, including two police forces, the Counseling Service of Addison County (with which the school contracts for a full-time counselor), and organizations that help ensure each student has access to food, clothing and medical care.

Frazer noted Robinson’s 101 students have unique needs that school officials work to respond to each day.

“Regardless of who shows up, we assess the needs of those students. In the vast majority of cases, we can meet those needs, and we are doing so,” she said. “I have no concerns about my 101 students. I have no concerns that there are safety issues, that any of our students are dangerous within the school building.”

The principal added that school officials plan for a variety of safety measures. The school uses cameras, alarms, drills and has weekly meetings discussing the needs of each classroom, all of which are measures designed to ensure the safety of those in the learning community.

“Every adult in an elementary school is trained to watch, to listen, to respond to student needs, to help kids be calm and happy. All of those things we’re trained to do, and we do it every minute that a student is in the building,” Frazer said. “We take that responsibility seriously. I think we’re doing it well. I feel very safe and comfortable in my school. I think that’s been the case every day this year, and I expect it to be the case going forward.”

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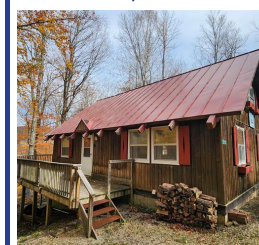
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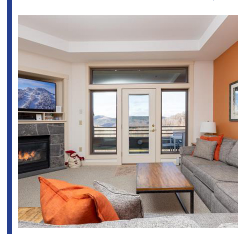
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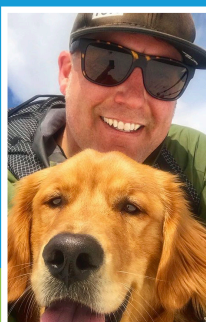
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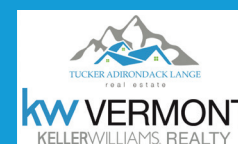
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