



TOP MTB RIDERS FLOCK TO KILLINGTON FOR THE U.S. OPEN

The Fox U.S. Open of mountain biking returns to Killington this weekend with events Friday-Sunday. Local riders, coaches and students will be competing for cash prizes.

The region has seen exponential growth in ridership and Woodstock High School boasts the first public school varsity mountain bike team in the state!

Page 14-45



KAHAN RECOGNIZED WITH DAY & FLAVOR

Vermont superstar Noah Kahan was awarded a day and a B&J's flavor last week in support of his mental health initiative.

Page 5

EAST MOUNTAIN RD IN KILLINGTON IS CLOSED FOR REPAIR, PAVING

A short section of East Mountain Road, between Bear Mountain Road and Trailside Drive, will be closed for two weeks beginning this week. A large culvert will be replaced under the road, then it will be repaved Oct. 15, according to Abbie Sherman, director of public works for the town of Killington.

Base Camp at Bear Mountain to begin build-out

25 acre purchase will yield 102 residential units at slope side at Killington Resort

By Polly Mikula

Ottauquechee Realty Advisors, LLC has closed on its purchase of 25 acres from Killington Resort, on which it will develop Base Camp at Bear Mountain. The sale was finalized Thursday, Sept. 19. The development parcel, adjacent from Killington Resort's Bear Mountain Base Lodge, has town and Vermont Act 250 Master Plan approvals allowing for up to 102 residential units.

Phase I is fully permitted for the construction of 24 townhomes configured in 12 duplex buildings. All of the townhomes will have ski-in ski-out access on the Bear Cub Trail at Bear Mountain.

Duplex prices start at \$2,900,000 depending

on view and location, according to the website (basecampatbearmt.com).

The two-level duplex units feature a first floor layout with a two-car heated garage, entry area, gear locker, storage room, office, bathroom, bonus room, and open dining, living, and kitchen areas as well as access to patios. The second-floor sleeping level consists of four bedrooms and three full bathrooms; two are master suites and two bedrooms have a shared bath.

The townhomes feature radiant heat, gourmet kitchen, and high-end finishes throughout, Bomengen noted. The living room features 14-foot

ceilings with floor-to-ceiling windows looking out at Bear Mountain.

This will be the third development at Killington by the managing Ottauquechee Realty Advisors partners Richard Saunders and Steve Malone. The first two were Top Ridge and The Lodges within Sunrise Mountain Village, both developed along the Sun Dog trail.

"The market for the upscale townhomes is for young families, typically with two kids and parents in their early-to-mid 40s who are fairly high wage earners and want a new ski home," Malone said.

Development → 4

Killington announces FIS World Cup music

Fitz and the Tantrums, Matt Quinn, Eve 6 and DJ Ross One to play the Killington Cup

Killington Resort announced the entertainment lineup for the 2024 Stifel Killington Cup, Tuesday, Sept. 24. Taking place Nov. 29-Dec. 1, the eighth edition of the Audi FIS Ski World Cup will bring together the fastest female technical alpine skiers in the world with live concerts, movies, fireworks and more.

Killington will host four concerts throughout the weekend: Fitz and the Tantrums, Matt Quinn (from Mt. Joy), Eve 6, and DJ Ross One.

The entertainment kicks off on Friday with DJ Ross One, the athlete bib presentation and a stunning fireworks display. Ross One

Killington Cup → 9

Suspect arrested in Pawlet triple homicide

Staff report

On Friday, Sept. 20, 2024, Vermont State Police (VSP) obtained an arrest warrant for the suspect in the killings of three people — family members — last weekend in Pawlet.

Brian Crossman Jr., 22, of Granville, New York, faces three counts of aggravated murder arising from the fatal shootings of his father, 46-year-old Brian Crossman Sr.; his stepmother, 41-year-old Erica (Pawlusiak) Crossman; and his 13-year-old stepbrother, Colin Taft. Evidence shows the killings occurred early morning on Sunday, Sept. 15, inside the family home on Route 133 that Crossman Sr. shared with his wife and stepson.

At the time, police called the incident "isolated" and said there was "no identified threat to the community."



Submitted
An intake photograph of Brian Crossman Jr., 22, taken at the Warren County Jail.

Triple homicide → 4



Submitted

U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders held a 'Basketball with Bernie' event at Rutland Middle School, Sept. 14.

Bernie Sanders shoots hoops with students at Rutland Middle School

U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders has been touring the state embarking on his first ever "Basketball with Bernie" events for youth.

The tour started in Winooski, Derby, and St. Albans, then on Saturday, Sept. 14, he met with more young people and families in Springfield and Bennington, ending at Rutland Middle School in Rutland at 4 p.m.

Sanders held free throw shooting contests, handed out awards, and gave out free basketballs to each participant.

"Parents, teachers, and doctors that I talk to worry that too many kids are spending more time on their

"I was so glad to see over 200 young people, and their families, turn out this weekend," Sen. Sanders said.

phones than they should, are not physically active, and are not developing the kind of peer relationships that are healthy," said Sanders. "Given today's world, these are not easy problems to overcome,

but we've got to keep trying."

"Basketball, and sports in general, require physical exertion, teamwork, discipline, and a striving for excellence. Good qualities for our kids to adopt," he continued. "Which is why I was so glad to see over 200 young people,

and their families, turn out this weekend. Thank you to everyone who joined me on Saturday to shoot some hoops and make the events possible. And by the way, it was a lot of fun."

Village Trust Initiative selects first seven communities

Reading and Benson receive funds for General Store projects

The Preservation Trust of Vermont, Vermont Council on Rural Development, and the Vermont Community Foundation announced the first cohort of communities selected for the Village Trust Initiative, Sept. 12.

The Village Trust Initiative is a new partnership of the three organizations that will support 20 Vermont communities over the next several years to form a Community Trust and undertake a transformational revitalization project in their historic village.

The Village Trust Initiative is made possible with a \$10 million Congressionally directed spending award from Senator Leahy's office in 2023 and will provide selected communities across the state with substantial planning and implementation funding. Each community will receive technical assistance from all three partner organizations, funding to support the predevelopment of the project, and significant capital investment to launch the project forward.

By helping communities define a vision for their future and complete revitalization projects, the Village Trust Initiative will build community capacity, preserve a sense of place, and ensure Vermont villages are dynamic places for future generations. In the coming years, the program will expand to support additional villages in all 14 counties in Vermont.

The first awards went to seven communities, representing seven counties:

1. Benson, Rutland County, General Store project
2. Reading, Windsor County, General Store project
3. Braintree, Orange County, Snowsville Hotel housing and community space project
4. West Fairlee, Orange County, Bean Hall Community Center project
5. Wolcott, Lamoille County, Schoolhouse rehabilitation project
6. Lunenburg, Essex County, Gilman Middle School reuse project
7. Greensboro Bend, Orleans County, Church and parsonage adaptive reuse project

"The Reading Community Trust is excited to be a member of the 2024 Village Trust Initiative cohort and will
Village Trust → 12

Vt Delegation introduces bill to redraw boundaries of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park in Woodstock

The Vermont Congressional Delegation, Senator Bernie Sanders (I-Vt.), Senator Peter Welch (D-Vt.), and Representative Becca Balint (VT-At-Large) introduced the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park Establishment Act Amendments, legislation that extends the boundary of the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historic Park to include the neighboring King Farm, which is currently owned by the Vermont Land Trust.

"The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park is a treasure for Vermont and our nation," said Senator Sanders in the news release Monday, Sept. 23. "Vermont's forests and working farms have always been vital to our economy and critical to our character as a state. I'm pleased this bill will continue Vermont's conservation legacy by expanding this park and helping to conserve land for agriculture, forestry, and educational purposes for future generations."

"The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park is a unique example of how decades of conservation and stewardship have shaped our landscape and Vermont values. As Vermont's first and only national park, this park plays an important role in conserving and educating folks about our state's rich agricultural heritage," said Senator Welch. "By

expanding the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP to include the King Farm, our bill will create new enrichment opportunities and ensure that future generations can continue to enjoy and appreciate this historical treasure."

"In Vermont, we care deeply about the preservation, stewardship, and the future of our parks and lands," said Rep. Balint. "I'm proud to take action to strengthen this partnership and ensure that King Farm has the resources it needs for trail maintenance, conservation, and land management. I'm grateful to work with Senator Welch and Sanders and our shared commitment to our state's outdoor recreation."

Located in Woodstock, the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP preserves a significant historical, agricultural, and natural landscape. The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP became Vermont's first and only national park when it opened its doors to the public in 1998. The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP commemorates the historical contributions of its namesakes—George Perkins Marsh, Frederick Billings, and Mary French Rockefeller—preserves Vermont's proud agricultural heritage, and conserves native forestland ecosystems. It also provides countless educational opportunities for visitors, protects archaeological sites, and showcases historic architecture.

The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park Establishment Act Amendments would expand resources for the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP's Stewardship Institute to support educational programming, research, community engagement, and conservation efforts. Additionally, the bill would authorize the Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller NHP to acquire the King Farm from willing property owners in the future, without requiring its sale.

The Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park Establishment Act Amendments Act is endorsed by the Vermont Land Trust and has the support of the town of Woodstock.

"The town of Woodstock is happy with this legislation, as we have an outstanding and cooperative relationship with the National Park Service and our residents enjoy all the activities and services they currently offer," said Eric Duffy, municipal manager for the town of Woodstock. "The Park is a massive tourist draw and a vital part of our community."

"We welcome the opportunity to partner more closely with NPS in enhancing access to land and programming at King Farm. The timing aligns perfectly with our efforts to raise funds and invest in King Farm, alongside community partners," said Tracy Zschau, president and CEO of Vermont Land Trust.

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Vermont State University researchers receive grant to study links between ticks and invasive plant species

Vermont State University (VTSU) announced Monday, Sept. 23, that it was recently awarded a \$1.8 million National Science Foundation (NSF) grant, along with researchers from the University of Maine, to conduct groundbreaking research on ticks and invasive plant species.

VTSU faculty members Drs. Kristen Ross and William (Bill) Landesman are co-investigators on the grant.

The project, titled “Management of linked human and ecosystem health threats in the private woodland socio-environmental system” is funded through NSF’s Dy-

namics of Integrated Socio-Environmental Systems program and will provide valuable research opportunities for undergraduate students over the next five years.

“This research is crucial for understanding social dynamics involved in managing ecological threats to forest and human health. This funding will also allow us to provide in-depth, hands-on, impactful research opportunities for our undergraduate students over the next five years,” shared Dr. Ross.

The multidisciplinary team, comprising biologists, social scientists, and mathe-

matical modelers will investigate land management decisions made by private landowners, aimed at addressing threats to both forest and human health in the context of the control of invasive plants and ticks.

“Tick-borne diseases are a persistent and rising concern in Vermont,” said Dr. Landesman. “This project will help us to implement land management to help reduce this risk while maintaining the health of our forests. It is especially rewarding to do be able to perform this research with students and in collaboration with faculty across the VTSU system.”

“Researching the correlation between invasive species and number of ticks has been hard work but it is really important to keep it going. The results of this research could really impact what we know about tick habitat and possibly give more ways to help control tick populations in certain areas. This research is important from both an environmental and human health perspective,” said Allie Cloutier, a student at VTSU Johnson who participated in collecting preliminary data during the summer of 2024.

Alexandra Williams, a VTSU Castleton
Tick study → 10



Courtesy The Mint

The S.P.A.C.E. unit above will soon be delivered to Mac Steel in Rutland to support a new Artist Residency Program.

Innovative S.P.A.C.E. Unit to enhance Artist Residency Program at Mac Steel

The Mint makerspace announced Monday, Sept. 23, the upcoming transport of an innovative S.P.A.C.E. unit to Mac Steel, marking a significant step in the organizations collaboration with Mac Steel, who further partners with Salem Art Works.

This unique 8 foot by 12 foot unit, acquired from Mike’s Country Store in Clarendon, has been meticulously weatherized and transformed into a livable

dwelling through a hands-on educational initiative.

The Mint engages the community by hosting classes on home improvement, welcomes back alumni from Vermont Works for Women TrailBlazers program and even students from Rosie’s Girls, who learned valuable skills such as drywall installation. This collaborative effort not only enhances the functionality of the unit but also has fostered a spirit of

creativity and learning.

This S.P.A.C.E. unit will be the first of its kind at Mac Steel, designed specifically to support their Artist Residency Program.

Josh Mac of Mac Steel expressed his excitement, stating, “We are really excited to partner with The Mint to create these small living units. We know our artists will love them and we believe in the larger mission of The Mint”

“The project serves as a proof of concept for our vision at The Mint, which includes a comprehensive trades education curriculum aimed at creating sustainable living solutions,” The Mint stated in a news release. “While the initial unit is not yet solar powered, we are committed to developing these small living units into solar-powered accommodations that promote creative existence.”

Table of contents

Local news	2
State news	9
Opinion	10
Puzzles	11
U.S. Open/MTB section	14-45
Calendar.....	46
Music Scene	49
Arts, Dining, Entertainment	50
Pets	62
Horoscopes.....	63
Columns.....	64
Service directory.....	67
Classifieds	68
Real estate	70

MOUNTAIN TIMES

is a community newspaper covering Central Vermont that aims to engage and inform as well as empower community members to have a voice.

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← Triple homicide:

from page 1

After the issuance of the Vermont arrest warrant, the New York State Police located Crossman Jr. and took him into custody. He is being detained without bail. He made an initial appearance Friday afternoon in Warren County Court in Lake George, New York, on a charge of being a fugitive from justice. Arrangements for his extradition to Vermont remain pending.

VSP will release an update once Crossman Jr.'s arraignment in Vermont has been scheduled.

Evidence

The VSP investigation identified significant evidence that linked Crossman Jr. to the killings, including digital information, statements, injuries, and various interviews.

On Sunday, Maj. Dan Trudeau, commander of the state police criminal division, told WCAX that police received a report of a "person that had some blood on them" on a "roadway." That person was later detained, he said.

The case is outlined in an affidavit of probable cause in support of the arrest warrant, which is filed with the Criminal Division of Vermont Superior Court in Rutland.

VSP worked closely throughout this investigation with the office of Rutland County State's Attorney Ian Sullivan. Investigators have also thanked the greater Pawlet community for their continued patience and understanding as this case unfolded throughout the week.

The victims

Police identified the Pawlet Select Board member and family members as victims in triple-homicide.

Police said Brian Crossman, Erica Crossman and 13-year-old Colin Taft died as a result of gunshot wounds.

"The medical examiner determined that Brian Crossman's cause of death was gunshot wounds to the head and torso, Erica Crossman's was a gunshot wound to the head, and Colin Taft's was multiple gunshot wounds. All three deaths were ruled homicides," a police report Tuesday night stated.

On Tuesday morning, Crossman's colleagues on the Pawlet Select Board issued a statement mourning his death. "Brian Crossman was a friend and neighbor, a hardworking community member who just this year stepped up to join the Pawlet Selectboard," they wrote.

"This tragedy that struck him and his family has also hit our community hard, and we are shaken and grieving. Our hearts go out to everyone affected by this devastating loss," read the statement, which was signed by the board's chair, Mike Beecher. "The town of Pawlet will work to get through this as we always get through hard times, by supporting each other and doing our best to carry on."

Teacher remembers Crossman as 'humble' and 'kind'

Decades ago, JeanMarie Oakman served as Brian Crossman's teacher and principal during her tenure at Wells Village School.

She said Crossman was a "humble, sweet, gentle boy," the kind of kid who made others feel at home at the small, rural school.

"He looked after all of his cousins and relatives. He was so kind to his sister," Oakman said, noting that Crossman was part of a large "salt of the Earth" family.

After falling out of touch, she said, she caught up with Crossman at a wedding in recent years, and she "beamed with pride" to see how well he was doing.

"Imagine, he wanted to sit with his old teaching principal," she recalled. "I remember leaving that wedding thinking, 'what a remarkable human being'"

Now, she was questioning how such a tragedy could befall Crossman and his family. "Why them? I can't fathom. It's been very upsetting," she said.

Ethan Weinstein/VTDigger contributed to this reporting.



Courtesy Base Camp at Bear Mountain

Two renditions show what the 24 duplexes will look like once completed. The estimated timeline would have the project completed by the end of 2026. The townhomes start at \$2.9m and feature floor-to-ceiling windows with views of Bear Mountain.

← Development:

from page 1

Malone said pre-construction will begin this fall and continue as long as possible until winter weather sets in, then it will proceed in the spring.

"We anticipate commencing site-work beginning October, then vertical construction will begin late fall or early winter," Malone said.

Once construction begins, Malone estimates that it'll take 2 1/2 years to complete the 24 townhomes. He expects them to be completed by late fall of 2026.

"About 65%-70% of the buying population wants to see a model home, especially in this price point," Malone added. "So once we have one done for folks to walk into and see furnished, then the marketing and sales shifts into a high gear."

Ottaquechee Realty Advisors, LLC has partnered with Prestige Real Estate as its listing agent for sales of the units.

"The interest level in these properties has been very strong," said Heidi Bomengen, co-owner and broker at Prestige Real Estate, of the pre-sales over two past years.

"Base Camp at Bear Mountain is the newest development ... in Killington in more than a decade," the listing on prestigekillington.com reads.

Future Base Camp at Bear Mountain development phases will include a multi-family offering and a custom home offering. Phase 2 will add 72

residential units consisting of townhomes and multi-family buildings. Phase 3 will consist of six single-family residences.

The developers have also stated they plan to build homes only when they have purchase and sales agree-

Once construction begins, Malone estimates that it'll take 2 1/2 years to complete the 24 townhomes.

ments. It's unclear how long it will take for the entire project to be completed.

"It depends on the market, the economy," Malone said.

For more information, visit: basecampatbearmt.com.

Gov. Scott proclaimed Sept. 19 as Noah Hahan Busyhead Project Day

Kahan brings awareness to mental health initiatives

Last Wednesday, Sept. 18, Governor Phil Scott announced that he proclaimed Thursday, Sept. 19 “Noah Kahan’s Busyhead Project Day” in Vermont as critically acclaimed Vermont singer and songwriter, Noah Kahan, returns to Vermont to perform a sold-out benefit concert with all proceeds going to Vermont-based mental health organizations.

The Busyhead Project, founded by Kahan, is a mental health initiative aimed at providing resources and information needed to end the stigma around mental health. Kahan has always been outspoken about his own journey and struggles, and has incorporated his experiences into his music through his honest and vulnerable lyrics.

“Our mental health is as

important as our physical health, and the challenges we’ve faced over the last few years has made that connection even more clear,” said Governor Phil Scott. “Growing up in rural Vermont, Noah understands how difficult it can be to get the help we need. So I’m grateful for his generosity, as he comes home to raise money for mental health organizations in order to help fellow Vermonters struggling in our state.”

Since launching last year, The Busyhead Project has raised over \$2.5 million dollars in pursuit of its ultimate goal to make mental healthcare accessible for all, by joining forces with national and local organizations to increase mental health awareness, amplify discussion, and democratize resources.

“It is the most tremendous honor to have Sept. 19 be named Noah Kahan’s Busyhead Project Day in the greatest state in America. I will celebrate by eating Ben & Jerry’s, getting a horrific stomach ache from my lactose intolerance, and then drinking a Heady Topper as the sun sets over the Green Mountains,” said Kahan. “I have been so fortunate to call this place my home, and I will never forget the love and support that the 802 has showed me. There is no combination of words, lyrics, or music that can fully describe the beauty of this place. I will not try to. I am just honored to be able to live here, to breathe the air, to exist in this magical place, and to call it my home. Thank you Vermont for this great honor.”

For more information visit: BusyHeadProject.org.

Kahan gets the scoop with Ben & Jerry's

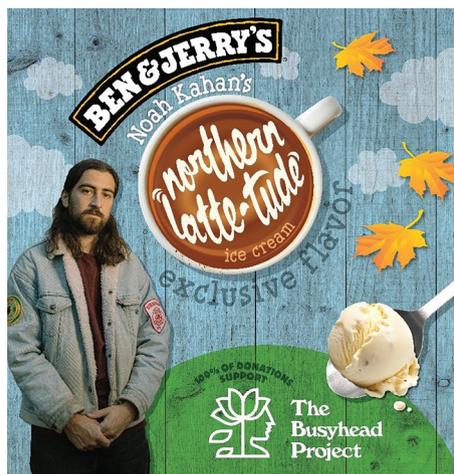
At Noah Kahan’s Benefit Concert in Essex Sept. 19, Ben & Jerry’s scooped a very limited-edition flavor: Northern Latte-tude.

Created in partnership between Kahan and Ben & Jerry’s Flavor Gurus, the flavor is a maple latte ice cream with graham cracker cookie dough & graham cracker pieces. Northern Latte-tude is inspired by Kahan, his Vermont roots and his popular song, Northern Attitude.

The limited-edition flavor was created specifically for the benefit concert with the goal to raise funds for Kahan’s mental health initiative, The Busyhead Project, which raises awareness around the importance of mental health, reduces stigmas and provides mental health resources.

“We were more than excited to partner with Noah Kahan to create this flavor,” said Emily Smith, Ben & Jerry’s head of brand innovation. “With Noah being from Vermont and establishing his non-profit The Busyhead Project to support such an important issue that he cares deeply about, we saw tons of fan gratitude for Noah’s Latte-tude, all while doing good.”

Kahan is a Grammy-nominated Vermont singer and songwriter who has exploded from his New England roots into the global mainstream and has been touted as one of this year’s biggest and best new artists. At the core of his music are vulnerable lyrics and an unfiltered yet relatable honesty, as the critically acclaimed artist pens songs straight from the heart and cracks jokes with his signature, self-deprecating sense of humor. Across his three albums and an EP, Kahan has garnered global renown for his singular mix



Submitted

Ben & Jerry’s has made a limited edition flavor in Kahan’s honor: Northern Latte-tude.

of Folk, Americana, and Rock, landing more than seven billion streams, a 4x Platinum Certification for his hit single “Stick Season,” and collaborations with Post Malone, Kacey Musgraves, Brandi Carlile, Hozier, Gregory Alan Isakov, Gracie Abrams, Sam Fender, Lizzy McAlpine, Zach Bryan, Joy Oladokun, and more. His widely adored, Double Platinum-Certified album, Stick Season, is inspired by his New England roots and earliest musical inspirations—from Paul Simon to Yusuf Islam (Cat Stevens)—conveying a vivid representation of what he loves, fears, and struggles with most passionately. Last year, he also founded The Busyhead Project, a charitable initiative that expands access to mental healthcare and fights the stigma around mental health.



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Gasoline	Paint	Fluorescent											
Adhesives	Pesticides	Thermostats											
Resins	Oil	Propane Tank											
	Aerosol												

Transfer station is for the collection & transfer of solid waste deposited by residents and property owners of the Town. (Windshield sticker & punch card needed). Recycling Center is for residents and property owners of the Town. (Free with windshield sticker). If you need to dispose of solid waste outside the normal operating hours of the Transfer Station or have construction & demolition debris or other non-acceptable waste, residents and property owners of Killington can go to the Rutland County Solid Waste District Transfer Station & Drop-off Center located on Gleason Road in Rutland.



TOWN OF
KILLINGTON
VERMONT



ZERO-SORT
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Start your engines



By Rep. Jim Harrison

Spoiler alert: Author's political bias may show...

The race to Election Day (Nov. 5), has officially begun in Vermont. The Secretary of State's office has begun the mailing of general election ballots to all active voters in the state. Voters can choose to mail or drop off their ballot at their Town Clerk's office or return them on Election Day. If you are not registered to vote, you can register at your Town Clerk's office or visit mvp.vermont.gov.

And while I may be a little slow out of the gate, I am a candidate for re-election as the state representative for the Rutland-11 district (Chittenden, Killington, Mendon and Pittsfield).

If you would like a lawn sign in any of these towns to show your support, please email me at Jim.Harrison.vt@gmail.com. I will drop one off and pick up after election day.

While it would have been easy to step down and say it's someone else's turn, I am running to help us bring more balance and fiscal responsibility back to the State House. On too many key bills, legislative leaders chose to override vetoes and enact their own plans rather than find middle ground with the governor these past two years.

Yes, I admit that I agree with Phil Scott on many issues, especially when it comes to affordability. We need 51 House members or 11 Senators to stand up for finding that elusive middle ground on major legislative initiatives and right now we don't have those numbers to support Phil Scott when it really counts.

The next legislative session will be critical in many areas, including education finance

Harrison → 12



By Jim Harrison

Vermont's best known race car driver Governor Phil Scott showed Graham and Luke (Harrison's grandsons) one of the race cars a few years ago.

Chittenden seeks geothermal funding

By Brett Yates

Thanks to a recently expanded state program, municipal buildings in Vermont have a chance to go green without burdening local budgets. Officials in Chittenden hope to take advantage.

Eyeing heating, lighting, and weatherization upgrades, Chittenden has applied for \$499,999.49 — out of a maximum of \$500,000 — in grant funding from Vermont's Municipal Energy Resilience Program, which will use \$45 million from 2021's federal American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) to subsidize the decarbonization of town buildings. The big-ticket item is a proposed geothermal heat pump for the Chittenden town office, which would cost \$247,000.

For the North Chittenden Grange Hall, officials have requested \$56,328 for a standard air-source heat pump system. Geothermal systems have a bigger price tag in part because they require digging below the surface of the earth to collect heat from soil that, even in winter, remains relatively warm. That, however, allows them to use less energy to keep buildings heated.

According to projections shared by Emergency Management Director Jan Sotirakis, who applied for the grant on the

town's behalf, the geothermal system would save \$5,000 in annual energy expenses over the course of its four- or five-decade lifespan. Even so, Selectman Andrew Quint lamented the upfront cost before voting to approve the application on Sept. 23.

"As a taxpayer, \$247,000 is beyond frustrating. It's just so out of context," Quint said, calling it "federal printed money that at some point will have to be paid for."

The town office and the Grange Hall would also receive modifications to improve each building's "thermal envelope." And because the Municipal Energy Resilience Program can pay for projects related to ADA compliance, a wheelchair-accessible ramp could come to the Grange.

The Vermont Dept. of Buildings and General Services will evaluate grant applications and announce winners by Oct. 25. It could choose to fund all, some, or none of Chittenden's desired projects, which will compete with proposals from across the state.

"I've heard that there's 27 applications from Rutland County," Sotirakis said. By her account, Chittenden is one of three Rutland County towns seeking funding for a geothermal system.

Where is the state road work this week?

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) published its weekly report of planned construction activities that will impact traffic on state highways and interstates throughout Vermont, Sept. 23-27 and ongoing. Local roads are included below:

Hartford: Monday through Friday, motorists should expect moderate delays with traffic shifts and alternating one-way traffic on Route 5 and sideroads from the VA Medical Center to the Hartford/Hartland town line. Motorists should also anticipate

traffic shifts at the intersection of Route 5 and North Main Street. The truck detour remains in effect at the intersection of North Main Street and Route 5. The detour directs truck traffic to continue south on Route 5 and utilize the Sykes Mountain Avenue roundabout to then travel north on Route 5, where truck traffic will then be able to make the left turn onto Hartford Avenue to travel over the bridge and continue onto Route 5.

This detour does not apply to standard Road work → 13

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SKI SWAP

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SALE DATES AND HOURS:

LOCATION: PICO BASE LODGE AT PICO MOUNTAIN RESORT

Friday, October 4: 5:00 PM - 9:00 PM

Saturday, October 5: 9:00 AM - 4:00 PM

Sunday, October 6: 9:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Consignment drop off dates and locations:

at Pico Ski Club:

September 21: 12:00 - 3:00

September 28: 12:00 - 3:00

September 29: 9:00 - 1:00

October 2: 4:00 - 7:00

October 3: 4:00 - 7:00

at Pico Retail Shop:

October 4: 12:00 - 3:00

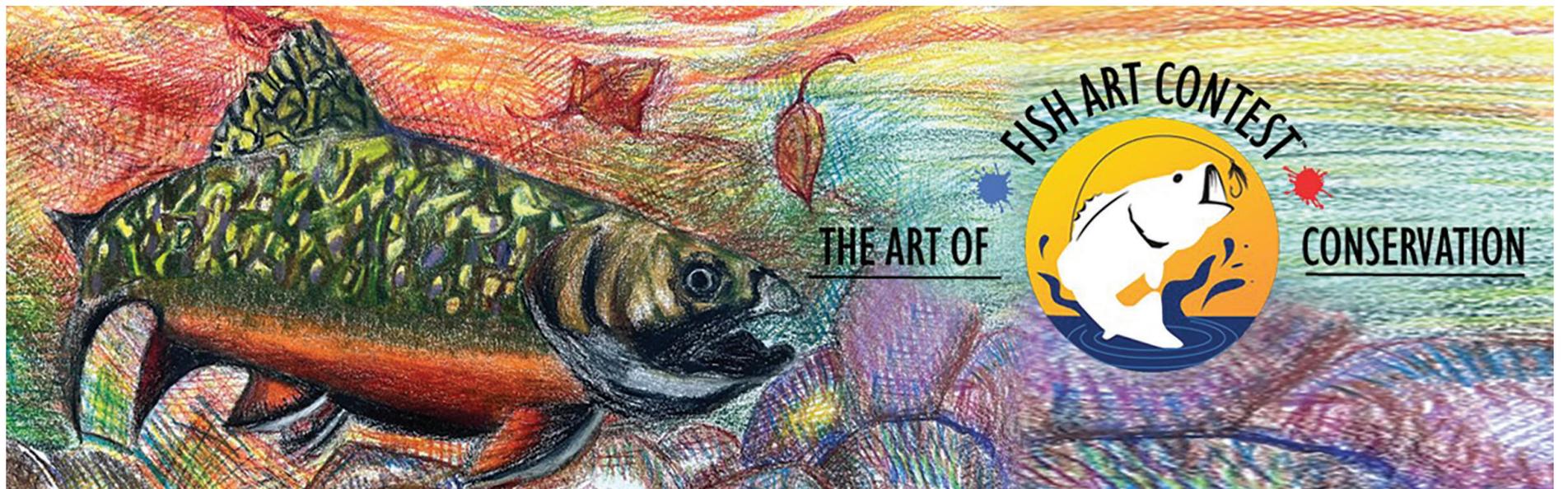


**PLEASE enter all consignment items online
PRIOR to the drop off date that you choose**

(entering items online prior to drop off will make the drop off process MUCH faster)

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to read the full instructions for consigning**





Courtesy VTF&W

VTF&W announce K-12 student Fish Art Contest

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Dept. (VTF&W) announced Sept. 10 that entries are being accepted for the 2025 Vermont Student Fish Art Contest in partnership with Wildlife Forever.

The department invites Vermont students in grades K-12 to select a fish species found in Vermont waters and submit an

illustration and one-page creative essay on the species. The essay is not required for grades K-3.

“The Fish Art Contest is a way for Vermont students to use their creativity and strengthen their knowledge and connection with our environment,” said VTF&W Education Specialist Corey Hart. “Last year, 226 Vermont

Students submitted artwork of Vermont fish species. Several Vermont schools incorporated the contest into their curriculum, allowing the teachers to highlight the selected fish species in detail before the students created their masterpieces.”

Winners will be selected for four grade categories: K-3, 4-6, 7-9,

and 10-12.

Winners will receive a fishing rod and reel, and their art will be entered into a selection process to be featured in the department’s forthcoming 2026 Fishing Guide and Regulations publication.

Teachers who have questions may contact Corey Hart by email at Corey.Hart@vermont.gov or by

phone at 802-505-5562.

Rules and information about the contest are available at: theartofconservation.org/fish-art-contest.

Entries to the 2025 Vermont Student Fish Art Contest must be submitted by Feb. 28, 2025, at: form.jotform.com/242386164735159.



Courtesy Castleton Community Center

Bocci court planned for Castleton Community Center

Heritage Family Credit Union Business Development Officer Tracy Adams and Tanya Bergantino, Castleton Branch Manager presented a \$2,500 check to Castleton Community Center Director Jo Ann Riley to support a Bocci Court at the center. The bocci court will be located on the back lawn at the center allowing members and guests to enjoy playing throughout the day. Enjoyable at virtually any age or athletic ability, bocce ball has become the third most played sport in the world.

Donated car helps Rutland family forge ahead

With the average price of a used car currently around \$31,000, many people are unable to afford even the most modest vehicles. For a family of seven from Rutland, these high prices have pumped the brakes on their ability to live self-sufficiently. Thankfully, a generous donor presented this family with a life-changing gift that will put them on the road to self-sufficiency: a donated car.

Danielle Quintana’s family was awarded a 2015 Chrysler Town & Country minivan from the car-donation nonprofit Good News Garage. The Burlington-based organization was founded in 1996 as one of the nation’s first charitable car donation programs. Over the last 28 years, it has helped car donors give over 5,500 vehicles to neighbors in need.

Upon being handed the keys to her new-to-her car, Quintana said, “My husband and I have five little girls. This is such a blessing. Because of you, we will be able to do more as a family, and take our children to school and sports. I can’t even express how blessed we are.”

According to Good News Garage, post-pandemic car prices have meant that many lower-income individuals and families are unable to afford reliable vehicles, restricting their ability to obtain steady employment, bring their kids to school or

childcare, and live self-sufficiently here in New England. The organization also says the need for donated vehicles is at a critical level. Car donations are down and being far outpaced by the demand and need for reliable used cars.

Good News Garage awards cars to Vermont residents through a partnership with the state’s Reach Up agency. Car recipients must be Reach Up participants to qualify for cars.

For more information or to donate, visit: GoodNewsGarage.org or dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/reachup.



Courtesy Good News Garage

Danielle Quintana’s family of seven from Rutland was recently gifted a minivan.

GMCB announces FY25 hospital budget decisions and enforcement of FY2023 budgets, includes RRMC

The Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) has concluded its annual review of hospital budget submissions for fiscal year 2025. This year's decisions reflect a careful balance between ensuring access to high-quality, affordable healthcare for Vermonters, maintaining financial sustainability of hospitals, and responding to the evolving healthcare landscape. The GMCB also took corrective action against The University of Vermont Medical Center and the Rutland Regional Medical Center for exceeding their budgets in FY2023.

The GMCB reviewed budget proposals from all 14 regulated hospitals across the state, taking into consideration each institution's financial health, projected revenue needs, cost containment efforts, and patient care priorities. As part of this process, the Board engaged in a series of public hearings, incorporating feedback from stakeholders, hospital administrators, healthcare providers, the Vermont Health Care Advocate, and community members.

"Vermonters are facing some of the highest healthcare costs in the country and deserve an affordable healthcare system. Not

only are Vermont insurance premiums rising faster than in nearly any other state, but healthcare costs are straining school budgets and contributing to rising property taxes," said Owen Foster, chair of the Green Mountain Care Board. "These budget decisions require Vermont hospitals to focus

on population health—to keep patients healthier and out of hospitals—and to constrain costs at a time when many hospitals face significant financial challenges. This will not be easy, particularly given our underlying demographics and housing shortages that must be urgently addressed. Our healthcare costs and these decisions highlight the need and opportunity for systemic change that will provide Vermonters with an affordable and sustainable hospital and health system."

The Green Mountain Care Board's decisions were consistent with FY25 guidance, which set hospital revenue targets and price increases at levels reflecting wage growth and inflation. FY25 guidance established that operational efficiency and provider productivity would be a key focus and important factors in considering whether a hospital's budget could exceed guidance. Review of FY25 budgets revealed opportunity for Vermont hospitals to increase efficiency and provider productivity—which would lower healthcare costs for Vermonters and improve access.

The hospital system transformation and

sustainability recommendations arising out of Act 167 (2022) will be presented to the Board on Wednesday, Sept. 18. Dr. Hamory and his team from Oliver Wyman will discuss in detail the changes they recommend to ensure the long-term affordability and sustainability of Vermont's healthcare system.

Budget enforcement

Vermont's hospital budget review statute provides that "Each hospital shall operate within the budget established" by the Board. 18 V.S.A. § 9456(d)(1). If a hospital believes that it cannot comply with the budget as established by the Board, the statute provides a process by which a hospital can take proactive steps to apply for adjustment of its budget, showing need based on an exceptional or unforeseen circumstance, 18 V.S.A. § 9456(f). In prior years, some hospitals have sought mid-year rate adjustments as part of a process by which the GMCB reviews the situation and determines whether adjustment to the established budget is appropriate.

In 2024 several Vermont hospitals reported results over their FY23 established budgets. Four hospitals, having not applied

"Vermonters are facing some of the highest healthcare costs in the country ... Not only are Vermont insurance premiums rising faster than in nearly any other state, but healthcare costs are straining school budgets and contributing to rising property taxes," said Owen Foster, chair of the Green Mountain Care Board.

for budget adjustments, received letters from the GMCB explaining that the Board identified these deviations and intended to review the underlying factors in considering potential enforcement.

The University of Vermont Medical Center (UVMCMC) exceeded its FY23 budget by \$80,290,156. Porter Medical Center exceeded its FY23 budget by \$11,000,307. Rutland Regional Medical Center exceeded its FY23 budget by \$11,064,861. Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital (NVRH) exceeded its budget by \$2,105,926.

After reviewing evidence, conducting hearings, taking extensive public comment, and deliberating on these FY23 overages, the GMCB determined that corrective measures to remediate the deviations for UVMCMC and RRMC were appropriate to protect Vermont rate payers.

The GMCB voted to fully enforce UVMCMC's overage by reducing future commercial rates over two years. GMCB elected to enforce 50% of RRMC's overage by reducing future commercial rates over two years.

Hospital budgets → 66



Courtesy Killington Resort

Fitz and The Tantrums will perform at the Killington Cup after Saturday's races.

← Killington Cup: from page 1

is considered one of the top open format DJ's in the world. A staple on the Hollywood party circuit, DJ Ross One has toured with artists such as Kanye West and Rihanna. He has earned the reputation as the go to DJ for everything from Grammys after parties to Paris Fashion Week.

Between Giant Slalom runs on Saturday, Killington will welcome a truly unique solo, acoustic set with Matt Quinn, lead singer of the indie folk rock group Mt. Joy. After releasing three very successful studio albums, Mt. Joy returned in early 2024 with the poignant and deeply personal single "Highway Queen." Matt Quinn's set at Killington will follow Mt. Joy headlining a show at Madison Square Garden on Sept. 28 and sharing the main stage at Ocean's Calling Music Festival with Dave Matthews Band.

After the races conclude on Saturday, multi-platinum artists Fitz and The Tantrums will perform. Fitz and The Tantrums is a band who have energized popular music and culture with a series of unshakable, undeniable and ubiquitous anthems and albums. Along the way, they've impressively tallied just shy of 4 billion streams and counting, powered by hits such as the 4x-platinum "Hand Clap," 3x-platinum "Out of My League," platinum "The Walker," and gold "Moneygrabber." The Los Angeles collective has magnified the scope of pop music with a dash of indie, a dose of soul and a whole lot of dancefloor-ready bounce.

Following the concert, the action moves to the Snowshed Lodge, where stand-out women from the ski industry and beyond will discuss the contributions of women in the industry on a panel as part of U.S. Ski & Snowboard's HEROic initiative. Immediately afterwards, stick around to catch an exclusive movie showing (to be announced). Also on Saturday, don't miss the World Cup Rebels Après Ski party at the Pickle Barrel Nightclub, open to all ages from 4-7 p.m. benefiting the World Cup Dreams Foundation.

On Sunday, American punk-pop trio Eve 6 will take the stage mid-day following the first run of the ski race. For over two decades, Eve 6 has been a force in the alternative rock scene, captivating audiences with their infectious sound and compelling lyrics. With a discography that spans hit albums like "Eve 6" and "Horrorscope," the band has left an indelible mark on the music landscape. Known for their dynamic performances and Max Collins' distinctive vocals, Eve 6 continues to resonate with fans, delivering a high-energy experience that transcends the boundaries of alternative rock.

"Watching world-class skiing isn't the only reason to attend the Stifel Killington Cup," said Director of Brand Marketing and Events Amy Laramie. "I am really looking forward to this year's lineup of music, with high-energy bands that will keep the party going all weekend long"

Highlights of the 2024 Stifel Killington Cup include:

Friday, November 29 (no ticket required):

- Athlete bib presentation held at 5:45 p.m.
- Fireworks display after dark
- Music throughout the evening from DJ Ross One

Saturday, November 30 (tickets required):

- Festival Village opens at 7 a.m.
- Giant Slalom Run 1 begins at 10 a.m.
- Matt Quinn performs between runs
- Giant Slalom Run 2 begins at 1 p.m.
- Fitz and the Tantrums performs after the second run
- World Cup Rebels après ski party held at the Pickle Barrel
- HEROic women's panel held, followed by film screening
- Official Killington Cup after party held at the Wobbly Barn with DJ Ross One

Sunday, Dec 1 (tickets required):

- Festival Village opens at 7 a.m.
- Slalom Run 1 begins at 10 a.m.
- Eve 6 performing between runs
- Slalom Run 2 begins at 1 p.m.

The 2024 Stifel Killington Cup is a fully ticketed event. All attendees will need either a General Admission ticket, Grandstand ticket or VIP ticket to enter the Festival Village, concerts and spectating areas. General Admission tickets are available online in advance for \$10, with a portion of all ticket proceeds benefiting the Killington World Cup Foundation, which supports athlete hospitality and provides grants to support winter sports infrastructure and access to winter sports throughout the region. A limited number of Grandstand tickets are still available for purchase, providing an unparalleled location to view the giant slalom and slalom races.

For more info, tickets and the full weekend schedule, visit: Killington.com/worldcup.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Lack of housing is a health emergency

By Rep. Brian Cina

Editor's note: Brian Cina is a state Representative for Chittenden 15 (Old North End | East District, Burlington). Cina is also on the House Health Care Committee and House Ethics Panel. This commentary was originally addressed to the members of the Vermont General Assembly, Governor Scott and Administration, Lieutenant Governor Zuckerman, Mayor Mulvaney-Stanak and Administration, and Burlington City Councilors.

On Monday night, Sept. 16, while distributing a hot meal on the steps of the public library in downtown Burlington to hungry people who are currently experiencing unsheltered homelessness, I heard many stories about the brutal impact of the housing crisis on the most vulnerable. I offered to share a summary with you in hope that we can do more to provide greater safety and to reduce suffering.

A man with a disability requiring use of a wheelchair shared that he was exited from a hotel despite being eligible. Then he was told to call to get a new room. He waited on hold for hours only to be denied because there were a limited amount of rooms available. He feels that the government failed him after he became disabled. Despite paying taxes from age 14 until he was injured, he receives no assistance now, while others who may have never paid any taxes, get a room if they were ahead in line. He wants housing and an opportunity to work again in some capacity. Until then, he needs a safe place to sleep and has been unable to rest due to escalating street violence.

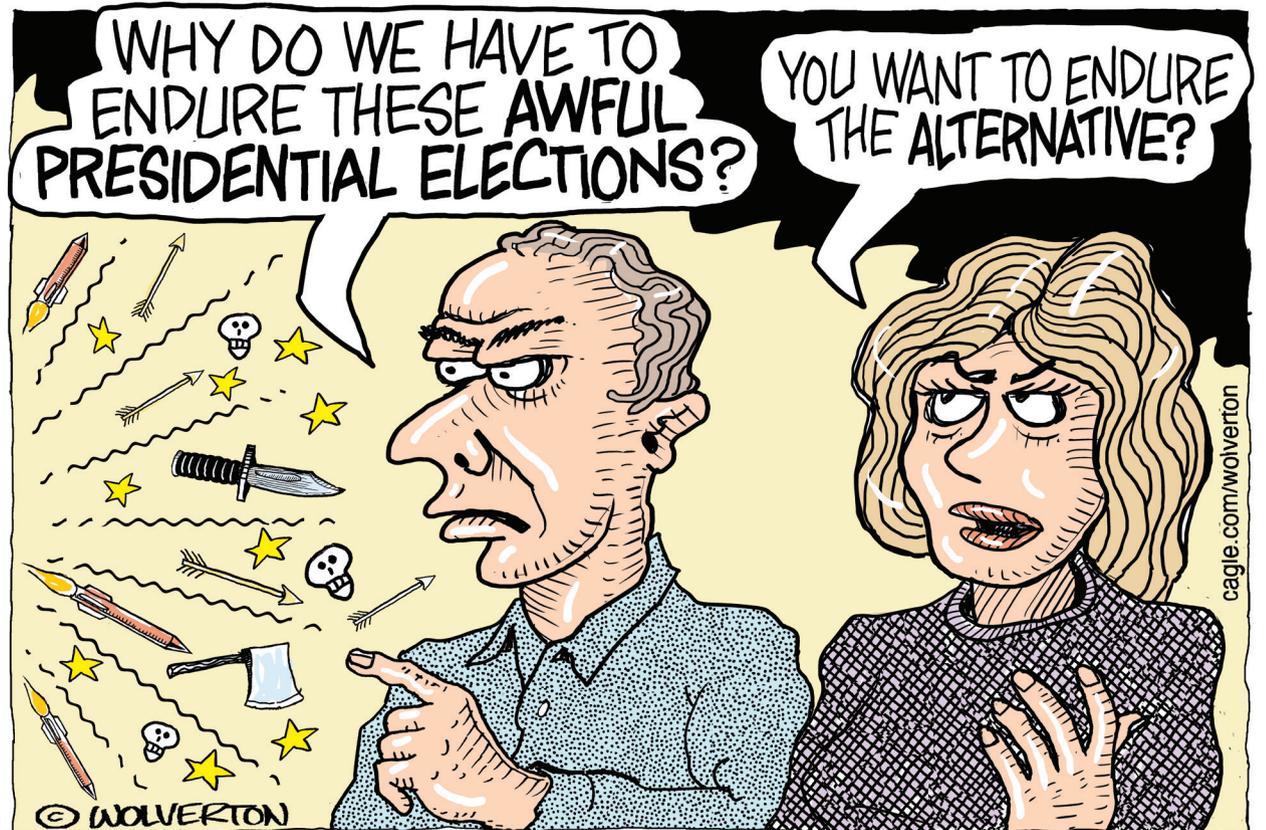
A pregnant woman shared that she has been staying up for days on end out of fear of getting assaulted. She grew up in DCF custody. Now her children are in DCF custody because it is unsafe for them to live with her because she is unhoused. She expressed gratitude because her DCF worker is doing everything possible to help her to find housing and to get her kids back. She appreciated treatment court for supporting her recovery. She urgently needs a safe place to rest so she can protect her unborn child and continue the work toward providing a safe home for her other children.

Many others told stories about the increased violence against people experiencing unsheltered homelessness, especially those with physical and psychiatric disabilities. They shared that the interpersonal violence takes many forms. In addition to an increase in lateral violence between those who are unsheltered, the most vulnerable are being robbed and assaulted by greater numbers of housed and unhoused people struggling with substance use disorders. Groups of high-school and college-age youth roam the streets at night attacking unhoused people in a variety of ways. A sport called hobo-hunting rewards players in a cyber-game with points for harming unhoused people in real life. Some hunters use the roof of the Marketplace Garage as a base from which they launch their attacks and raids.

Unhoused people are being treated as prey as the state puts more of our most vulnerable in harm's way, through the mass exiting from hotels. Many people feel completely rejected and abandoned by our neighbors and by the government. One person stated "it feels like they are trying to kill us off." Another asked "where do they want us to go?"

Although most people would prefer housing or shelter as soon as possible, they understand all too well that there is a massive shortage of affordable and accessible housing. While they are unsheltered, they want safe spaces to be. They need sanctuaries where they can camp so they can rest

Housing as health emergency → 66



Burned Out on Presidential Elections by Monte Wolverton, Battle Ground, WA

LETTERS

Re-elect Alison Clarkson to the VT Senate

Dear Editor,

The people in Windsor District are so fortunate to have Alison Clarkson representing us in the Vermont Senate where she is currently the Senate Majority Leader. She is one of our three state senators from the Windsor District and is seeking re-election for her fifth term in the senate.

In her 20 years representing our communities, in both the House and the Senate, Clarkson's knowledge, hard work, and ability to form working relation-

Please support this trio with your vote on or before Nov. 5.

ships with others, even across the aisle, has earned her colleagues' trust and my enthusiastic support.

She is vice chair of the Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs Committee and serves on Senate Government Operations. Some of

Clarkson → 12

End homelessness in Vermont

Dear Editor,

What happened yesterday in Vermont to people experiencing homelessness is nowhere close to a humane treatment of our neighbors. I saw babies and school children being sent to live in the woods and on our streets. I saw people on oxygen and in wheelchairs completely disregarded by our state. I saw people who are extremely vulnerable with psychiatric disabilities left to fend for themselves. I saw people who lost their homes in the flood dropped from housing programs. That we allowed and even orchestrated this humanitarian crisis in this state is inexcusable.

Vermont is failing to protect our most vulnerable. At End Homelessness Vermont we work primarily with people with complex needs and disabilities as well as working with people at the point of an emergency. Our most vulnerable clients are being left to catastrophic outcomes.

Over 1,000 Vermonters, including hundreds of children, will lose their access to shelter by mid-October. This burden

Homelessness → 11

Who can call this progress?

Dear Editor,

The Legislature allocated a large sum of money—I believe a million dollars—for a consultant to assess the state of Vermont's health-care and identify potential solutions.

The consultant ... released a lengthy report... but does not call for modifying the system of multiple payers

After many months and miles and meetings, the consultant, Dr. Bruce Hamory, released a lengthy report that identified numerous problems. The vast majority of these he could have gleaned from simply reading news headlines (people unable to afford premiums and out-of-pocket costs, wait times too long, hospitals in financial trouble, major insurer using up reserves, transportation lacking, housing lacking, etc.).

The consultant's recommendation? → 11

World Day for Farmed Animals is Oct. 2

Dear Editor,

Factory farms are destroying the environment and harming animals on a massive scale. Their waste pollutes our water, harms sea life, and creates awful conditions for people living nearby. And now, these big U.S. meat companies are moving their operations to developing countries, which will hurt local farmers, food supplies, and the environment there, too. It's like "meat colonialism," and it's not okay.

We have to care. This impacts global resources and the lives of people and animals everywhere. On Oct. 2, people across the world will be speaking up for animals on World Day for Farmed Animals. Join in—learn more at dayforanimals.org. I am volunteering this year to hand out vegan food samples.

There are options in every restaurant and grocery store to replace animal products with plant-based foods.

We can all do our part to make a difference. Sincerely,
Mario Vincelette,
Rutland

CAPITOL QUOTES



State politicians have long argued about plans to replace Vermont's only women's prison, Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility, with calls for reform, fiscal responsibility and abolitionism. While the state has slowly pursued building a new facility — expected to cost about \$70 million, with roughly \$15 million already set aside. Officials are eyeing one of two sites in Essex. Last month, VTDigger reporter Ethan Weinstein toured Chittenden Regional's seven units and spoke to inmates held there. Here's what he heard.

“For most of us, the plan is to do our time and get back into the community... Treat people like people and [they] will act like people. If you treat them like caged animals, [they] will act like caged animals,” said **Erika Cassani**, who's incarcerated at Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility.

“I feel like the money could be better spent for groups like Mercy Connections and others like it,” said **Katelynn Senecal**, an inmate offering a more tempered perspective as she referenced a Burlington organization that provides mentorship for women in prison.

“This building is not fit to house people, to have people living in it and working in it... [there are] bugs coming up from the bathrooms... I assume I'm breathing in some amount of mold on a regular basis,” said **Jess Kell**, who leads the Kids-A-Part parenting program, a restorative justice session.

“[Women at the Maine center] are treated with a level of dignity and respect and put in an environment of ownership for the program... And what do we do here in Vermont? We send them off to a facility that is an embarrassment.” said interim Corrections Commissioner **James Baker** at a hearing in 2021.

LETTERS

Vt voters support the decriminalization of sex work

Dear Editor,

A recent statewide survey shows Vermonters strongly support the decriminalization of consensual adult sex work by more than 26% compared to those that think sex work should remain a crime; while 26% of those surveyed remain undecided. The poll found that Democrats/Progressives strongly support decriminalization with 62% in support and only 14% opposed. Decriminalization was also supported by one third of Republicans surveyed. Decriminalization is strongly supported by voters ages 18-45. These results closely reflect national trends. Also of note, 58% of voters said that the government should stop expending resources to arrest adults for consensual prostitution.

The poll, which surveyed 539 voters in Vermont, was conducted by Public Policy Polling on Sept. 4 and 5, 2024.

Vermont has recently implemented several policy changes supporting the basic human rights of sex workers and survivors of trafficking at both the state and city levels. In

2023, a new law was enacted prohibiting law enforcement from engaging in investigatory sex, which along with the state's prohibition on custodial sex, now comprises the country's most comprehensive ban on police sexual violence. In 2022, Vermont passed a ballot referendum that removed a ban on prostitution from the city charter in Burlington, and a similar local ordinance also passed in Montpelier. Laws that allow sex workers and survivors of trafficking to seek justice or medical care when they are victimized or witness a crime were enacted in 2022.

The survey also asked voters whether they would support decriminalizing the sale of sex, while keeping the purchase of sex illegal. Only 15% support this model of prohibiting prostitution, while 51% oppose it, and 34% are unsure.

Lawmakers market “entrapment model” — also called the “Nordic model” or “equality model” legislation as a means of curtailing prostitution and combating trafficking but countries

that have implemented the entrapment model continue to see violence and exploitation perpetrated against sex workers.

“These poll results match what we're hearing from Vermont voters daily,” said Henri Bynx, co-director of The Ishtar Collective, which supports survivors of exploitation and consensual adult sex workers throughout Vermont. “Half of voters support decriminalizing sex work, while one-quarter of voters are undecided and open-minded on the issue. Also, voters disapprove of the entrapment approach to sex work, and aren't thrilled about spending taxpayer money to arrest consenting adults,” said Henri Bynx, co-director of The Ishtar Collective, which supports survivors of exploitation and consensual adult sex workers in Vermont.

Ariela Moscovitz, Decriminalize Sex Work
Editor's note: Decriminalize Sex Work is a national organization pursuing a state-by-state strategy to end the prohibition of consensual, adult prostitution in the U.S.

← Homelessness: from page 10

will be left on providers, municipalities and our communities in general. We must all agree that our most vulnerable Vermonters, people experiencing homelessness, deserve continuous shelter until they find permanent housing.

“I had conversations just trying to comfort clients who did not understand due to their disability,” said Shelby Lebaron, worker at EHVT, “Our clients are terrified that they will lose their lives. I can't lay my head down or think of going to bed knowing that there are children crying in a tent in their parent's arms. Knowing that there are people struggling to breathe. They are all alone. There are people in wheelchairs who can't even set up a tent or get access to a bathroom.”

Letting people suffer the most catastrophic of

outcomes is not who we are in Vermont. The Vermont we know brings people together, picks up shovels after a flood to support our fellow Vermonters. These are our fellow Vermonters.

Our municipalities need support to address this crisis in a humane way. We can not criminalize people for a housing crisis and unsheltering that they did not create. Our community members need to meet those who are suffering with empathy and understanding or this crisis will never get better.

The governor must call a special session and correct course on this inhumane action. We can not allow this to stand. We are better than this and we must do better.

Brenda Lynn Siegel, executive director of End Homelessness Vermont, endhomelessnessvt.org

← Progress?: from page 10

recommendations call for many things that disrupt the network of providers and the lives of the people who count on those providers, but does not call for modifying the system of multiple payers and multiple policies, and multiple coverages and endless haggling between patients, providers, and insurers.

The consultant estimates savings of \$400 million over five years if all recommendations are implemented. Almost 10 years ago former governor Shumlin estimated savings from universal care roughly equal to that (or greater than that if you take account of inflation) but unilaterally killed the plan.

Does anyone think we're making progress on the disaster that is healthcare in Vermont?

Lee Russ, Bennington

← Harrison:

from page 6

and property taxes, rising health care costs, lack of housing and heating costs. Our towns were particularly hard hit with education property taxes this year (Chittenden 24%, Killington 29%, Mendon 22% and Pittsfield 29%). Key lawmakers chose to proceed with their property tax bill rather than find a compromise with the governor. Taxes would have still gone up, but maybe not as much. One of the provisions in the bill was to set up a study commission on education costs and financing. While that is well intended, it is a two-year commission and, in my view, we cannot afford another year of double digit increases and certainly not two!

Additionally, the Legislature approved the Clean Heat Initiative (S.5) last year, which was enacted despite a veto by Scott. At the time it was passed, the prevailing estimate was that it would cause heating oil and propane to increase by 70 cents per gallon. Now that estimate is much higher and could be well over \$1.50 per gallon. Fortunately, the bill did include a provision that requires the Legislature to approve the final details of the program this coming session before it can take effect. If the current cost estimates are accurate, I will be a solid “No” when the bill comes up in January.

As you may have seen in the news recently, Vermont health insurance rates are high and getting higher. Furthermore, a consulting firm hired by the Green Mountain Care Board is suggesting that Vermont hospitals need to coordinate services and avoid a lot of the duplication that now exists, or some may close.

Our towns were particularly hard hit with education property taxes this year (Chittenden 24%, Killington 29%, Mendon 22% and Pittsfield 29%).

Given the independent nature of our communities and the hospitals that serve them, the conversations and possible legislation needed may be difficult.

Affordability is one of the major reasons that John Rogers, a former Democratic state senator, decided to run for Lt Governor as a Republican. I will be supporting Rogers on Election Day.

I will also be supporting our three Rutland County Senators (Brian Collamore, Terry Williams and Dave Weeks). While that is probably not

a surprise, I will point out that all three voted against this year’s property tax bill and other bills that increase what we all pay. While Pittsfield is in the Windsor District for Senate, I will suggest that Andrea Murray is a new candidate and has made affordability a central part of her campaign. The governor needs senators like Andrea.

Please use your vote wisely this election.

Fortunately, there are more contested races for the State House than there have been in 40 years. Perhaps that is a sign of some dissatisfaction with the current direction of the Legislature? We won’t know until the votes are tallied on Nov. 5.

The race has begun. My money is on Phil Scott retaining the governor’s office. I just hope we can better support his commonsense approach to issues and affordability.

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

← Clarkson:

from page 10

the major initiatives she has worked hard on include making historic investments in housing, enshrining reproductive liberty into our state Constitution, enacting marriage equality, expanding common sense gun safety measures, reducing the cost of childcare, and protecting our environment.

Clarkson is teaming up with Senator Becca White and a strong new candidate, Joe Major, as our Windsor Senate District Democratic ticket in the general election.

Please support this trio with your vote on or before Nov. 5.

*Sue Schiller,
Norwich*

← Village Trust:

from page 2

receive an award of \$300,000 to support pre-development expenses and restoration construction on a historic building in the village of Felchville,” stated the Reading Community Trust after receiving the award.

Established in June 2024, the Reading Community Trust (RCT) is incorporated and in the process of obtaining 501c3 status. The RCT is an offshoot of a group called “The Future is Reading” that began meeting regularly in January 2024 to hear what was on the minds of Reading residents and to determine how best to revitalize the local economy. It became clear to the group that many residents desired a community gathering space and that establishing a community trust might be the first step in that direction. The RCT is actively soliciting feedback from the community about viable uses for a restored historic building in the village. The pre-development funding from VTI will allow the group to hire professionals to conduct conditions, engineering and feasibility assessments and to research permitting on potential structures. The group will conduct a capital campaign to raise the necessary funding for the purchase of a historic building.

“VCRD is extremely proud of the work of this initiative,” said VCRD Executive Director Denise Smith. “We were impressed with the incredible projects submitted by the communities and the passion of the people in those communities. The selection process was rigorous and difficult, and the work the staff and the Advisory Committee did to select the first cohort of projects was incredible. We are all so excited to assist these communities in bringing vitality back to buildings and village centers that have raised generations of Vermonters”

PTV and VCRD visited each of the 14 finalist communities this summer, taking

time to meet local project leaders, see potential project sites and learn more about the life and community in each village. Project leaders spoke of the potential that the VTI program brings to their community.

“The VTI project has the potential to play an anchor role in knitting together a number of current developments contributing to the revitalization of the village,” said Oran Young Wolcott. “With a little effort, these developments can come together to initiate a new chapter in the life of the village. The repurposed school can become the hub around which these developments coalesce.”

There will be two future rounds of the Village Trust Initiative program within the next four years.

To participate in this program a community must:

Be a town of fewer than 2,500 residents based on the 2020 Decennial Census.

Have an existing community trust organization or the desire to build one.

Be interested in a revitalization project utilizing a historic resource or site in an established village environment. Greenspace and trails are not eligible.

Have or expect to have site control.

Have or expect to have endorsement by the Selectboard to participate in the program (a motion in Selectboard meeting minutes or a letter indicating support).

Communities that will be most successful in this program may also have:

An identified community need and demonstrated community support for the project.

An identified building or site in the Village that could meet the identified need.

For more information, visit: Vtrural.org/village-trust.



Courtesy VTSU

Bill Landesman and students from Vermont State University study ticks and invasive plants.

← Tick study:

from page 3

Biology major who also participated in collecting preliminary data this past summer, shared, “Getting the opportunity to work with Dr. Ross and Dr. Landesman has been an incredible experience. As an undergraduate student, this work has built my researching skills and expanded my knowledge outside of the classroom. Exploring tick densities and invasive plants opened my eyes to a whole other world of biological and ecological studies I never realized was so important for the health of our state’s forests as well as human health.”

This initiative builds upon ongoing research led by Dr. Landesman and students from the VTSU Johnson and Castleton campuses, supported by the CDC-funded New England Center of Excellence in Vector-Borne Diseases. The NSF grant allocates \$238,000 to VTSU, with funding commencing on Sept. 1, 2024.

“As an undergraduate student, this work has built my researching skills and expanded my knowledge outside of the classroom,” said Alexandra Williams, a VTSU Castleton student.

WORDPLAY

CAREGIVING WORDSEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and back

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

ACUTE
AGE IN PLACE
AGING
CAREGIVER
COMPASSION
CONTINUING

COORDINATOR
DAYCARE
EQUIPMENT
FAMILY
GERIATRIC
HOMEHEALTH

AIDE
HOSPICE
ILLNESS
MEMORY
NURSE
NURSING HOME

PALLIATIVE
PROXY
RESPITE
SKILLED
THERAPY
VOLUNTEER

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Solutions →62

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Unequaled
- 5. ___-fi (slang)
- 8. Synthetic resin
- 11. Chadic language Bura-__
- 13. Influential come Election Day
- 14. Bucket
- 15. European river
- 16. Earn a perfect score
- 17. Horizontal passage
- 18. Barely sufficient
- 20. Dekaliter
- 21. Goo Goo Dolls hit
- 22. Australian city
- 25. Female servants
- 30. Plumbing fixtures
- 31. Tooth caregiver
- 32. Book of Esther antagonist
- 33. Say aloud
- 38. Thyrotrophic hormone
- 41. Absolute
- 43. Untimely
- 45. Area or neighborhood
- 47. Juicy fruit
- 49. Expresses distaste, disapproval
- 50. S. American rodents
- 55. Swedish rock group
- 56. Influential American president
- 57. Volume

- 59. Begged
- 60. Resinlike substance secreted by certain lac insects
- 61. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 62. Good friend
- 63. Body part
- 64. Tableland

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Barrels per day (abbr.)
- 2. Body parts
- 3. Invests in little enterprises
- 4. Rock legend Turner
- 5. Dug into
- 6. Laughed
- 7. Northern European nation
- 8. San Diego ballplayer
- 9. Eight
- 10. Substitutes (abbr.)
- 12. Moved swiftly on foot
- 14. Compensated
- 19. Volcano in the Philippines
- 23. Speak ill of
- 24. One who publishes
- 25. Expression of bafflement
- 26. Macaws
- 27. Matchstick game
- 28. We all have our own

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			

- 29. Divinatory
- 34. Explosive
- 35. Follows sigma
- 36. Sea eagle
- 37. Type of bread
- 39. Bit used with a set of reins
- 40. Time away from work
- 41. Parts per thousand (abbr.)
- 42. Lots on your plate (abbr.)
- 44. Actor Brosnan
- 45. It's part of packaging

- 46. Towards the oral region
- 47. Public Theater creator Joseph
- 48. Ancient Syrian city
- 51. Swiss river
- 52. Mollusk
- 53. A French abbot
- 54. Hoagies
- 58. Not present (slang)



Road work:
from page 6

motor vehicles and will be in effect until early November. Flaggers and uniformed traffic officers will be present to assist motorists through the work zone.

Hartford: Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., motorists should expect moderate delays with alternating one-way traffic patterns at the intersection of Old River Road, Mill Road, and the VA Cutoff Road at Bridge #7. Flaggers will be present to assist motorists through the work zone. Motorists are encouraged to avoid the intersection and seek an alternative route if possible.

Ludlow: Pleasant Street at the junction of Pleasant Street and Mill Street is closed to all vehicle traffic to facilitate project construction. A detour is in place that routes vehicle traffic from Pleasant Street on Elm Street, Main Street, and Pleasant Street Extension.

Pittsford: Motorists are traveling over the temporary bridge. Monday through Friday from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Saturday 7 a.m. to 1 p.m., traffic control will be present to allow for intermittent one-way alternating travel on Route 7.

Quechee: The eastbound travel lane of the Quechee Gorge Bridge is closed through fall 2024. Signal permits alternate travel over the bridge. The trail at the bridge is closed through fall 2025. The adjacent trail is open via a signed detour through the visitor center.

Rutland: A Class I highway resurfacing project will require nighttime lane closures with alternating one-way traffic from Sunday night to Friday morning, 7 p.m. to 7 a.m., on Route 7 between Cold River Road and Lincoln Avenue and Business Route 4 between Ripley Road and Route 7. Motorists can expect grooved and uneven surfaces with raised structures and limited pavement markings on Route 7 and Business Route 4.

GUESS WHO ?

I am an actor born in California on September 26, 1983. I briefly played college football, but I am best known for roles on two television shows, including one where I played a thug who ropes two women into a money laundering scheme.

Answer: Manny Montana

SUDOKU

Solutions →62

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

Level: Beginner

Daily March 31, 2024 - Nov 27, 2024 **Rutland Killington Commuter** Operating from 7:15 AM until 11:45 PM

Rutland to Killington

RMMTC*	7:15 AM	8:15 AM	9:15 AM	10:15 AM	11:15 AM	12:15 PM	1:15 PM	2:15 PM	3:15 PM	4:15 PM	5:15 PM	8:15 PM	10:15 PM
Top of West Street**	7:16 AM	8:16 AM	9:16 AM	10:16 AM	11:16 AM	12:16 PM	1:16 PM	2:16 PM	3:16 PM	4:16 PM	5:16 PM	8:16 PM	10:16 PM
Rt 4 @ Lafayette Street **	7:17 AM	8:17 AM	9:17 AM	10:17 AM	11:17 AM	12:17 PM	1:17 PM	2:17 PM	3:17 PM	4:17 PM	5:17 PM	8:17 PM	10:17 PM
Town Line Road**	7:23 AM	8:23 AM	9:23 AM	10:23 AM	11:23 AM	12:23 PM	1:23 PM	2:23 PM	3:23 PM	4:23 PM	5:23 PM	8:23 PM	10:23 PM
Mendon Mountain Orchards & Motel**	7:24 AM	8:24 AM	9:24 AM	10:24 AM	11:24 AM	12:24 PM	1:24 PM	2:24 PM	3:24 PM	4:24 PM	5:24 PM	8:24 PM	10:24 PM
Mendon Mountain View Lodge**	7:32 AM	8:32 AM	9:32 AM	10:32 AM	11:32 AM	12:32 PM	1:32 PM	2:32 PM	3:32 PM	4:32 PM	5:32 PM	8:32 PM	10:32 PM
Pico Resort Hotel	7:36 AM	8:36 AM	9:36 AM	10:36 AM	11:36 AM	12:36 PM	1:36 PM	2:36 PM	3:36 PM	4:36 PM	5:36 PM	8:36 PM	10:36 PM
The Inn at Long Trail**	7:38 AM	8:38 AM	9:38 AM	10:38 AM	11:38 AM	12:38 PM	1:38 PM	2:38 PM	3:38 PM	4:38 PM	5:38 PM	8:38 PM	10:38 PM
Deli @ Killington Corners	7:41 AM	8:41 AM	9:41 AM	10:41 AM	11:41 AM	12:41 PM	1:41 PM	2:41 PM	3:41 PM	4:41 PM	5:41 PM	8:41 PM	10:41 PM
Killington Park and Ride	7:44 AM	8:44 AM	9:44 AM	10:44 AM	11:44 AM	12:44 PM	1:44 PM	2:44 PM	3:44 PM	4:44 PM	5:44 PM	8:44 PM	10:44 PM
Hillside	7:45 AM	8:45 AM	9:45 AM	10:45 AM	11:45 AM	12:45 PM	1:45 PM	2:45 PM	3:45 PM	4:45 PM	5:45 PM	8:45 PM	10:45 PM
Killington Road Stops***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
K1 Base Lodge	7:58 AM	8:58 AM	9:58 AM	10:58 AM	11:58 AM	12:58 PM	1:58 PM	2:58 PM	3:58 PM	4:58 PM	5:58 PM	8:58 PM	10:58 PM
Human Resources	7:59 AM	8:59 AM	9:59 AM	10:59 AM	11:59 AM	12:59 PM	1:59 PM	2:59 PM	3:59 PM	4:59 PM	5:59 PM	8:59 PM	10:59 PM
Snowshed Base Lodge	8:00 AM	9:00 AM	10:00 AM	11:00 AM	12:00 PM	1:00 PM	2:00 PM	3:00 PM	4:00 PM	5:00 PM	6:00 PM	9:00 PM	11:00 PM

Additional Summer Hours

Killington to Rutland

Killington Grand Hotel	8:02 AM	9:02 AM	10:02 AM	11:02 AM	12:02 PM	1:02 PM	2:02 PM	3:02 PM	4:02 PM	5:02 PM	6:02 PM	9:03 PM	11:03 PM
Mountain Green Resort	8:06 AM	9:06 AM	10:06 AM	11:06 AM	12:06 PM	1:06 PM	2:06 PM	3:06 PM	4:06 PM	5:06 PM	6:06 PM	9:06 PM	11:06 PM
Killington Road Stops***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Hillside	8:12 AM	9:12 AM	10:12 AM	11:12 AM	12:12 PM	1:12 PM	2:12 PM	3:12 PM	4:12 PM	5:12 PM	6:12 PM	9:12 PM	11:12 PM
Killington Park and Ride	8:14 AM	9:14 AM	10:14 AM	11:14 AM	12:14 PM	1:14 PM	2:14 PM	3:14 PM	4:14 PM	5:14 PM	6:14 PM	9:14 PM	11:14 PM
Gazebo Plaza (across from Post Office)	8:15 AM	9:15 AM	10:15 AM	11:15 AM	12:15 PM	1:15 PM	2:15 PM	3:15 PM	4:15 PM	5:15 PM	6:15 PM	9:15 PM	11:15 PM
The Inn at Long Trail**	8:21 AM	9:21 AM	10:21 AM	11:21 AM	12:21 PM	1:21 PM	2:21 PM	3:21 PM	4:21 PM	5:21 PM	6:21 PM	9:21 PM	11:21 PM
Pico Resort Hotel	8:23 AM	9:23 AM	10:23 AM	11:23 AM	12:23 PM	1:23 PM	2:23 PM	3:23 PM	4:23 PM	5:23 PM	6:23 PM	9:23 PM	11:23 PM
Mendon Mountainview Lodge	8:25 AM	9:25 AM	10:25 AM	11:25 AM	12:25 PM	1:25 PM	2:25 PM	3:25 PM	4:25 PM	5:25 PM	6:25 PM	9:25 PM	11:25 PM
Pico Mountain Commons**	8:27 AM	9:27 AM	10:27 AM	11:27 AM	12:27 PM	1:27 PM	2:27 PM	3:27 PM	4:27 PM	5:27 PM	6:27 PM	9:27 PM	11:27 PM
Old Turnpike Rd**	8:28 AM	9:28 AM	10:28 AM	11:28 AM	12:28 PM	1:28 PM	2:28 PM	3:28 PM	4:28 PM	5:28 PM	6:28 PM	9:28 PM	11:28 PM
Meadow Lake Drive**	8:30 AM	9:30 AM	10:30 AM	11:30 AM	12:30 PM	1:30 PM	2:30 PM	3:30 PM	4:30 PM	5:30 PM	6:30 PM	9:30 PM	11:30 PM
Best Western**	8:31 AM	9:31 AM	10:31 AM	11:31 AM	12:31 PM	1:31 PM	2:31 PM	3:31 PM	4:31 PM	5:31 PM	6:31 PM	9:31 PM	11:31 PM
Eastridge Professional Bldg**	8:32 AM	9:32 AM	10:32 AM	11:32 AM	12:32 PM	1:32 PM	2:32 PM	3:32 PM	4:32 PM	5:32 PM	6:32 PM	9:32 PM	11:32 PM
Deer Street**	8:36 AM	9:36 AM	10:36 AM	11:36 AM	12:36 PM	1:36 PM	2:36 PM	3:36 PM	4:36 PM	5:36 PM	6:36 PM	9:36 PM	11:36 PM
Nichols Street**	8:38 AM	9:38 AM	10:38 AM	11:38 AM	12:38 PM	1:38 PM	2:38 PM	3:38 PM	4:38 PM	5:38 PM	6:38 PM	9:38 PM	11:38 PM
RMMTC*	8:45 AM	9:45 AM	10:45 AM	11:45 AM	12:45 PM	1:45 PM	2:45 PM	3:45 PM	4:45 PM	5:45 PM	6:45 PM	9:45 PM	11:45 PM
Staples Plaza	8:55 AM	9:55 AM	10:55 AM	11:55 AM	12:55 PM	1:55 PM	2:55 PM	3:55 PM	4:55 PM	5:55 PM	6:55 PM	9:55 PM	-
RMMTC*	9:05 AM	10:05 AM	11:05 AM	12:05 PM	1:05 PM	2:05 PM	3:05 PM	4:05 PM	5:05 PM	6:05 PM	7:05 PM	10:05 PM	-

* Rutland Multi Modal Transit Center
**Indicates Curb-Side Pickup

***Indicates Designated Stops on Killington Road
"R" indicates stop on request only

Red indicates Sunday Service only

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Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking returns to Killington

Downhill riders compete for \$15,000 cash purse; Best Whip riders for popularity

Thursday-Sunday, Sept. 26-29 — KILLINGTON—The Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking will once again return to Killington Resort, Sept. 26-29. Professional and amateur athletes from around the world will compete in the Open Class Downhill for one of the largest cash purses in racing, and as always, the Fox U.S. Open also offers amateur racing classes in Downhill and Dual Slalom.

The Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking was established in 2003 with the goal of creating excitement in the American mountain bike scene. The event features a unique and open Pro/AM format. The Open offers the most challenging and competitive racing in the nation and sets the standard as a proving-ground for up-and-coming and elite racers alike. Anyone can enter the Open Class and compete amongst the pros for the cash purse and a chance to prove where they rank. Amateurs compete for bragging rights and some of the best prizes in racing.

Event schedule:

Thursday, Sept. 26

Downhill track walk
Downhill practice

Friday Sept. 27

Downhill practice
Dual Slalom practice, qualifying then finals

Saturday Sept. 28

Downhill practice and seeding/qualifying
5 p.m. USO Best Whip Competition

Sunday Sept. 29

11 a.m. Downhill Finals
Next Gen Downhill Race
Adaptive Downhill Race
There will not be an Enduro race at the U.S. Open festival this year.

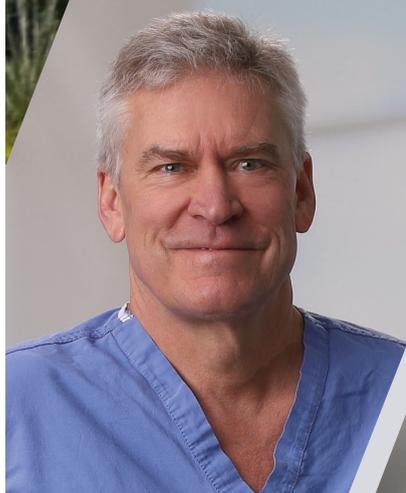
Venue

From Ramshead base area spectators can view the Dual Slalom and Best Whip competitions. For the Downhill on Goat Skull, spectators can accessed the trail by foot or purchase a single-use lift ticket at Ramshead for a one-way trip up the Ramshead Express (without a bike)



The Trail Beckons

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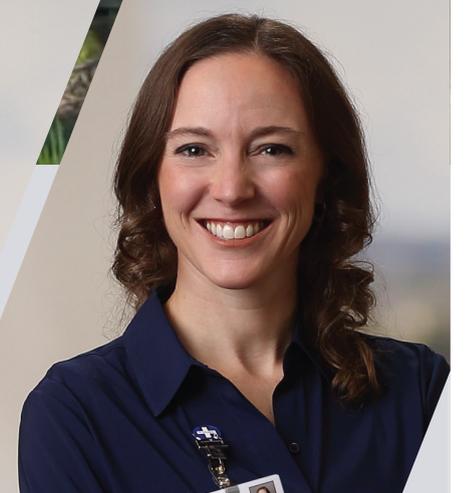
Melbourne Boynton, MD



Deborah Henley, MD



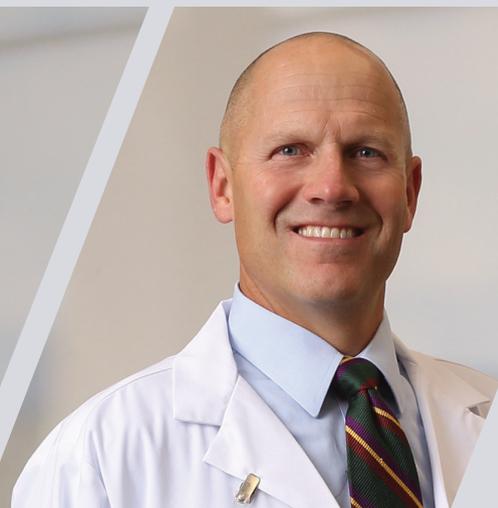
John Karl, MD, MPH



Lindsay Kleeman-Forsthuber, MD



Eric Marsh, MD



Matthew Zmurko, MD

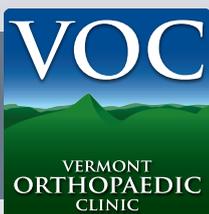
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A DEPARTMENT OF RUTLAND REGIONAL MEDICAL CENTER



By Paul Holmes

The Dual Slalom short course is excellent for spectating as riders go head-to-head.

Dual Slalom starts the party Friday night

Friday night features sprints on a shorter dual slalom track, with a mix of groomed and natural terrain. This event is located right in the main venue area at Ramshead base area (alongside the Downhill finish and Best Whip jumps).

The Dual Slalom event is the best at the USO for all levels of athletes. It can even be raced on an enduro bike.

The short track will feature a mix of grass turns, smaller berm turns and jump features — designed to suit athletes competing on their normal trail bikes as well as slalom specialists.

Like the signature Downhill event, anyone can enter the Open class of the Dual Slalom and race for the cash.

Riders will have to qualify to get into the finals. Qualifying runs will be broken into two sessions, both open

to all athlete categories.

Sign up to race or come drink a beer and heckle! There will be music and an bar within the venue (no outside alcohol allowed in the event areas.

Open Class Dual Slalom cash prizes (equal for men and women)

- 1st - \$2,000
- 2nd - \$1,000
- 3rd - \$500
- 4th - \$250



By Paul Holmes

The course features not only gates but jump obstacles, too.

Beast hosts big mountain bike party all weekend

Killington Resort has made significant investments in their bike park and the town of Killington boasts extensive après, dining and lodging options making it an ideal choice for the worldclass event. Spectating is free, and the bike park will be open to the public throughout the event. Join the party and experience epic competition, spectating, and riding with friends!

“The venue proved once again to be a great home for the USO and we are excited to continue to build on the momentum generated,” stated Clay Harper, co-founder and event director of the Fox U.S. Open.

“The Vermont mountain bike community is unlike any other,” Harper continued.

The Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking was established in 2003 with the single goal of creating excitement in the American mountain bike scene. Featuring a unique Open Pro/Am format, the Fox U.S. Open offers the most challenging competition in the nation, setting the standard as a proving ground for up-and-coming and elite athletes alike. It offers a full slate of amateur classes. Anyone can enter the open class and compete against the pros to prove where they rank and take a piece of the massive cash purse!

Professional and amateur athletes from around the world are anticipated to compete in the Open Class Downhill for one of the largest cash purses in racing, with additional amateur racing held in Enduro and Dual Slalom events.

This year will mark the 21st anniversary of the U.S. Open.

Nina Hoffmann, who is the defending champion of the Women’s Downhill at Killington two years running, is always excited for the event to be at Killington this summer. “I really liked Killington ... It was just a good atmosphere and of course to get the win — for me was a great way to finish off the

season,” she said.

The Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking has long created opportunities for young athletes to strive toward, with a history of racers like Richie Rude and Neko Mulally, who competed as kids in the Downhill back in the mid 2000s. In 2022, the Fox U.S. Open collaborated with USA Cycling to introduce new Cat 1 age categories for athletes under 15 years old. The biggest moves, however, came from young athletes Asa Vermette, 15, and Aletha Ostgaard, 14 — both earning top five finishes in the Open Class Downhill.

“The atmosphere at U.S. Open is great!” said Asa Vermette. “The Dual Slalom and the Best Whip were sick! The DH track was insane, from chunky with roots to manicured jumps — every lap I did was so fun! Getting on the podium was crazy with all the fast guys there. I was stoked to get 3rd and I am hyped to go back for 2023!”

The U.S. Open Downhill race will remain true to its heritage as an open class event that gives up-and-coming racers the chance to compete against the pros and will again be included in the U.S. Downhill National Series. Racers age 14 and under will also have their shot in the Next Gen Youth Downhill event, which offers categories for intermediate and expert racers.

Also back by popular demand will be the USO Best Whip, taking place on a massive set of jumps carved into the base area of the bike park for a premier viewing experience. This invitational competition is a crowd favorite and must-see.

Beyond the competition, the Fox U.S. Open attracts race fans, freeriders and families with Killington Bike Park remaining open to the public throughout the entire event week.

For more event information, visit: USopen.bike.



By Andrew Santoro

Womens on the Downhill Podium of a past U.S. Open celebrate with Champagne.

Even our VP of HR Shreds the Trails

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Vice President, Human Resources

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Best Whip is Saturday

Back by popular demand will be the USO Best Whip, taking place on a massive set of jumps carved into the base area of the bike park for a premier viewing experience. This invitational competition is a crowd favorite and a must see.

Spectating is Free, and approved areas of the bike park are open to the public during the event (access up the Ramshead chairlift for spectators will be available for purchase). Join the party and experience epic competition, spectating, and riding with friends!

Courtesy Killington Resort

The Best Whip competition at the U.S. Open is always a crowd-pleaser!



By J. Rice, courtesy U.S. Open

The men take the podium in a recent U.S. Open at Killington.

Downhill comp is Sunday

The U.S. Open Downhill race will remain true to its heritage as an open class event that gives up-and-coming racers the chance to compete against the pros and will again be included in the U.S. Downhill National Series.

Downhill Open Class racers will be competing for a \$15,000 first place check on both the men's and women's side. Anyone can enter, anyone could win!

The 2024 US OPEN Downhill Track will start off the top of Ramshead Peak and will include sections of the existing trail "Goat Skull" combined with new sections specially built for the 2024 US OPEN.

Downhill seeding/qualifying will run as follows:

OPEN CLASS racers will take seeding runs on Saturday OR must qualify if there are more than 80 entrants in the class. *TOP 60 IN QUALIFYING WILL MAKE THE CUT FOR FINALS ON SUNDAY. (Athletes that do not make the cut will not race in finals, but will still have lift access for freeriding on Sunday)

*Note - exceptions do apply for former USO podium holders and Top 60 Elite UCI athletes

Open Class Downhill Prize Purse - Men and Women (Equal):

- 1st - \$15,000
- 2nd - \$7500
- 3rd - \$3750
- 4th - \$1875
- 5th - \$937.50



By C. Vanderyajt, courtesy U.S. Open

Dakotah Norton gets air as he approaches the finish line at the Ramshead base area of Killington Resort at a past Fox U.S. Open event. Crowds cheer the riders from the festival village.



By Jason Mikula

The Best Whip jump (as seen Monday, Sept. 23) is built between the magic carpets on Ramshead at Killington Resort.

Building the Best Whip jump

Staff report

The flat Ramshead beginner ski area at Killington Resort (home to two magic carpets during the winter) has been transformed into a huge mountain bike jump for the Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking competition this weekend Sept. 26-29.

The spectator-friendly best whip competition is a crowd favorite. It's being held Saturday, Sept. 28 at 5 p.m. at the main Ramshead venue.

Top riders from around the world will hit the jump and turn sideways as much as possible — a whip. The goal is getting past 90 degrees and bringing the bike back straight for landing. A celebrity team of judges will determine the winner by considering amplitude, individual style, degree of the whip and execution — including how they bring the whip back.

Riders will have 30-40 minutes to complete as many runs as possible once competition begins. Then, judges announce who will make it to the finals. The final riders will participate in a jam-style format for another 20-30 minutes before final judging and winners are announced.

Designing the courses is always a collaborative effort between trail builders, the Killington Resort team and Clay Harper, the race director and co-founder of the U.S. Open events.

Although the process takes many weeks, work will continue right up until race day competitions. Although it's been really dry in the weeks leading up to the race, rain is forecast for the days just before it. The team will be prepared to place tarps over the jump if necessary so rain wouldn't impact the dirt. As soon as the event is over, the team will take the jump down and transform it back into a beginners' area of the ski area once again.



Courtesy Killington Resort

The Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking returns to Killington Resort this weekend. The Best Whip contest (a fan favorite) will be held Saturday; the Downhill finals for open, Next Gen and Adaptive will be on Sunday.



Courtesy Killington Resort

Next Generation riders compete at U.S. Open, open to skilled riders age 5-14

Young racers will also have their shot at the Fox U.S. Open in the Next Gen Youth Downhill event, which offers categories for intermediate and expert racers. For 2024, advanced categories will ride the main downhill track and novice categories on the separate Next Gen specific track.

“Next Gen” applies to U.S. Open categories for athletes 14 years old and younger. This program starts on a separate, youth

specific downhill track with the novice categories beginning at 5 years old and advances all the way to Expert/Cat 1 classes on the main USO Downhill track, Goat Skull.

These categories will race on our youth specific track, located on “Rabbit Hole” on Killington’s Snowshed peak. Rabbit Hole will be open for freeriding everyday leading up to the Next Gen race. The trails will be closed to the public on Sunday morning for

a mandatory practice session for all Next Gen novice racers.

USO Next Gen racing is not a beginner or first-timer event. Racers should have experience riding downhill and be capable of riding technical trails with rocks, roots, switchbacks, etc. Next Gen is designed for kids that have real off-road mountain bike experience (i.e. they have ridden at a bike park). All racers should be comfortable

with fall line turns, rocks and small jumps and drops.

Mandatory protective equipment: Full-face helmet, knee pads, elbow pads and gloves.

Next Gen athletes can not compete in both the New Gen novice event and intermediate/expert event on the main track, rather they must choose between the two prior to racing.

Spectating: Tips and tricks on how to watch the races

Spectators, watch the action all weekend at Killington Resort’s Ramshead base area.

All events are free to watch and hiking up the trails for better viewing is encouraged. A \$15 spectator pass to ride the Ramshead Express quad uphill will also be available for purchase (go to the ticket booth on the second floor of the Ramshead lodge).

The Dual Slalom kicks off the competitions all day Friday,

Then Saturday at 5 p.m. the USO Best Whip competition takes place on a massive set of jumps carved into the base area of the bike park for a premier viewing experience. This invitational competition is a crowd-favorite and a must-see!

Sunday, it’s all Downhill action with the Open Finals beginning just after 11 a.m. Next Gen and Adaptive Downhill events are also Sunday.

Spectating the Downhill event will be along the main track — Goat Skull, which can be accessed on foot or spectators can purchase a single-use lift ticket at Ramshead for a one-way trip up the Ramshead Express.

Beyond the competition, the Fox U.S. Open attracts race fans, freeriders and families and the Killington Bike Park will remain open to the public throughout the entire event.

Spectating rules, policies

Please do not ride your bikes through the venue. Walk bikes through any high-traffic areas.

Remember: Killington is a smoke-free resort. Smoking is prohibited in the event venue but is permitted in resort parking lots.

The flying of drones is strictly prohibited in the venue and on Killington Resort property.

Pets will be allowed inside the venue, but they must remain on a leash at all times while on resort property.

Bathrooms will be available inside the Ramshead Base Lodge throughout the event. Porta-potties also will be available in the Ramshead and Vale parking lots.



By C. Vanderyajt, courtesy U.S. Open

Spectators cheer on Downhill mountain bike racers as they whiz by on Goat Skull.



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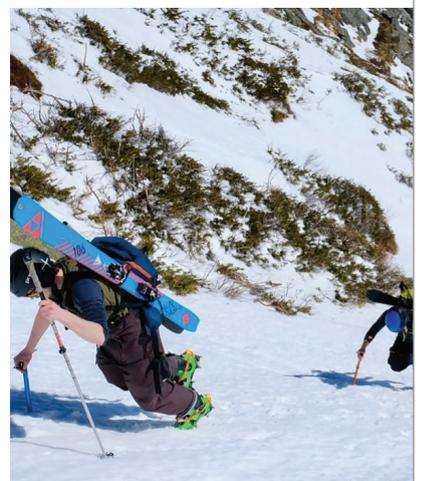
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KMS coach Dylan Conte set to compete in Downhill, Dual Slalom

By Katy Savage

Dylan Conte has been mountain biking since he was about 12. A small bike park where he grew up was built and his dad dropped him off there. He's been hooked ever since.

Mountain biking, he said, allows him to "both be competitive and be out in nature," Conte said. "It's something active that I enjoy and I can continue to get better at."

Conte, 30, has been a mountain bike coach at Killington Mountain School since 2021 and he's about to compete in the Downhill and Dual Slalom events at the Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking Sept. 26-29, along with his students.

"Pretty much every athlete that I work with will be there competing," he said.

Conte is no stranger to the event. He competed in his first U.S. Open in 2006 in New Jersey as a junior. It was actually his first time racing.

"I didn't do very well," he said. But that didn't stop him.

He's competed at most U.S. Opens since. He got 19th in the Downhill event in Killington last year and 10th in the Dual Slalom.

Twelve KMS athletes will also be participating in the USO events over the weekend at Killington.

"It's so much fun, it's way more rewarding than my own races," Conte said.

Conte and his students will walk the course before they ride. They'll look at different lines, assess where the race track will be worn down after all the riders and strategize how to maximize their practice time.

"We're lucky we're at our home course," Conte said. "Everyone on that team has both done well and raced here a ton. [But] it's a new race, and things can be different."

As far as Conte's own race aspirations, he's hoping to finish in the top 30.

"This year is a little different than years past. It's a lot more international talent," he said. "For me, a top 30 in the pro class would be something I'd be proud of."



Courtesy of Joshua Poirier

Josh Poirer, a coach at KMS, previously raced at Thunder Mountain. He plans to compete in the U.S. Open this weekend at Killington Resort.

KMS Coach Josh Poirer, an Enduro racer, looks to Downhill

By Katy Savage

Joshua Poirier is in his second year as a downhill mountain bike coach at Killington Mountain School and he's already "looking forward to many more," he said. "The athletes I work with are all incredible people which makes my job fulfilling and fun."

Poirier is a mountain bike racer on the side, traveling to Downhill and Enduro races throughout the northeast. He finished in 10th place in the enduro category at the U.S. Open last year and seventh in 2022. But this year, Killington's USO will not have an Enduro.

Q&A with Josh Poirer

MT: How long have you been mountain biking for? Do you remember your first time and how you got started?

Joshua Poirier: I've been mountain biking for 16 years now and racing for 10. I was originally a dirt bike kid growing up but then as I got older it became a hassle to transport and maintain a dirt bike so I started riding mountain bikes instead.

MT: Have you competed in the US Open before? What was it like and how did you do?

JP: This will be my fourth US Open (which included three enduro races and my second downhill race) and I am really looking forward to it. It is certainly one of the best events of the season and always really fun when all of my friends from all over the country and world come together for the race. My results have been good here, I'm consistently in the top 10 for pro Enduro and a mid-pack pro in Downhill.

MT: What made you want to compete this year? And what events are you competing in?

JP: What makes me want to compete this year in particular is being able to do it with my team, the Killington Mountain School Gravity Mountain Bike Team. I will be racing only one event this year and that will be the downhill.



Courtesy Sitota LaRocque

Sitota LaRocque, 15, competed in the U.S. Open at Killington last year at 14 years old and podiumed in both the Duel Slalom and Enduro events.

Q&A with KMS's Sitota LaRocque, a reigning double podium finisher

By Katy Savage

Sitota LaRocque, 15, is only a freshman at Killington Mountain School, but this will already be her second time competing in the U.S. Open. She'll be riding with 12 other KMS athletes, along with two coaches.

"It's so awesome to have such a big event so local to me," LaRocque said.

Mountain Times How long have you been mountain biking for? Do you remember your first time and how you got started?

Sitota LaRocque: I've been pedaling a bike since I was 2. I started mountain biking in 2019 because my older brother joined our local race team called Ideride and I wanted to be on it but I wasn't old enough. I eventually joined Ideride in 2021 for my first race season but was sadly cut short due to a broken pelvis. I continued to compete with Ideride through 2023 then just this past season I started at the Killington Mountain School.

MT: Have you competed in the U.S. Open before? What was the experience like and

how did you do?

SL: Last year I competed at the Fox U.S. Open for the first time. I did the Enduro, which I got third in, and in the Dual Slalom, which I got second in. At the downhill, I crashed, but I still had a super fun time competing. The whole event was so fun. And the vibes were unmatched.

MT: What made you want to compete this year? And what events are you competing in?

SL: I wanted to compete again this year because it was so fun last year and I made so many good memories. Also because I want redemption in the Downhill. This year I will be competing in the downhill on Goat Skull and in the Dual Slalom.

MT: What's your favorite thing about mountain biking?

SL: My favorite thing about mountain biking is the community. Everyone is so supportive of each other and willing to help out whenever. I've made so many amazing friends through mountain biking.



Submitted

Sarah Hamlin, 15, now a KMS student will compete in her third U.S. Open race this weekend.

Sarah Hamlin turns pro with Hayden's GT Wild Rye racing, leading the charge for women in mountain biking

By Katy Savage

Sarah Hamlin was 11 when she first started mountain bike racing. She competed in the U-12 category with boys because there weren't enough girls for them to have their own team.

Now, 15, Hamlin is a sophomore at Killington Mountain School and she just became a professional rider for the first time on an all-women's team that fellow Killington Mountain School student Mazie Hayden started with her dad last fall called GT Wild Rye Racing — sponsored by a bike company called GT Bicycles and a women-owned clothing company called Wild Rye.

"I really wanted to create my own professional team after being on someone's else's team," Hayden said. "There is no all-women team and there's even less women in Downhill."

When Hayden started forming the team, the first person who came to join her was Hamlin.

"She is incredibly positive and very resilient," Hayden said. "She can have a bad run or fall in her run and she can just think about how she can improve it. As a student at KMS, I know how easy it is to burn out and I don't see her doing that. I really appreciate that in her."

There's an age gap between them, but they know each other well. Hayden, 23, used to be Hamlin's coach.

"I had always looked up to Mazie when I started get-

ting into mountain biking more," Hamlin said. "She would do some camps for Killington and I would see videos Killington would produce on their Youtube channel. It was funny because the first year I started biking I did private lessons with her."

Hamlin has noticed an uptick in the number of women since she started racing. "It's cool to see that it's growing and how mountain biking is getting more inclusive. Being on the women's team is setting an example for girls who want to do it in the future."

Hamlin added that she wants to be "that person that someone will look up to some day."

This will be Hamlin's third time competing in Downhill at the U.S. Open of

Mountain Biking. She won her age group in 2022 and she placed fifth in her age group in 2023.

She said the crowd makes this race feel different.

"The crowds are just so much bigger and I love that it's at my home mountain," Hamlin said. "It feels nice to just have the home crowd come out. Even kids from KMS will come and support the bike team. I've never seen a crowd like it before."

Hamlin wants to continue growing in her sport, hoping to compete in World Cup races when she's eligible at 17. This year, she hopes to place in the top five at the U.S. Open.

"The girls in my category are very competitive," Hamlin said. "I'm just looking forward to riding well and having fun while doing it and staying competitive."



Submitted

Sarah Hamlin will join Mazie Hayden on the GT Wild Rye team.

Mazie Hayden aims for the podium in the Dual Slalom

By Katy Savage

Mazie Hayden, a 23-year-old Killington Mountain School graduate from Pittsfield, has become a regular presence on mountain bike race podiums.

This will be her fourth time at the Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking. She got third place in Dual Slalom in 2022 and fifth last year, while she got 15th in Downhill last year and was disqualified in the dual slalom.

"One thing that is super different about this race is that it's the only race in the U.S. that draws such a large international crowd," Hayden said.

Hayden is competing in Downhill and Dual Slalom again this year.

This will be her first time competing at the event under her new own all-women team. Hayden and her dad started GT Wild Rye Racing last fall. It's sponsored by a bike company called GT Bicycles and a women-owned clothing company called Wild Rye. Hayden asked two other KMS athletes, Riley Miller and Sarah Hamlin, to be part of her team.

Hayden created it to empower more women in the traditionally male-dominated sport.

"Seven years ago, when I first started racing, there were almost no women at most

regional events I attended," Hayden said on a recent Instagram post. "Now, I often see 20-plus racers in the amateur women's category, especially in the junior women's. I am so glad to see the women's field grow, and even happier to get beat handily by juniors more and more. But in all seriousness, I can't wait to see how women continue to push progression in this sport — seems like we're picking up momentum. I really

hope that those in the mountain bike industry and those with power in the downhill social sphere continue to or begin to support all these amazing and female riders,

because they certainly deserve it."

Hayden, who grew up ski racing and mountain biking, is currently living in North Clarendon. She's planning to move to Maine next month to work seasonally as a ski coach at Carrabassett Valley Academy in Maine. She'll devote more time to mountain biking in the summer. Until then, Hayden is in the hunt for another podium at this weekend's U.S. Open.

"I would love to be in the top five but that's never easy because we always have a lot of talented people show up," Hayden said. "I want to podium in the Dual Slalom."

I am so glad to see the women's field grow, and even happier to get beat handily by juniors.

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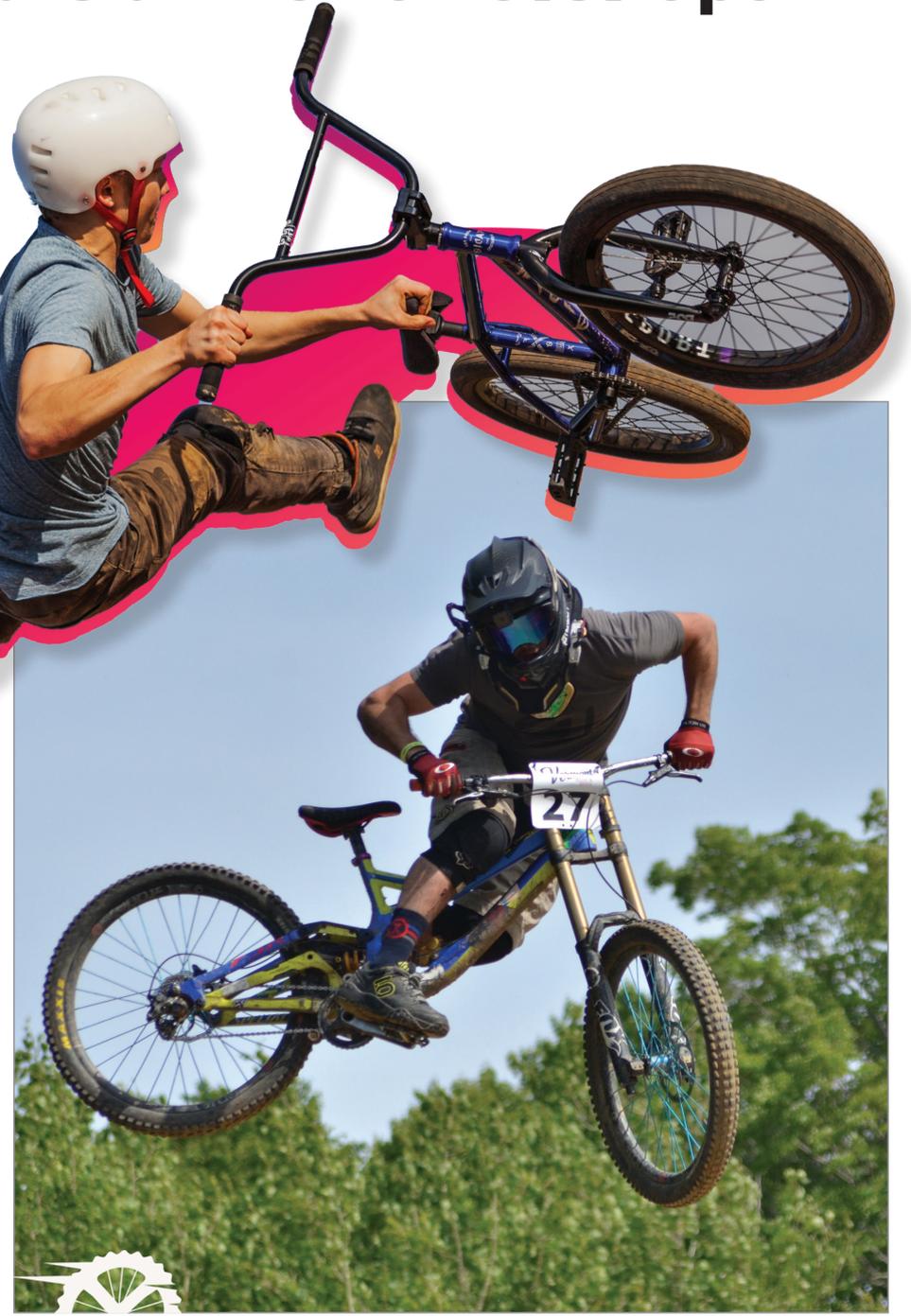
Highlights from past years at the Fox U.S. Open



By Paul Holmes



By Dave Trumppore



By Robin Alberti



By Paul Hansen



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Killington Forward expands biking safety on roads and crossings to popular singletrack trails

The Town of Killington has received approval for a master TIF District, which includes redeveloping Killington Road and its gateway on Route 4 for multi-modal transportation — **bike lanes and safe crossings from the resort to popular cross-country trails.**

Additionally, this year the town has received an **\$84,000** grant to improve mountain bike crossings on Route 100 and connect the town's three cross-country areas: The Sherburne Trails, Gifford Woods and the Base Camp Trails.

What's next? In addition to redeveloping Killington Road, the Killington Forward plan includes constructing a brand new municipal water system serving Killington Road and its gateway on Route 4 (already under construction) and building a new workforce housing development at the base of Killington Road (land has been purchased).

Stay tuned! Killington is poised for growth and new developments!




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Adaptive riders compete on main downhill track

The USO Adaptive Downhill will return this year and will feature top invited athletes competing on the main downhill track on Goat Skull, Sunday, Sept. 29.

Vermont Adaptive produces the event at the Fox U.S. Open at Killington Resort. This will be its fourth year. The race is the only adaptive downhill race held East of the Mississippi River, according to Vermont Adaptive's blog.

Trail accessibility for mountain bikers of all abilities, including adaptive riders, got a big boost this year with the addition of dedicated funding from the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC). In total, 51 projects split the annual investment of over \$6 million — the most awarded to date — to help spur Vermont's outdoor recreation economy.

This year the state awarded \$196,585 to conduct a recreator survey and economic impact analysis for adaptive recreation and \$644,437 for the Vermont Trails and Greenways Council in partnership with Vermont Adaptive, Northern Forest Canoe Trail, Vermont Mountain Bike Association, Upper Valley Trails Alliance, and Community Geo, to develop a statewide trail accessibility hub and complete detailed trail assessments in order to promote and share high-quality information about trail access across the state.

The Vermont Trail Accessibility Hub, a collaborative initiative, is aimed at providing the resources and information needed to make Vermont's trails more accessible to a wider number of individuals, including those with differences in physical mobility.

Out of nearly 8,000 miles of trails and waterways in Vermont, only a fraction are truly accessible for people living with disabilities and experiencing mobility challenges, according to a recent Vermont Adaptive blog post. The Hub plans to use its \$644,000 grant award to promote outdoor equity by increasing the resources needed to develop and promote accessible trails statewide.

"The Trail Accessibility Hub not only allows existing organizations and trail builders to scale up the efforts to improve mountain biking, water and pedestrian access to hundreds of locations across the state, it also allows us to more effectively learn from and coordinate with other organizations also working to enhance trail accessibility," said Erin Fernandez, executive director of Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports, a partner organization with the Trail Accessibility Hub. "The [Hub] will significantly accelerate both the rate at which we can make more of Vermont's multipurpose trail networks 'adaptive-friendly' and help us solidify Vermont as an accessible outdoor recreation destination."

"Vermont is accessible, Vermont is for everybody and there are more places to play," said Jeff Alexander, the director of strategic partnerships and business development at Vermont Adaptive. "Everybody deserves to play and have the ability to get out."

The state initiative to increase tourism with the explosion of mountain bike trails and riders flocking to the state, specifically includes projects that focus on diversity and inclusion. VOREC projects awarded this year fall into one of four tracks: implementation, project development, outdoor equity, and flood recovery.

For adaptive riders, trail width and turning radius are most important. Trails need to be at least 3 feet wide for accessible bikes.

It's the first time the grant program has specifically encouraged projects focused on outdoor equity to apply to a dedicated funding track. Grant recipient Arwen Turner, executive director of Come Alive Outside, said: "Come Alive Outside is thrilled to receive funding through the VOREC Community Grant Program's Outdoor Equity track. This funding supports the continued work of Come Alive Outside's Outdoors For All Initiative, a collective of



By Zach Godwin, Killington Resort
An adaptive rider competes at a past U.S. Open Downhill event at Killington Resort. The Adaptive race this year is on Sunday.

organizations, businesses, and advisors with experience representing underserved and underrepresented populations in outdoor recreation. This funding will boost the collective's ability to develop both simple and highly innovative solutions that make accessing the health, wellness, and joy benefits of outdoor activities in Rutland more equitable."

"These grants are an investment in Vermont's future," said Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore.

"They will help communities revitalize their outdoor recreation assets, create jobs, improve access to nature for everyone, and build stronger, more resilient communities for generations to come."

For adaptive riders, trail width and turning radius are most important. Trails need to be at least 3 feet wide for accessible bikes. Sometimes trails aren't accessible because of parking or problems getting to the trails themselves.

"I think it's needed, I don't think most people know that adaptive biking is a thing," said Ben Hannibal, an adaptive rider. "I think people would realize how many things we can do."

Racing the USO main downhill track, Goat Skull, is a surefire way to change people's minds about adaptive riders' abilities! The double black diamond trail features lots of rocks and mandatory drops and is described on Trailforks as a "rowdy trail."

Hannibal, who lives in Washington, D.C., heard about adaptive mountain bike opportunities in Vermont through an Instagram post in 2021.

"I saw a guy I follow who was doing it and so I was like,

'I want to do it,' he said.

Since, he's made it up to Vermont to ride about one a

Racing the USO main downhill track, Goat Skull, is a surefire way to change people's minds about adaptive riders' abilities! The double black diamond trail features lots of rocks and mandatory drops and is described on Trailforks as a "rowdy trail."

summer.

Hannibal grew up in Maryland and spent most of his days outside before failed spinal surgery in 2006 left him partially paralyzed. He now works for the U.S. Department of Agriculture in Washington, D.C.

"To have a chance to mountain bike again is rewarding," he said. "I like being out in the woods, you have that peace, you're climbing these hills, you're being outside."

For Greg Durso, a paraplegic and program director at the Kelly Brush Foundation (KBF), being outside is just as important now as it was before a sledding accident in Ludlow left him partially paralyzed.

"To me being active is so important and part of my identity, but even more important, being in a wheelchair, it helps you thrive post-injury, introduces you to a new community of people, gets you out of the house, helps in getting back to work," said Durso on the KBF website. "It has so many facets that help you physically, socially and mentally and sets you up for success. It also translates to everyone else in life too, so you can connect with others on so many different levels."

Mountain biking: then and now

Improvements in equipment and trails over the past decade have made the sport more fun for more people

By Polly Mikula

Mountain biking even just a few decades ago was a very different sport than it has evolved to be today. Mountain bikes “back in the day” were only slightly different than their road counterparts in that they had slightly wider tires and a bit more tread. They still had small wheels, narrow bars, center-pull brakes and fixed seat-post. And mountain bike “trails” were often just Class 4 roads, logging and farm roads, cross-country ski trails and lower angle hiking trails.

The modern era of mountain biking is said to have begun in the 1980s, but real changes to the sport didn’t occur until the ‘90s, according to most “historians” writing on the matter. Specific mountain bike trails began to be built in earnest in the early 1990s, mostly in recreation-friendly areas like the ski towns of Killington, Ascutney, the Mad River Valley and Stowe. But since they were built on ski slopes, they were almost all expert routes.

Killington was among the earliest adopters. It began lift-serve mountain biking in 1991 with trails straight off Killington Peak — a 1,700 foot vertical from the top of K-1 to the base.

“Typically bike parks at ski areas don’t offer the right product, there is just too much vertical,” explained said Dave Kelly, co-founder of Gravity Logic, the consulting company Killington hired to design and build a 5-year plan to improve its mountain bike trail systems.

“Most of what they had was comparable to a ski mountain that offers only double black diamonds with no grooming so there

are 10-foot moguls to contend with... it only caters to a very small percentage of riders,” Kelly explained.

In the fall of 2014, Gravity Logic projected that Killington could see 50,000 bikers annually, if its master plan was followed to completion — up from about 2,000 riders per year prior to Gravity Logic’s engagement.

“There is nowhere in the East that has the potential that Killington has,” said Kelly in 2014.

The resort hit that target in 2021, one year after the five-year buildout was complete. Growth has continued since, albeit not quite as exponentially with ridership leveling off in the 50,000-55,000 range.

Although perhaps most famous for building up the bike park in Whistler, British Columbia, Gravity Logic was not new to Vermont. Starting in 2007, VMBA brought in Gravity Logic for several annual conferences for ski resorts to share and learn about the development of mountain bike trails as part of summer operations. Their trail building advice applied to non-lift-served networks too and these conferences were instrumental in educating many riders and trail-builders throughout the state’s mountain bike community.

Today, VMBA boasts more members per capita than any other state, a strong foundation of support with 30 local chapters and collectively manages over 1,400 miles of public access multi-use trails.

Bikes themselves have changed significantly, too, of course. Now standard are full suspension, 29-inch wheels, powerful

hydraulic brakes, adaptable “dropper” seatposts and fat, grippy, tubeless tires — all of which radically improve the mountain bike experience.

“The technology improvements upgraded my attitude. Mountain biking transformed from an activity I felt I ought to enjoy into a sport I really, really want to do every day,” wrote Stephen Shankland, a journalist who covered the tech industry for more than 25 years. “That’s good news for a middle-aged man who spends an awful lot of time parked behind a computer screen.”

Improvements in equipment and trails over the past decade have made the sport more fun for more people. Biking in Vermont may never be quite as popular as skiing (to be fair, the season is much shorter with much more rival options for recreation) but its growth has brought tens of thousands of more people to the state to enjoy the sport and its events.

Businesses in ski towns like Killington a short decade ago, struggled to stay open during the summer month (and many didn’t), now nearly all are open. Restaurants offer outdoor seating (a positive outcome of the pandemic) and new bike shops are opening every year. The dream of Vermont becoming the “Moab of the East” was first idealized by Rochester in the ‘90s, then adopted by the Kingdom Trails in the Northeast Kingdom; but today Killington may have the best claim to that title with its worldclass lift-serve offerings, plus over 250 cross-country trails within a half hour’s drive. As a destination for riders of all abilities, it’s simply hard to beat.



By Zach Godwin, Killington Resort
A young rider races at a past U.S. Open event.

Popularity: ridership, trail use, chapters expand

By Polly Mikula

Mountain biking in Vermont is now the state’s fastest-growing form of outdoor recreation, according to the Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) a non-profit that provides advocacy, education, and community-driven stewardship statewide and to local chapters.

“The growth of the sport has been exponential in the past — call it five years,” Mark Harris, a Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association board member said last summer.

“It’s really hard for us to quantify what’s happening, but you can feel it.”

While the total number of rides or riders in Vermont is impossible to tally as there are no fees or trail counters on most trail systems, some do choose to log their rides on apps like Trailforks or Strava and resorts with lift-serve do require tickets (like Killington Resort) and by all those measures growth has been exponential. With many metrics showing ridership doubling in a few short years.

VMBA has also grown, with over 9,600 members and 28 local chapters who steward 1,000+ miles of public-access trails.

With increased growth, however, comes increased impact and those at the helm of VMBA

acknowledged the need for a long-term plan to support this growth and ensure sustainable trail riding.

“Taking stock of the state of the big challenges and opportunities for mountain biking here in Vermont, as well as the strengths

“It’s really hard for us to quantify what’s happening, but you can feel it,” said Mark Harris, Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association board member.

VMBA has developed as an organization, allowed us to put together a plan that we believe will bring trail riding in Vermont to the next level,” said Nick Bennette, VMBA executive director.

VBBA defines success as:

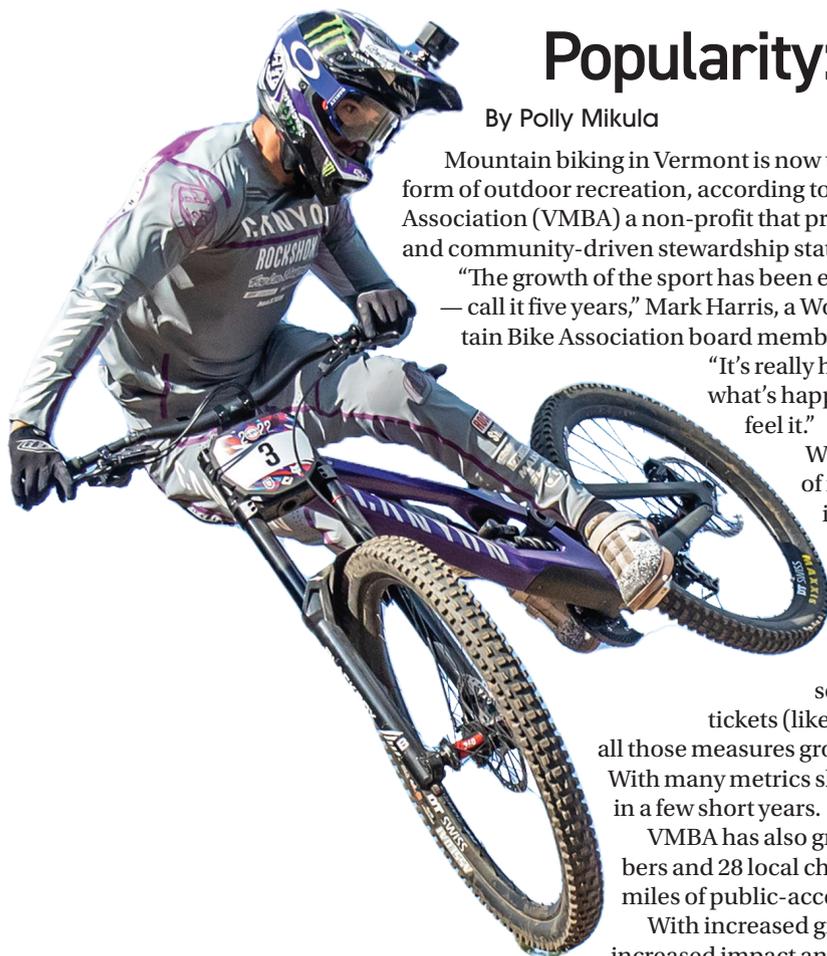
- More and better, sustainably-built trails
- Quality riding experiences
- Engaging events
- Stronger relationships
- Increased volunteerism
- Healthy communities
- A vibrant, sustainable outdoor recreation economy

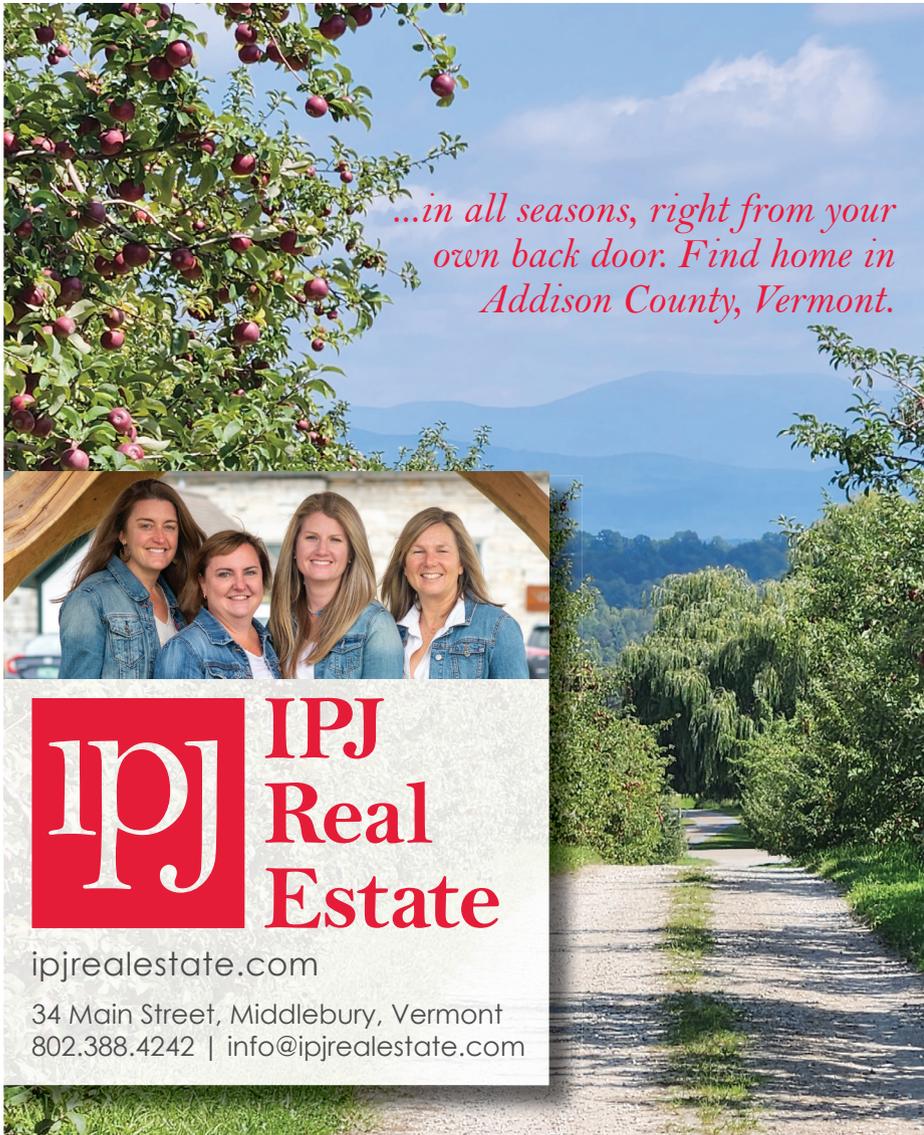
The model we’re really trying to establish is community-supported stewardship,” said Nick Bennette, VMBA executive director.

A good place to start is to become a member of VMBA and/or a local chapter and stay connected to future opportunities.

For more info visit: vmba.org.

Ethan Weinstein/VTDigger contributed to this reporting.





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Woodstock varsity mountain bike team grows

Woodstock Middle/High is the first public school in the state to field a varsity team

By Katy Savage and Polly Mikula

Mountain biking has been such a popular club sport at Woodstock Union High School that this fall it became a varsity sport. And it made history as the first public school in the state to field a team.

"They're very serious athletes competing at some of the top national levels," School Board member Matt Stout

said at a district meeting this past January before the board voted unanimously to elevate mountain biking to varsity status. Stout is also on the board of the Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association. "It's a tremendous opportunity that we offer the kids. It's not offered in every school. Aside from the budget, these kids deserve to be recognized like all other athletes."

Woodstock mountain biking coach Todd Uva said the varsity level recognition will allow the team to have more funding and opportunities. "It finally gives us a budget," Uva said. "We've been operating for a number of years with no budget and no transportation. All the coaches were volunteering their time."

Uva launched the Woodstock High School Cycling Club in 2017 after leading a mountain biking program at Woodstock's summer SOAK camp.

"I'm just a lover of cycling," Uva said. "I wanted to share this passion with adolescents."

To get it off the ground, he did whatever he could. He and his wife loaded up bikes in their cars and drove kids to competitions.

When the school's club team debuted in 2018, there were 13 riders. The last year of the club there were 33 riders, making it one of the largest programs in the school.

This fall, there are 47 riders on the varsity team.

"Being a varsity team will lead to a more serious attitude, more frequent practices, and easier transportation to races," said captain Levi Halley.

They'll compete in the Northern New England High School Mountain Bike Series, which includes about 30 teams in New Hampshire, Massachusetts, and Maine.

About 2/3 of the schools that compete in that series are from private schools/academies.

"It is definitely growing," Uva said. "There are about 320 to 400 [students] from

middle school to high school."

Like other varsity sports, the Woodstock team started this season in August and will continue until the championship race Oct. 26.

"Being a varsity team will lead to a more serious attitude, more frequent practices, and easier transportation to races," said Levi Halley, 17, of Woodstock, one of the team captains.

Halley started mountain biking when he was 6 years old. "I enjoyed the aspects of being in nature and having

fun with friends and family," he said. "As I progressed, the competitive aspects of it also became a top priority. Now, I enjoy racing on the bike team the most."

While the sport remains male-dominated, Uva said Woodstock has 9 female athletes on the team this fall—which is a greater proportion of the team than most other schools.

Ada Mahood, 17, has been on the mountain biking club at Woodstock since she entered high school. She had grown bored with soccer, she said.

The rising senior is excited to compete on a varsity

team.

"We've worked so hard these past few years and brought home some incredible wins. We deserve the recognition of a varsity sport," Mahood said.

Mahood, who lives in Thetford, started mountain biking as a child with her family.

"I've had so many incredible teammates over the last few years, especially on our girls' team we have grown so close we even call ourselves a family," she said. "Even on days where I don't feel like doing the tough workouts they always manage to make it super fun and joyous ... For me, our team dynamic is one of the best and I look forward to every fall when I get to see everyone back in action again."

Mahood said the sport is about camaraderie, whether she wins or loses. She remembers a race she won her freshman year, when she was trailing in third, she heard her coach yelling, "It's all you Ada, it's all you."

"I finished that race in first and my team surrounded me," Mahood said. "It was just amazing. It felt nice to stand on top of the podium.

But at the end of the day, it was my team that really pushed me to the finish line."

When asked what the Fox U.S. Open mountain bike events mean to him, coach Uva said: "Having the Fox U.S. Open at Killington and the UCI World Cup Cross-Country event in Lake Placid

on the same weekend is a testament to the quality of trails and venues in our region. As a mountain bike coach, I'm excited that our athletes have the opportunity to take in some of the world's best riders in two very different but exciting mountain bike disciplines."

"As a mountain bike coach, I'm excited that our athletes have the opportunity to take in some of the world's best riders," Coach Uva said of the U.S. Open and UCI World Cup.



By Peter Seman

Members of the Woodstock Varsity Mountain Bike team listen to coach Todd Uva before a race earlier this fall. This is the first year the school has elevated the team to be a varsity sport.



By Pigsaw Paparazzi, courtesy Todd Uva
Quinn Uva

Quinn Uva, a rider to watch



Courtesy EverWildVisualResearch
Quinn Uva

By Polly Mikula

Quinn Uva, 18, is an accomplished mountain bike racer who's competed in race circuits across the northeast throughout his teenage years — often besting riders with many more years under their belts! He's no stranger to the podium either, having won the 2023 Maxxis ESC Stan's Enduro in Woodstock, Oct. 1, 2023 as a U-20 rider and earning bronze in the 2022 Enduro World Series in Burke on Aug. 14, 2022 as a U-16. In 2023, he was the Northern New England High School Mountain Bike Race Series Individual Champion and Overall series leader and he placed 31st at the 2023 U-18 cross-country National championship. This year, he finished fourth in the Vermont Overland gravel race for U-18 and 39th in the mens open category.

Last year, he was also awarded:

- The Northern New England high school series individual champion and overall points leader.
- Overall series champion of Vermont Youth Cycling Series
- U20 Champion in the Woodstock Eastern States Cup Enduro

As a captain of the Woodstock Varsity Mountain bike team, Quinn Uva has also been recognized for his leadership.

"Quinn's enthusiasm for cycling is infectious and he is eager to share his passion with youth and his teammates," said Coach Uva. "He is a leader on and off his bike, striving to improve his teammates by teaching skill sessions and providing fitness and training suggestions. He is a determined, powerful, and versatile athlete whose commitment has allowed him to pedal to success in xc, enduro, and gravel events but more importantly, he inspires others with his welcoming and kind-hearted personality. He is known on the singletrack and the Nordic ski trails for his sportsmanship and camaraderie.

Quinn was recognized with the "Committed to the Core" award at Woodstock High School's Buzzworthy Sports Award ceremony last year. Fulfilling the criteria as "an athlete who embodies self-discipline, resilience, and



Courtesy Todd Uva

Quinn Uva, 18, is a captain of the Woodstock varsity mountain bike team as well as a top podium finisher. He's a rider to watch as his passion for riding expands from racing to instructing the next generation of little rippers.

persistence. He is driven and focused, putting additional training hours beyond the typical high school practice. He approaches training as a journey by operating on the premise that it isn't what he achieves that is important but rather how he achieves it."

His coaches added, "This level of commitment requires sacrificing social engagements for a healthy sleep routine, making time for recovery which is often overlooked by young athletes, daily stretching routines, thoughtful consideration of diet and nutrition, and adhering to the recommendations of physical therapists and trainers ... It involves finding unique activities to train to your weaknesses. This level of commitment builds character which defines an individual way more than any sporting result ever could. Quinn fosters a sense of inclusion and community wherever he goes raising the spirits of those around him."

Q&A with Todd Uva, head coach of the Woodstock Varsity Mountain Bike Team

How did you get into Mountain Biking? Do you remember your first time on a single track? What were you riding?

When I was in college in the early 1990s my childhood friend began riding and I was intrigued. Shortly after, I purchased my first mountain bike, a GT Tequesta. Modern mountain bike design was in its infancy but I was drawn to the Tequesta more because of the black paint job splattered with neon highlights rather than its hyped Triple Triangle frame design. Most of my riding was on rural dirt roads and logging roads around my home in New York's Catskill Mountains.

My first singletrack experience was in college when we would (illegally) ride the hiking trails at Sleeping Giant State Park adjacent to Quinnipiac College. The bikes and purpose-built trails I ride now radically differ from what I rode then. The evolution of mountain biking is remarkable. While it is fun to be nostalgic, I don't miss my fully rigid bike.

What do you think are the main lessons student riders are learning on the Woodstock Mountain Bike Team? What do you want them to take away from the experience?

I enjoy pushing myself to crest a hill and then reaping the reward of a well-earned descent. The real satisfaction is when I witness our athletes gain fitness and confidence from their collective effort. Climbing takes fitness, determination, and the ability to push when your body and mind want you to quit. The collective experience can motivate an athlete to push harder and further than they might do when riding alone.

The culture on our team is built on encouragement and support and when you add a little healthy competition athletes respond by giving a little more, training a little harder, and gaining more respect for one another. This is how we integrate teamwork into a sport that is often perceived as individual. The takeaway is that with cooperation and a collective effort, challenges become more attainable and rewarding. This can be applied to all aspects of these athletes' lives.

How has the team evolved over the years? Do you feel a difference in the atmosphere/attitudes now that it's officially a Varsity Sport?

The takeaway is that with cooperation and a collective effort, challenges become more attainable and rewarding.

This can be applied to all aspects of these athletes' lives.



Submitted

Coach Todd Uva

The evolution of the team began 11 years ago from the Mountain Views Supervisory Union's Summer SOAK program.

The school district was looking for ways to keep youth engaged over the summer and asked educators to devise activities to meet this goal. With encouragement from my wife, I created a mountain bike program to introduce youth to basic riding skills, the history of the sport, and anything else mountain bike-related. This offering

is known as Dirt Rascals. Within a few years, a girls' program called Spin Sisters was developed increasing female participation on our team. The interest in these programs was high and almost all of the participants communicated that they would be motivated to ride more if given the opportunity. As an educator at Woodstock Union High School Middle School (WUHSM), it seemed natural to start a club at school.

The club was approved by the school board in 2016 and met weekly for group rides. At first, participation was low but then a few club members asked for permission from the school administration to try a race. That was the impetus that allowed our club to take off. In our first race season in 2017, we had 13 racers including one girl. Today the team has 47 members including 9 girls and Woodstock Middle/High School is the first public school in Vermont to have a varsity mountain bike team.

Our team is thrilled to have earned varsity status. It took seven years but the growth and success the club experienced could not be ignored. This accomplishment would not have been possible without the support of countless volunteer coaches, parents, and community members. The athletes, particularly members of the senior class who have been with the team for many years, definitely feel that their hard work and dedication have finally been recognized with the team's new status. There is a feeling of legitimacy.

Logistically we now have transportation to races, paid coaches, and a budget to help with race preparation and bike maintenance. The transportation benefit is a huge relief, as I spent a fair amount of time weekly figuring out how to transport 20-30 bikes and athletes to races.

The evolution of the team is closely tied to our community's local bike organization, the Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association (WAMBA). Also founded in 2016, WAMBA's growth and partnerships with local landowners have secured access to amazing trail networks that have quickly become favorites of our athletes, locals, and regional visitors. This coevolution has contributed to a passionate group of youth riders who will likely become ambassadors for the sport of mountain biking.

How do you manage the mental aspect of mountain biking, especially when students face difficult courses or have to recover from falls or setbacks? What is your favorite advice?

To have fun! Riding and racing bikes can be intense and we can get caught up in the moment and take it too seriously. I can frequently be heard at the start of race saying, "Remember, we ride bikes because it is fun!" or "Just think of this as a large group ride with people who share the same passion as you."

What do you enjoy most about coaching middle/high

Q&A with Coach Uva → 37



By Polly Mikula

Sam Mikula, 14, shakes the hand of a fellow rider after a regional race hosted by Proctor Academy in Andover, New Hampshire, Sept. 18.



By Peter Seman

Coach Todd Uva readies a team of riders from Woodstock middle/high school before a race earlier this fall season.

← **Q&A with Coach Uva:**
from page 36

school athletes, what is the most rewarding part of your job?

Coaching a high school mountain bike team is so much fun. The athletes motivate me to stay fit and get me moving on days when I might otherwise gravitate toward a comfortable couch. No matter how exhausted I may feel at the end of my work day, I look forward to riding with the team. They make me laugh and amaze me with their skill. Watching athletes progress is rewarding. For some, it can be reaching a new personal record on an ascent, and for others, it can be making a particularly challenging climb for the first time without walking their bike. Both of these accomplishments are monumental in their own right. It's truly remarkable to watch these athletes grow as individuals and as a team. The most rewarding moment for me is seeing a rider that you've coached in the past sharing their passion in the role of a coach and mentor. That's when you know you've made an impact.

How would you describe your coaching philosophy, and what values do you emphasize with your team?

I believe that bikes can create pathways for individuals to experience growth, connection, and community. As a coach, I want to facilitate this pathway by providing opportunities for youth to push their limits, learn from one another, and give back to something greater than themselves. I create avenues where athletes become mentors and share their expertise to empower their teammates and themselves. I'm fortunate to have so many athletes with a rich and diverse cycling background who are willing to contribute and offer their knowledge. This is a tremendous resource and asset for our team and I find that less experienced riders respond well to their seasoned teammates. Facilitating and reflection are powerful coaching strategies.

Can you share a memorable story about your experience working with kids on the team? Something you are proud of?

One of my most memorable moments was supporting an athlete with special needs to complete his first race. This young man's developmental disabilities affected his motor skills and caused cognitive impairments but in no way did they deter his desire to finish. With encouragement and support, he tackled the first ascent amusing me along the way with his tremendous sense of humor. We pedaled, jogged, and laughed our way up that hill and then meticulously picked away over and around rocks and roots on the descent. As we departed the woods nearing the finish line he was greeted with raucous support from teammates and spectators. It was truly awe-inspiring and I'm sure I wasn't the only person to shed a tear in that moment.

What does a team practice look like?

Mountain bike practices look different from traditional sports teams mainly because our playing field is made up of singletrack trails. Another unique aspect of our team is that it is coed and athletes range from grades 7-12. Due to our size and the locations where



By Jason Mikula

Todd Uva smiles during a recent Woodstock Mountain MTB team race in New Hampshire.

we practice, we rely on numerous volunteer coaches to help carry out and manage practices. Our captains also play a big role in leading workouts and skill sessions. It takes a group effort to have a successful and safe practice.

We are fortunate enough to have two local bike networks within a few miles pedal from campus [Mt. Peg and the Aqueduct Trails]. Our ride to these networks serves as a warm-up before we focus on skills and fitness. We typically warm up together as an entire

team and then break into groups based on the categories the athletes' race. Within these groups, coaches focus on building fitness such as doing intervals or other hard efforts, or focus on skills such as cornering and descending. On some days, we may open up with a skills game and then just go out and have fun on the trails.

This season we are focusing on more demanding fitness exercises to be as fit and strong as possible for the championship race we will host at the Mount Peg Trails on Oct. 26.

One of the biggest challenges I face as a coach is trying to structure practice to meet the needs of my diverse athletes. Our team is composed of athletes who have strong fitness and have ridden at highly competitive levels on the international and national stage, many who prioritize ripping laps at the bike park over ascending, and others who are simply new to the sport and eager to learn. There is a fine line between pushing too hard and not enough. This is why my focus is on having fun and inspiring our athletes to make cycling a lifelong sport with the hope that they too will share their passion for riding with others.

There is a fine line between pushing too hard and not enough.



By Polly Mikula (left) and Sam Fraga (right)

Quinn Uva works to get out front in a mass start at a regional race in New Hampshire, Sept. 18.



By Jason Mikula

Woodstock teammates Levi Halley and Tomas Masterson race over a rock at race, Sept. 18.



By Polly Mikula

Freshman teammates Sam Mikula, 14, and Brian Kardashian, 14, refuel after the Sept. 18 race.

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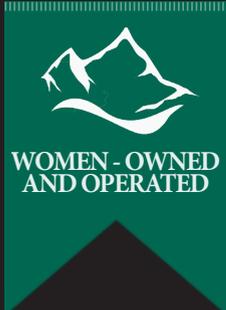
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Courtesy Todd Uva

Quinn Uva, 18, captain of the Woodstock high school mountain bike team, demonstrates a trick to a group of young riders earlier this summer in Woodstock.

Oldie but goodie: 'Cloud Drop' to 'Sir Bermsalot' in Woodstock's Mt. Peg trail system

By Quinn Uva, Woodstock Mountain Bike Team Captain

This is the quintessential run to do when visiting Woodstock. This run is one of the oldest in Woodstock making it a classic and has been heavily revamped in recent years. The easiest way to access "Cloud Drop" to "Sir Bermsalot" is from the Knox Meadow parking lot off Route 106 — less than 5 minutes south of downtown Woodstock. Parking in downtown Woodstock is also an option as you can access all of Mt. Peg via the Village Trail on the north end. There is no fee to ride Mt. Peg, but donations are greatly appreciated and can be given to the Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association (WAMBA) to support the trails.

Starting from Knox Meadow, head across the wooden bridge and take a right. Follow the grassy ski trails to the end of the field and begin climbing up Redline on the left. Redline is the main climbing trail on the south end of Mt. Peg and was recently revamped into a flowy climb. Continue on Redline, go past Crosstown (if you're crunched for time, take Crosstown and skip straight to "Sir Bermsalot") to "Cloud Drop" Connector, which will lead you to the last portion of the climb, "Into the Clouds." If you thought the last two trails were steep, this might be the time to turn on your e-bike (Woodstock loves e-bikes btw!) "Into the Clouds" is the final meandering and punchy push to the summit of the south end, home to the infamous "Cloud Drop." Along this last punch you can see "Hardstyle" to the right, another best of Woodstock. (Hardstyle is a great second lap. It counters the flow of "Cloud Drop" to Berms with its loose, technical, and steep terrain. Give the skinny log leading into Hardstyle a try at the summit; watch your derailleur though!)

This is where the fun begins. "Cloud Drop" is a hand-built flow fest consisting of small to medium sized berms and many optional doubles and jumps. This is one of those trails that is fun for all types of riders but comes alive at speed. Entering the first few berms with speed will set you up for effortless dirt to dirt transfers. After a flat-ish section, continue left on "Cloud Drop." On your way down this next portion, take a quick peek to your right at the "Hardstyle" trail gap (it's easier than it looks!)

But "Cloud Drop" is only just the beginning... now it's time for "Sir Bermsalot." Just revamped last year in 2023 as one of Woodstock's first machine-built trails, "Sir Bermsalot" is the brother from another builder to Black Bear at the Kingdom Trails. Large berms and small to medium sized jumps/doubles from top to bottom are the staple of this trail. There are even split lines with different jump options near the top. Yet again enjoyable by riders of all skill levels, there are multiple triples and berm gaps for experienced riders (you'll see them).

And that's the end! "Sir Bermsalot" will shoot you out where you started at the bottom of Redline for easy access to another lap! Remember to thank the trail builders! Gavin Vaughn and Graham Farrington (G&G Building and Racing) outdid themselves on this run!

Cabot Pepper Jack at the Aqueduct Trails: the reward is worth the effort

By Luca Morris, Woodstock Mountain Bike Team Captain

Cabot is just one of the many fantastic trails in the Aqueduct trail system. The Aqueduct, with its main trailhead located on Cox District Road, is conveniently located close to downtown Woodstock — and its middle/high school. The main trailhead is accompanied by a parking lot with room to fit all your riding buddies.

Once you're at the parking lot, head on up the Class 4, Grassy Lane, and maybe stop for a dip in the pump track! From here to the base of Cabot trail, you get to choose your own adventure, with several options of routes. You can ride the Class 4 road all the way up to the trail for a simple warmup, or take the single-track: Rum Street all the way to Buffer Zone, to Fiddler, to Coaster, and then you're there!

This is a trail with no shortage of opportunities to both get air and wrangle roots.

Cabot trail starts off pretty chill with some pumps and a rock-garden bridge, but pretty soon, the climbing begins. Expect some

switchbacks with some off-camber sections and steep, rooty pitches. Bring your motor! Eventually it will become an endless succession of zigzagging turns up. The trick is to tell yourself that the top is right after that corner! No? Well, then it must be after the next! No? Then it must be after that...

In no time, you'll find yourself (finally!) up at the top. There, as you catch your breath, you'll see the sign warning more timid riders against braving the cheese trail's gnarly downhill, which starts out with swooping berms, tricky roots, and gravity-defying jumps. Your previous efforts will be rewarded with step-downs, doubles, jumps and gaps, on built-dirt and wild woods. This is a trail with no shortage of opportunities to both get air and wrangle roots. In other words, it's epic!

Beyond having a delicious name, this trail is easily one of the most exciting in the Aqueduct trail system. It's got a great uphill, perfect for your workout or granny gear—either way, your hard work ascending pays off in the end. Intermediate to expert riders visiting the Woodstock area should put the cheese trail on their list of must-rides.



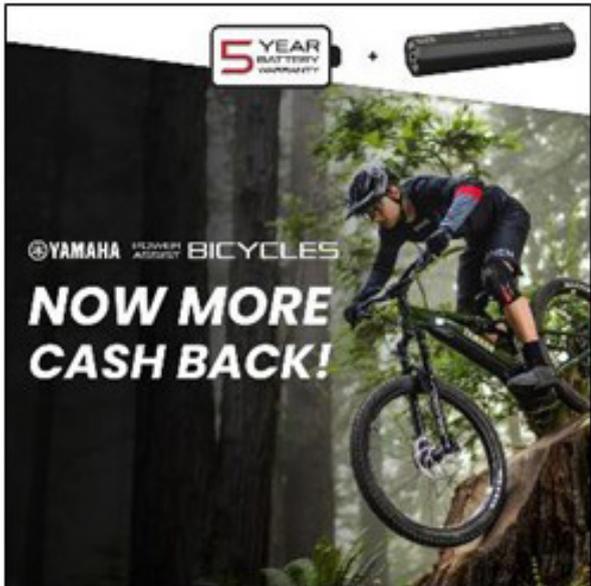
Courtesy Luca Morris

Luca Morris rides in the Woodstock Mountain Bike team's season opening race.

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The Sherburner, Gifford Woods State Park in Killington: Go here, ride this

By Jason Mikula

The Sherburner is a trail not to miss when coming to this area. It's a new trail, debuting in 2023, and was built by L&D Trail Works. It's a perfect adventure that takes under an hour (depending on your skill level and choice of route). The trailhead is about a 3 minute drive from the bottom of Killington Road to the parking lot of Gifford Woods where you can access the trailhead. (It's a \$5 fee for non-KMBC members for day access as Gifford Woods is a state park).

From the main parking lot you'll jump on your bike and ride on through the campground a short distance. A couple hundred yards up on the right you'll notice a bike stand, water, bike tools and pump to make sure you are dialed in before hitting the trails. Pesky Cairn (the trail that leads you to the Sherburner) begins through that field; the single track trail is fairly obvious on the left side of the field.

Pesky Cairn is a great up and down warmup trail. It's rocky and rooty but super fun for all skill levels. Enjoy the beautiful stream and occasional waterfalls that meander along the trail, too. In the right light, it's quite magical and worth stopping to snap a pic. Another fun part of this trail is that you actually get to ride through the stream at a couple points along the way. An added unique feature to this trail.

From Pesky Cairn you'll reach the exit of the Sherburner first. Keep riding as the Sherburner is meant to be a one way ride. (If you want some extra mileage, keep on Pesky Cairn to the lollipop part of the trail and ride that back to the trailhead of the Sherburner.)

This is where the work begins. Hopefully you're warmed up and ready for a fun 3 mile adventure with a 610-foot climb. To start, there are 4-5 berms that are relatively easy and well spaced out. This is a good warmup and gives you

false hope that the accent won't be so hard. But the next 6-8 berms are steep and back-to-back — sure to get your heart rate going. You'll know you're past this section when you get to a large cairn (pile of rocks). The trail flattens out a bit after that and you're well on your way. After that, enjoy a magical part of the forest in the mid-section of this trail. On the right hand side you'll see a beautiful ridge of cliffs and through the canopy the "Bat Cave."

For those who are not racing up, this is a good stopping point to grab some water and catch your breath. Some think the second half is easier than the first. There are a couple "false summits" and there are a couple sections that will test your rock navigating skills. Although a little technical, with the right line it's relatively easy to navigate your way and really fun.

Just before the top, there are two trees that you'll pass through that sort of feel like the "finish line" and you'll see the rock bench and an overlook (depending on the season). High five your riding partners, catch your breath, snap a pic and fuel up.

You'll want all your wits about you for the ride down! Some say it's one of the best rides down in the area. This trail pretty much guarantees a smile all the way down to the end. Choose your own adventure! Keep your tires on the ground or launch off the rock features on the sides of the trail and test your skills. It's flowy, berymy and super fun.

It's a long descent making the climb well worth it. L&D Trail Works (who constructed the trail) utilized the natural features with rock jumps and rock bridges creating unique features. The trail holds up great through the summer.

For intermediate to expert riders, this trail has a lot to offer. It's simply a great combo of fitness and fun.

Peninsula Trail and Loop, a scenic tour in the Aqueduct Trails

By Ada Mahood, Woodstock Mountain Bike Team

Peninsula is a trail that is perfect for beginners and intermediates riding in Woodstock. The scenery is quite amazing, especially in the fall. It starts up a short hill, then over some roots and up a short technical part before ending in the mossy lands of the Peninsula Trail. Even some experts claim that this trail can be challenging with some tricky lines.

It has a little for every skill level and a unique sense of being transported into a Tolkien story.

The Aqueduct Trail network, home to the Peninsula Trail and Loop, can be accessed by heading west on Route 4 through Woodstock. Once you get about 500 feet past the Woodstock Union High School, there is a road called Cox District Road. Follow that road about 1 mile until you come to a gravel driveway on the right. There, you'll find a small parking lot and beyond that parking lot, the hidden treasures of Woodstock; a Class 4 road that gives you access to all the goods of the Aqueduct Trails (to the right). You can ride up the Class 4 road until you reach the aqueduct on your left or you can opt in for some classic side trails such as Rum Street and TNT. Get your tires dirty on these two trails and know that they pop you back out onto the main Class 4 road where you can continue up for access to more trails.

Once you make it to the Aqueduct water source, stop and enjoy the view. In the fall, the colors here are worth a few pictures — it's a great choice for a water brake.

At the end of the uphill, you'll find the Peninsula Loop. The Peninsula loop is an older trail in the Aqueduct and much more rooty than many of the other trails in the trail network.

Nevertheless the trail is incredibly stunning and picturesque. It is a winding trail that meanders through the hills of the Aqueduct trail. The trail is very rooty and has a few ups and downs to it, but is relatively flat.

The descents are rocky, but a beginner would be able to navigate with no problem with some dedication. Some of the small punchy ascents are a little bumpy, but again with the right gear and a tough mindset, it's the perfect trail for beginners to test their skills.

Once you get about halfway into the trail, you come up on the most beautiful scenery in the network. It feels as if you've been transported back to a fairyland or a scene from The Hobbit. Moss covers the ground and the trees have grown so tall.

As you ride through this picturesque landscape you can't help but feel that you have been transported to a magical land. This is one of my favorite spots in the Aqueduct trails.

After this magical adventure through the moss, there is a trail to the left called the Peninsula Loop, this is a quick loop back around the Peninsula. If you want to see some more beautiful views of the Aqueduct and especially in the fall this loop can be extremely rewarding. If you're looking for a short less than a mile add-on, I would highly recommend the loop!

The beautiful scenery and almost magical sense of this trail makes it worth it for people of all abilities and ages to check out next time you're in Woodstock.

Some of the small punchy ascents are a little bumpy, but again with the right gear and a tough mindset, it's the perfect trail for beginners to test their skills.



By Jason Mikula

The start/end of the Sherburner Trail features a bike stand with tools to fix and or wash a bike. The trail begins on the field's left.



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Tour of Pine Hill park: Go clockwise for an extra workout; go counter-clockwise for fun

By Shelley Lutz, Pine Hill Partnership board member

Pine Hill Park in Rutland City is one of the original trail networks in Central Vermont and is a must-stop on any mountain biker's itinerary. The wooded park is 275 acres with 18 miles of mostly singletrack trails dotted with seven unique bridges.

If you are an aerobic machine, ride the park clockwise (maps available near the entrance on 2 Oak Street Extension in Rutland). Otherwise, for a calmer climbing experience, ride the park counterclockwise on the following suggested route.

All mountain bikes head up Escalator to access the trail system. From Escalator, hit Svelte Tiger to continue your climb into the park. Go left on Sisyphus, then right on Watkins Wood Road to get lungs and legs warmed up. Or head right up Svelte all the way to Droopy Muffin (intersection 22). Ride Droopy Muffin to intersect Underdog at intersection 26A. This side of Underdog is still a little rough, but once you are over the Centrifuge Bridge, the trail has been recently rebuilt. Head to Rocky Pond to view what used to be a picnic area and swimming area back in the mid-1950s.

From Rocky Pond, head to Shimmer to check out the Arch Bridge. Climb to the Overlook, then ride Overlook (the trail) to experience the 100-foot-long Suspension Bridge. At intersection 30, go right on PA4J — another recently refurbished trail. It rolls great in both directions but slightly downhill from Intersection 30 to 28. From here, pick any trail as they are mostly downhill back to the parking lot. But don't miss Milk Run and Maximum Capacity on your way out. Exit Strategy to the parking lot continues the flowy fun.

If you are looking for features ... Furlough has a couple of nice features, newly built in 2024: a huge rock face with a nice roller over (named Nugget) and a wooden ramp feature with a great roll off.

Other challenging trails with features include Broken Handlebar North, Halfpipe and Rosey's Rollover. These trails all have features built into the terrain.

For old-school challenge, Stegosaurus is full of rocky, rooty chunkiness.

Pine Hill Park's trails are built and maintained by volunteers, so please consider leaving a donation in Tinman at the front entrance. No cash? Locator maps have QR codes that you can scan and make donations.



Agency of Trans awards \$7.19m in bicycle and pedestrian grants

The Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT) announced Sept. 12 the awards of approximately \$7.19 million in grants to municipalities for bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure improvement projects. The combination of construction projects and planning grants will benefit cities and towns statewide with improved transportation connectivity and safety, tangible economic benefits, and additional transportation options for commuters, visitors to the state, and recreational users.

Vermont continues to prioritize making communities and streets more usable for all modes of transportation. In downtowns and village centers especially, municipalities are calling for better walking and bicycling facilities.

"Walking and bicycling are great ways to reduce congestion and provide an opportunity for physical activity for Vermonters and visitors," said Transportation Secretary Joe

"Walking and bicycling are great ways to reduce congestion and provide an opportunity for physical activity for Vermonters and visitors," said Transportation Secretary Joe Flynn

Flynn. "There are also positive effects on property values, tourism, and business growth, as well as reductions in traffic congestion, improvements in public health, and lower personal transportation costs."

The Agency annually awards millions of federal dollars through the Bicycle and Pedestrian Program, with a goal of providing safe and convenient facilities and alternative transportation opportunities. The 2024 grant cycle also includes funding from the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act Carbon Reduction Program, which funds projects designed to reduce transportation greenhouse gas emissions.

This year's awards include continuation of the initiative to fund small-scale improvements using 100% state funds. These smaller projects address critical safety needs, such as pedestrian crossings and filling critical sidewalk gaps. The Agency plans to assist municipalities with construction of these small projects quickly with minimal delays. Small-scale projects were awarded to eight Vermont communities.

AOT received applications for proposed projects totaling over \$10.1 million. This year's grant program will fund a variety of projects including a critical pedestrian connection from schools to village centers and libraries.

Locally, Rutland Intermediate School Sidewalk & Safety Improvement projects will receive \$75,000 toward \$226,600 project; and Bethel Main St Village will receive \$17,500 toward a \$35,000 investment in Rectangular Rapid Flashing Beacons.



Courtesy Shelley Lutz

Left: Nate Freund crests the "Nugget" off Furlough in Pine Hill Park near downtown Rutland.

Top right: Shane Slayton descends Rosey's Rollover before the snow had melted in the spring.



Courtesy Shelley Lutz

Shelley Lutz on Furlough feature in Pine Hill Park.



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Tips to maintaining your bike

Staff report

So, you bought a mountain bike. Well done! You've now got a few epic rides under your belt. Excellent. But now you wonder how to best protect your investment and keep it rolling like new.

While there are many expert bike mechanics around locally that can help, here are a few basic things that you can do at home to save you time and additional expense.

Before every ride

- Check tire pressure to ensure tires are inflated to the desired pounds per square inch (psi). Measure with a gauge. (Recommended psi depends on tire size: 26" - 27.5" = 40-50 psi, 29" = 35-45 psi.)
- Check the hub integrity and wheel trueness by moving the wheel side to side while holding the seat or fork; any play may indicate a loose bolt or compromised hub. Tighten with a hex wrench set. Next, spin the wheel and check for trueness and brake drag.
- Lube, then wipe down your chain. Experts recommend lube once per every 2-3 hours of riding; wipe off any excess oil.
- Check thru-axles and quick release tension to ensure that they haven't rattled loose or come undone.
- Wipe/rinse off excess dirt and mud after each ride. Dirt that's left on the components can absorb grease and lubricants, causing them to dry out faster and cause grinding on your next ride which will wear out parts over time. Wiping off dirt instead of washing your bike is preferred if it can get the job done. If extremely muddy, use a low water pressure and bike-friendly soap.

Every 3-5 rides

- Check brake pads (especially if downhill riding in wet conditions). Shine a flashlight into the brake assembly so you can clearly see the brake pad backing, brake pads, and rotor. If very little brake pad thickness remains and the brake pad backing is almost touching the rotor, it's time to replace your brake pads.
- Check shock/fork air pressure. Like tires, air shocks slowly lose pressure over time. You'll need a shock pump to gauge and add pressure, which should be done according to your bike manufacturers recommendations for weight.
- Check for chain wear. As chains wear between the pin and bushings formed into the inner plate, the chain grows in length. While it's a myth that they "stretch," they do wear down causing it to appear that way. As a chain becomes worn out,

the cassette tends to wear with it. Installing a new chain on a worn-out cassette will cause skipping, as will a new cassette paired to a worn chain. Therefore they are best replaced at the same time. But it's best to replace the chain before it takes out your expensive cassette! The only way to know if a chain is really worn out is to measure it. Most chain manufacturers say that a chain is worn out when it reaches 0.75% elongation. You can buy a chain-checker devices online or you can simply use a ruler to measure the distance between outer pins. A new chain will measure 12 inches from center to center of the pins. Any measurement over 12 1/16 inches indicates it should be replaced.

- Check bolt tensions. Loose parts can create problems fast; if your bike feels funny or is making mysterious noises, stop and figure out why. It's usually something that's worked itself loose. It's a good idea to carry a hex wrench with you on longer rides.

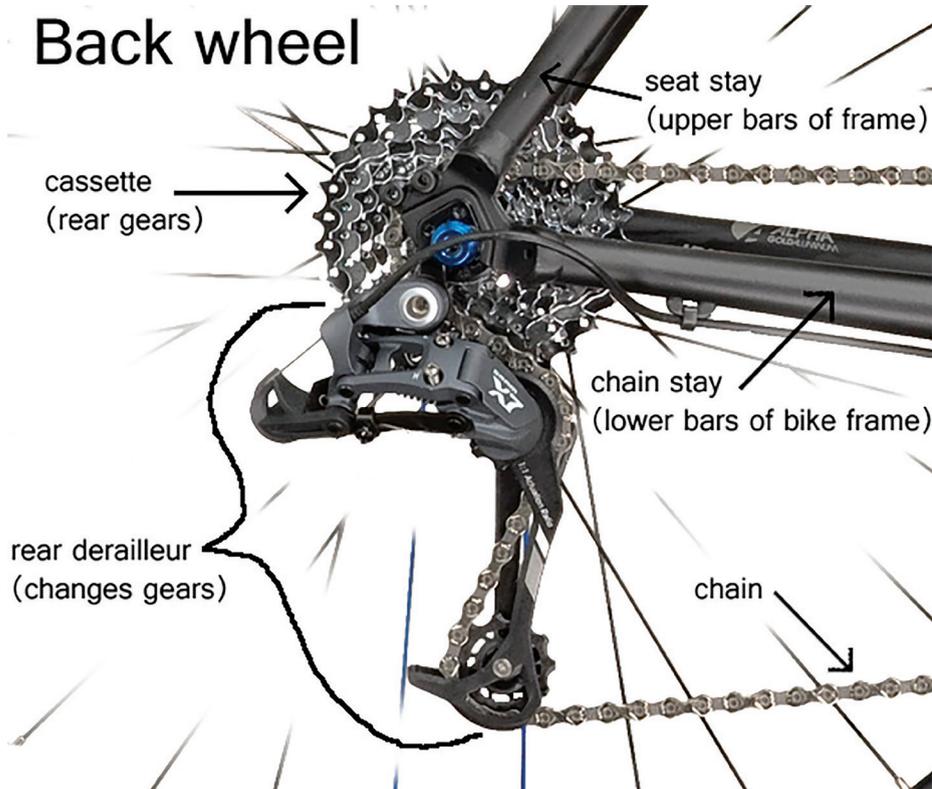
Every 6 months - 1 year

Then there's the more complicated stuff that most non-professional riders will go to a bike shop to service. (Of course, you can learn to do it at home and there are many video tutorials to show you how, but the tools, time and skill required is likely best left to the experts for most.)

Some such yearly tune-ups could include:

1. Service fork lowers. Change out seals and fork oil.
2. Bleed hydraulic brakes. Flush if fluid is darker than normal.
3. Thoroughly clean drivetrain including chain, cassette, derailleur pulleys, and chainrings.
4. Check tubeless tire fluid sealant. Verify that no cuts or wear are causing fluid to leak out; add more sealant if low.
5. Check tire tread and sidewall integrity. If low get new tires (sidewalls should be checked more frequently, especially before longer rides).
6. Service rear shock.
7. Service frame. Fully disassemble and clean all linkages, headset and bottom-bracket; replace bearings as needed and re-grease all mating surfaces upon reassembly.

If all this seems to complex or involved, most local bike shops are happy to help you maintain and service your bike anytime you need.



Courtesy Trek

Terms on the diagram (right):

Seat Stays: The seat stays are part of the bicycle frame. They connect the rear wheel to the seat tube.

Chain Stays: These are also part of the frame and they connect the rear wheel to the bottom bracket/crank.

Cassette: The cassette is actually a set of thin "cogs" (tiny chain rings). They are stacked horizontally from small to large and vary in number from as few as 5 to as many as 10 separate cogs. The smallest one is the fastest, the largest is the most powerful and is used for climbing hills.

Rear Derailleur: The rear derailleur literally de-rails the chain from one cassette cog to the next. It has two small cog-shaped wheels mounted in its frame, which keeps the chain tight. The rear derailleur changes gears when you tell it to.

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Fox US Open of Mountain Biking

Thursday-Sunday

WEDNESDAY
9/25

Woodstock Union High School Native Plant Sale
9 a.m.-5 p.m. Woodstock Union High School, 100 Amsden Way, Woodstock. A selection of 30 species of native plants. Proceeds support the agriculture department's greenhouse and gardens. wuhsms.org

S.E.A.T. Exercises
9-10 a.m. (Wednesdays) Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. \$6 per individual class or \$5 per class when paying for the whole month upfront. A brand-new, chair-based full body workout led by Melissa Cox. rutlandrec.com/godnick or 802-773-1853

Killington Active Seniors Lunch
11:30 a.m. (Wednesdays) The Lookout Tavern, 2910 Killington Road, Killington. \$5 donation towards the meal, tip is covered by local donors. 908-783-1050

Wednesday Farmers' Market (Rutland)
1-5 p.m. (Wednesdays) Depot Park, downtown Rutland. One of the largest farmers' markets in the state and the first to operate year-round. vtfarmersmarket.org

Diabetes Support Group
1-2 p.m. (Second Wednesday of every month) RRMC Diabetes & Endocrinology Center, 160 Allen St., Rutland. Free. For patients managing diabetes, to discuss challenges, ask questions, and provide support. Hosted by Community Health and Rutland Regional Medical Center's Diabetes & Endocrinology Center. Contact Michele Redmond at 802-277-5327. chcr.org/diabetes-support-group

Market on the Green
3-6 p.m. (Wednesdays) The Green, Woodstock. Produce, crafts, live music, and more. woodstockvt.com or 802-457-3555

Bone Builders at the Chaffee
3:30-4:30 p.m. (Wednesdays) Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. Free. Heather Wilson leads a bone-building class focused on weight training and balance exercises to increase strength, balance, and bone density. chaffeeartcenter.org

Cribbage for Adults
3-5 p.m. (Wednesdays) Hartland Public Library, 135 Route 5, Hartland. Free. hartlandlibraryvt.org/calendar or 802-436-2473

Diabetes Support Group
5-6 p.m. (Second Wednesday of every month) Community Health Castleton, 261 Route 30, Castleton. Free. For patients managing diabetes, to discuss challenges, ask questions, and provide support. Hosted by Community Health and Rutland Regional Medical Center's Diabetes & Endocrinology Center. Contact Michele Redmond at 802-277-5327. chcr.org/diabetes-support-group

The Art of Persuasive Writing
5:30-7:30 p.m. \$35 per person. Min attendance 5. Instructor: Ann Anderson Evans is an award-winning author and former professor. As a college professor, Ann was known for her inventive teaching style and she's looking forward to an interactive, zesty introduction to the techniques of writing a persuasive letter to the editor, grant application, resumé, essay. Instruction will include preliminary guidance, class participation, and the production of a short persuasive piece. chaffeeartcenter.org

THURSDAY
9/26

Fox US Open of Mountain Biking

Biking
All day. Killington Resort, 4763 Killington Road, Killington. Watch professional and amateur athletes compete in various events. Chairlift access available for purchase. usopen.bike

Woodstock Union High School Native Plant Sale
9 a.m.-5 p.m. Woodstock Union High School, 100 Amsden Way, Woodstock. A selection of 30 species of native plants. Proceeds support the agriculture department's greenhouse and gardens. wuhsms.org

Essentrics Stretch and Strengthen
9-10 a.m. (Thursdays) Stone Valley Arts, 145 E. Main St., Poultney. \$10. No-weights, low impact workout combines principles from ballet, tai chi, and physiotherapy to restore flexibility and balance. Bring a mat and water. stonevalleyarts.org

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

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

Survivors Support Group
10 a.m.-noon. (Thursdays) Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Free. Fliers available at the Godnick Center or call 802-775-3232. rutlandrec.com/godnick

Artery
Noon. (Thursdays) Adults. Connect and create with others. \$10-\$20. Painting in all mediums welcome. No set topic or instructor, attendees will work on their individual artwork. Must pre-register. chaffeeartcenter.square.site

Ukelele Group
Noon-1 p.m. (Thursdays) Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. Free. Attendees will play a collection of sheet music. All levels welcome, ages 12+. Must pre-register by Wednesday at noon. chaffeeartcenter.square.site

Play Bridge!
2-4 p.m. (Thursdays) Norman Williams Public Library, 10 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Beginners are welcome to observe. normanwilliams.org or 802-457-2295

Thursday Farmers' Market (Fair Haven)
3-6 p.m. (Thursdays) Village Green, Fair Haven. vtfarmersmarket.org

Feast and Field Music Series
5:30-9 p.m. (Thursdays through 9/26) Fable Farm, 1525 Royalton Turnpike, Barnard. \$5-\$25, under 12 free. Point Noire Cajun Band. Tickets: feastandfield.com/tickets

Sip N Dip
6-8 p.m. Location not provided. \$35. Enjoy a fun evening following along with an instructor to create an acrylic painting. BYO wine. Must pre-register. chaffeeartcenter.org

Queer Dance Party – DJ gEndEReNdeR & DJ kell
6-9 p.m. Fable Farm, 1525 Royalton Turnpike, Barnard. \$5-\$25. Celebrate the end of the BarnArts music series with a Queer Dance Party featuring DJ gEndEReNdeR and DJ kell. Locally sourced food and drink available from Feast & Field Farmers. feastandfield.com

Rutland Squadron Open House
6-8 p.m. Rutland Airport, 1002 Airport Rd., Clarendon. Learn about the Civil Air Patrol's cadet program for youth (12-18) and volunteer opportunities for adults. Activities include aerospace education, emergency services, and leadership development. Visit the Facebook page for more details: facebook.com/groups/civilairpatrolRutland

Rutland Young Professionals Mix at Kaleidoscope Art Supply
6-8 p.m. Kaleidoscope Art Supply, 37 Center St., 2nd Fl., Rutland. Join Rutland Young Professionals for a fun mix with light refreshments, an art project, and 15% off store-wide for RYP members. rutlandyoungprofessionals.org

FRIDAY
9/27

Fox US Open of Mountain Biking
All day. Killington Resort, 4763 Killington Road, Killington. Enjoy downhill and dual slalom races featuring elite and amateur athletes. Chairlift access available for purchase. usopen.bike

Woodstock Union High School Native Plant Sale
9 a.m.-5 p.m. Woodstock Union High School, 100 Amsden Way, Woodstock. A selection of 30 species of native plants. Proceeds support the agriculture department's greenhouse and gardens. wuhsms.org

Annual Fundraiser for BRGNS
10 a.m.-3 p.m. Fletcher Farm School for the Arts & Crafts, 611 Route 103 South, Ludlow. Free. Support Black River Good Neighbor Services' food shelf, utility, heating, rental, and crisis assistance programs. brgoodneighbors@gmail.com

New Recycling Exhibit Opening
10 a.m.-5 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. Free. Explore the latest exhibit focused on recycling and sustainability, featuring artworks made from recycled materials. chaffeeartcenter.org

Foodie Fridays
10 a.m.-5 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. Included with admission. Experience farm-to-table demonstrations that showcase historic and modern culinary techniques. billingsfarm.org

Bone Builders at the Chaffee
11 a.m.-noon. (Fridays) Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. Free. Heather Wilson leads a bone-building class that focuses on weight training and balance exercises to improve strength, balance, and bone density. chaffeeartcenter.org

Connections & Interconnections of Life Weekly Group
Noon-1 p.m. (Fridays) Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. A place to share thoughts, philosophies, spirituality, cultures, and more in a respectful way. All are welcome. Must RSVP: chaffeeartcenter.square.site

Hartland Farmers Market
4-6:30 p.m. (Fridays) Hartland Public Library Fields, 153 US Route 5, Hartland. Free. The Hartland Farmers Market offers a variety of local produce and goods. Contact Market Manager Trischa Wass at hartlandfarmersmarket@gmail.com or 1-360-223-0438 for more information.

Opening: Reimagined ... The Art of Recycling
5-7 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. The exhibit will be both inside the mansion and outside with sculptures on our historic property. Artists of all mediums whose work includes recycled materials will be part of this Exhibit. Plus, there will be a special Community Gallery area, where members of the community will also have recycled pieces on display. chaffeeartcenter.org

Local Color Exhibit Reception
5:30 p.m. Artistree Gallery, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. 2-D and 3-D works by over 60 local artists, celebrating the colors of Autumn. artistreevt.org/local-color-2024

Moby Dick – Adapted Staged Reading
7:30 p.m. West Rutland Town Hall Theatre, 35 Marble St., West Rutland. \$20. Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre presents a staged reading of Moby Dick, featuring pantomime, sea shanties, and traditional instruments. Tickets available at the door or paramountvt.org

SATURDAY
9/28

Fox US Open of Mountain Biking
All day. Killington Resort, 4763 Killington Road, Killington. Watch the thrilling USO Best Whip competition and various downhill races. Chairlift access available for purchase. usopen.bike

← **Calendar:** Email events@mountaintimes.info.....
from page 46

Run with a Ranger

8 a.m. (Saturdays) Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, 54 Elm St. (Route 12) Woodstock. Free. Join a Park Ranger for a 4.5-mile trail run with a 600' elevation gain through historic carriage roads and trails. This intermediate+ run includes insights into the history of the Mt. Tom Forest. Water and restrooms available at the Forest Center. Bring sneakers, a water bottle, bug spray and sun protection. Meet at the Forest Center. Parking is at Billings Farm & Museum. Registration required. nps.gov/mabi/planyourvisit/index.htm

Downtown Farmers' Market

9 a.m.-2 p.m. (Saturdays) Depot Park, 1 Depot Park, Rutland. Free. Featuring farm-fresh vegetables, fruits, artisan cheeses, maple syrup, handcrafted breads, and Vermont crafts. Open every Saturday from May 11 to Oct. 26. vtfarmersmarket.org/markets/summer

Woodstock Union High School Native Plant Sale

9 a.m.-5 p.m. Woodstock Union High School, 100 Amsden Way, Woodstock. A selection of 30 species of native plants. Proceeds support the agriculture department's greenhouse and gardens. wuhsms.org

Forest Fairy Hunts

10 a.m.-2 p.m. VINS Nature Center, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. Included with general admission. Join a scavenger hunt to find hidden forest fairies, then build your own fairy house at VINS Fairy Town. Wings encouraged. Recommended for ages 4 and up. vinsweb.org

Bristol Harvest Festival

10 a.m.-3 p.m. Bristol Town Green, Bristol. Free. Enjoy local crafts, food, live music, kids' activities, and an ADA-compliant playground. Explore downtown shops after the festival. bristolharvestfest.com

Mt. Tom Farmers' Market

10 a.m.-1 p.m. (Saturdays through 10/16) Saskadena Six parking lot, 247 Stage Road, South Pomfret. Free. Local produce, goods, fresh vegetables, fruits, homemade items, and more.

34th Annual Chili Cook Off

11 a.m.-1 p.m. Main St., Poultney. Free. The Poultney Rotary Club holds a day of chili tasting, live music by EnerJazz Big Band, a silent auction, and fun kids' activities provided by Wonderfeet Museum. Chili cooks compete for \$1,000 in prizes. For details or to enter, contact bmwride2012@yahoo.com or text 518-321-6354. poultneyareachamber.com/events

Rutland Railway Museum & Model Club

11 a.m.-3 p.m. (Saturdays) 79 Depot Lane, Center Rutland. Free. Maintained by the Rutland Railway Assoc. Inc. See an operating HO scale model railroad set up 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

Shriner Super Bingo

12-5 p.m. Riley Rink, 410 Hunter Park Rd., Manchester. Doors open at 8 a.m. A day of bingo and fun with the Shriners.

Art at the Chaffee: Drop N' Paint

Noon-2 p.m. (Saturdays) Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$25 per person, instructor help optional with a fee. All ages. Supplies and images to paint are provided. Must pre register by Friday noon at chaffeeartcenter.org

Okemo Mountain School 14th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament

12-6 p.m. Crown Point Country Club, 155 Golf Course Road, Springfield. \$100. Includes lunch, 18-hole shotgun start, and great prizes, with proceeds supporting the OMS Financial Aid and Scholarship Fund. okemomountainsschool.org

Tango Tonight! – A New Musical Reading

1-4 p.m. Pentangle Arts, 31 The Green, Woodstock. Free (donation appreciated). Experience a musical in development with 21 original songs and dance, featuring guest artists and a talk-back session. Reservations requested. pentanglearts.org/tango-tonight

IBC Stick Figure Installation in Fair Haven Park

1-4 p.m. Fair Haven Park, 47 So. Main St., Fair Haven. Free. The 5th annual stick figure installation, a popular fall event for the whole community. Pick up and decorate your figure from Sept. 21-27. Installation on Sept. 28, with Halloween characters featured in the 'Danger Zone.' For questions contact: IBC members: Lorraine Brown 802-265-3843 Judy Sheldon, Cindy Pritchard, Judo Sutherland, Ceil Hunt.

Okemo Valley Chamber September Mixer at Fischer Arts

5-7 p.m. Fischer Arts, 102 The Common, Chester. Okemo Valley Chamber members are invited to enjoy an evening of art, networking, and refreshments. Beer, wine, and refreshments provided. yourplaceinvermont.com

Moby Dick – Adapted Staged Reading

7:30 p.m. West Rutland Town Hall Theatre, 35 Marble St., West Rutland. \$20. Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre presents a staged reading of Moby Dick, featuring pantomime, sea shanties, and traditional instruments. Tickets available at the door or paramountvt.org

VSO: Bela Fleck and American Excellence

7:30-9 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$40-\$60, students \$10. Celebrate VSO's 90th anniversary with virtuoso banjoist Béla Fleck and composer Adolphus Hailstork, featuring Rhapsody in Blue and William Grant Still's Symphony No. 1. paramountvt.org

Free Yoga on Mondays

5:30-6:30 p.m. Billings Farm Visitor Center, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. Free. Join Farm & Forest Yoga Flow, hosted by Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park. Bring a mat and arrive by 5:25 p.m. tinyurl.com/FarmForestFlowYoga

SUNDAY
9/29

Fox US Open of Mountain Biking

All day. Killington Resort, 4763 Killington Road, Killington. Final day of races and competitions. Downhill Race. Next Gen Downhill Race. Adaptive Downhill Race. Chairlift access available for purchase. usopen.bike

Ludlow Farmers' Market

9 a.m.-1 p.m. (Sundays through 10/13) So. Depot St., Ludlow. Find a variety of local produce, fresh baked goods, handmade crafts, cold beverages, live music and more. Join us for fresh food, community, and fun. ludlowmarket.org

OMS Bike Ride for Kelly Brush Foundation

1 p.m. Okemo Mountain School, 53 Main St., Ludlow. \$50 suggested donation. Join a road/gravel or mountain bike ride to support the Kelly Brush Foundation. Pizza and beverages provided after the ride. Rain or shine.okemomountainsschool.org

Moby Dick – Adapted Staged Reading

2 p.m. West Rutland Town Hall Theatre, 35 Marble St., West Rutland. \$20. Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre presents a staged reading of Moby Dick, featuring pantomime, sea shanties, and traditional instruments. Tickets available at the door or paramountvt.org

19th Century Vermont Pipe Organs by John Atwood

2 p.m. Bridgewater Grange Hall, 129 Rt. 100A, Bridgewater Corners. Free. John Atwood will discuss the development of early pipe organs in Vermont from 1814 to 1900, and the differences between pipe and reed organs. bridgewaterhistory.org

Herbs & Longevity Talk

2 p.m. Cavendish Historical Society Museum, 1958 Main St., Cavendish. Free. Join a talk on plants and herbs associated with longevity, featuring Dr. Charis Boke from Dartmouth College. Donations welcomed. Info: 802-226-7807 or e-mail margocaulfield@icloud.com

Slate Valley Cares 4th Annual Fall Fundraiser

4-7 p.m. 1293 Park Hill Road, Benson. \$50. Join Slate Valley Cares for an evening of live music by Bird Mountain String Band, chicken & biscuits from The Wheel Inn, a live auction, and a cash bar. Proceeds support food sovereignty and community empowerment initiatives. Tickets available at givebutter.com/c/EvlSge. slatevalleycares.org

MONDAY
9/30

The Great Pumpkin Costume Contest: Foam Pumpkins Available

All day. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. Pick up a foam pumpkin starting Oct. 1 and decorate it to look like a book character. Return your pumpkin by Oct. 26 to enter the contest. Voting runs from Oct. 28-Nov. 2, with winners announced on Nov. 4. rutlandfree.org

Community Lunch

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (Mondays) Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland. Over 60, \$3.50. Under 60, \$6. Donations welcome. In partnership with the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging and Meals on Wheels, the Godnick Center hosts congregate meals. Make new friends, connect with pals. 802-773-1853

Monday Movie

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

TUESDAY
9/01

Urban Legend Guided Stroll

12-1:30 p.m. Depot Park, 49 Evelyn St., Rutland. Free. Join a mile-long lunchtime walk around Downtown Rutland to hear some (kinda true) urban legends. Suitable for kids, though some stories may be a bit spicy. No RSVP needed. comealiveoutside.com/events

Handcraft Gathering

2-4 p.m. (Every 3rd Tuesday) Abbott Memorial Library, So. Pomfret. Bring your knitting, crocheting, embroidery, or mending projects. abbotmemoriallibrary.org

Alzheimer's Support Group

4-5 p.m., Community Health, 71 Allen St., Suite 403, Rutland. Free. A monthly meeting for Alzheimer's caregivers and family members to share experiences and support one another. The group is run by participants with hands-on experience in caregiving. chcr.org

Rutland Area Toastmasters

6-7:30 p.m. (First and Third Tuesdays) Courcelle Bldg, 16 N. St. Ext., Rutland. Develop public speaking, listening and leadership skills. Guests welcome. 802-775-6929. toastmasters.org

Labyrinth: In Concert

7:30-9:30 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$49-\$69. Watch the full movie Labyrinth with a live band performing the score in sync with David Bowie's original vocals. paramountvt.org

19th Century Vermont Pipe Organs by John Atwood

Sunday @ 2 PM



Hartland author introduces new novel, "Agony Hill"

By Curt Peterson

Twenty-five people, fans and the curious, gathered at the Hartland Library Sept. 12 for Sarah Stewart Taylor's introduction of her new crime novel, "Agony Hill" (Minotaur Books, 2024).

The first in a new series by Taylor, "Agony Hill" has a local setting — Bethany, a fictional village in Vermont's Upper Valley in 1965.

She's been hosting signings at libraries and book shops in the region for about a month. "Agony Hill" is the first to go to print, and there will be at least one more — the next is in the hands of her editor.

Without giving away too many details, Taylor described a plot involving a suspicious fire, a body discovered among the ashes, and a Vermont State Police detective who identifies the victim, discovers his "not very nice guy" image and several motives for his murder.

This story takes place coincident with arrival of Interstates I-91 and I-89 and the self-immolation of farmer Romaine Tenney, who refused to sell his land for part of the route of I-91, locked and burned his house down, dying in protest. As Taylor was a toddler at the time, she doubts the Tenney story was direct inspiration for the plot of "Agony Hill," although, when she was editor at the Valley News, she wrote up the Tenney story for the paper, admitting "It *did* involve a fire death."

Her research revealed a pervasive fear of the changes in culture and population that might come with the new highways.

Taylor provided insight into how her writing progresses, starting with the general concept of a story, or plot.

"It isn't inspired by a single event," she said.

Her journalism background had trained her for efficient

and meaningful research for each book, and the story fills in as she absorbs the atmosphere, conditions and events of the story's era.

For "Agony Hill," Taylor spoke to a lot of people who were adults during the '60s and found those conversations "were chock full of information about that period."

She also dove into archives of daily and weekly newspapers of the time — a kind of "immersion" — revealing "colloquialisms, current prices (milk, four cents/gallon), early gerrymandering, national news, the Vietnam war, unrest in Los Angeles," etc.

She said there were two waves of "back to the land" migrants who came to Vermont — the first in the '30s, and, including her grandparents, a second in the 1960s and early '70s. "They had a huge influence on Vermont politics," she noted.

Taylor smiled when asked, "How do you come up with names for your characters?"

"It gets more difficult as you write more books," she said. "I found the Social Security database a great resource, just scanning names until I find one I feel is just right. Names are complicated."

But, she added, editors sometimes reject names, possibly because they find someone living in the book's current environment with the same name.

The "Agony Hill" crime series is her third to date, following four Maggie D'Arcy novels, and four Sweeney St. George Mysteries.

"Series are fun," she said, adding that it's the publisher who decides how many books in a series will be financially successful.

The Mountain Times asked Taylor how hard it is to

balance writing, raising her three children (ages 19, 16 and 14), raising sheep and chickens, and participating in the community.

"I often feel that I am out of balance. I think that it's a constant battle to put the important things first," she said. "Family is always the highest priority, though it's healthy for kids to see parents enjoying their work, hobbies and friendships."

"I love writing, and feel lucky I get to do it as my job. But publishing can be cruel and capricious!" she added.



By Curt Peterson

Hartland author Sarah Stewart Taylor reads from her new crime novel, "Agony Hill," during a book event at the Hartland Library.

THINKING OF TOMORROW.
SINCE 1884.

[MUSIC Scene]

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

WED 9/25

LUDLOW

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

POULTNEY

7 p.m. Poultney Pub - Open Mic with Danny Lang

QUECHEE

6 p.m. Public House Pub – Chris Pallutto

RUTLAND

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

BRANDON

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

BRIDGEWATER CORNERS

5 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – JD Tolstoi

KILLINGTON

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

6 p.m. Rivershed – Chris Pallutto

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. Poultney Pub – Vinyl Night with Ken

QUECHEE

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

RUTLAND

8 p.m. Angler Pub – A Sound Space Open Mic hosted by Josh Cote

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

SOUTH POMFRET

7 p.m. Artistree – Open Mic Night

WOODSTOCK

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Nick Bredice

FRI 9/27

BARNARD

7:30 p.m. Town Hall – Young Frankenstein: The Musical

BRIDGEWATER CORNERS

6:30 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Trivia

CASTLETON

6 p.m. Blue Cat Bistro – Marcos Levy

KILLINGTON

6 p.m. Rivershed – Jeremiah Strauss

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

6 p.m. The Foundry – Liz Reedy

7:30 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Aaron Audet

7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Live Music

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Jared Johnson

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Bobby Sheehan

RANDOLPH

7:30 p.m. Underground Listening Room - Violet Crimes w/ Breaking Up, Psych Ward Disco and Embers in Umbra

RUTLAND

6:30 p.m. Stonehedge Indoor Golf – Duane Carleton

SAT 9/28

BARNARD

7:30 p.m. Town Hall – Young Frankenstein: The Musical

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – Beer Run Comedy featuring Ray Jubela and Steve Tracy with opening act Al Barnes

KILLINGTON

6 p.m. Rivershed – Nick Bredice

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

6 p.m. The Foundry – Mowgli

7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Live Music

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel Nightclub – The Ultimates

LUDLOW

8:30 p.m. Off the Rails – Aaron Audet Band

PITTSFIELD

11 a.m. Town Green – Pittsfield Volunteer Fire & Rescue Bazaar with music by The Idiots

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub - Matthew "Lobo" & Daniel Rotundo

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – FROGZ

STOCKBRIDGE

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

WOODSTOCK

2 p.m. Town Hall Theatre – Musical: Tango Tonight

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Livingston Leo

SUN 9/29

BARNARD

2 p.m. Town Hall – Young Frankenstein: The Musical

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Bomoseen Lodge and Taproom – James Joel

BRANDON

7 p.m. Town Hall – Snake Mountain Bluegrass

BRIDGEWATER CORNERS

3 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Nick Bredice

KILLINGTON

12 p.m. Rivershed – Brunch with Rhys Chalmers

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tboneicus Jones

6 p.m. Rivershed – Trivia

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

7:30 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Jenny Porter

SOUTH POMFRET

3 p.m. Artistree - Milonga with Live music by Trio Tango Norte & Lessons by Tango Pro Champions

STOCKBRIDGE

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

MON 9/30

KILLINGTON

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

LUDLOW

8:30 p.m. The Killarney – Open Mic Night with King Arthur Junior

WOODSTOCK

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Brooks Hubbard

TUES 10/01

KILLINGTON

7:30 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Taco Tuesday with Rick Webb

LONDONDERRY

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

LUDLOW

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

PITTSFIELD

7 p.m. Town Hall – Acoustic Jam

POULTNEY

7 p.m. Poultney Pub – Bluegrass Jam

QUECHEE

5 p.m. The Public House – Jim Yeager

RUTLAND

6:30 p.m. Vermont Tap House – Trivia Night

WRITE TO US:

The Mountain Times encourages readers to contribute to our community paper by writing letters to the editor. Opinions are not endorsed by the Mountain Times, nor are the facts checked. We ask that opinions remain focused on issues; refrain from name-calling.

Please keep them to 300 words or they will be printed only at the editor's discretion if space allows.

Email letters to editor@mountaintimes.info



Moby Dick – Adapted Staged Reading performed by Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre

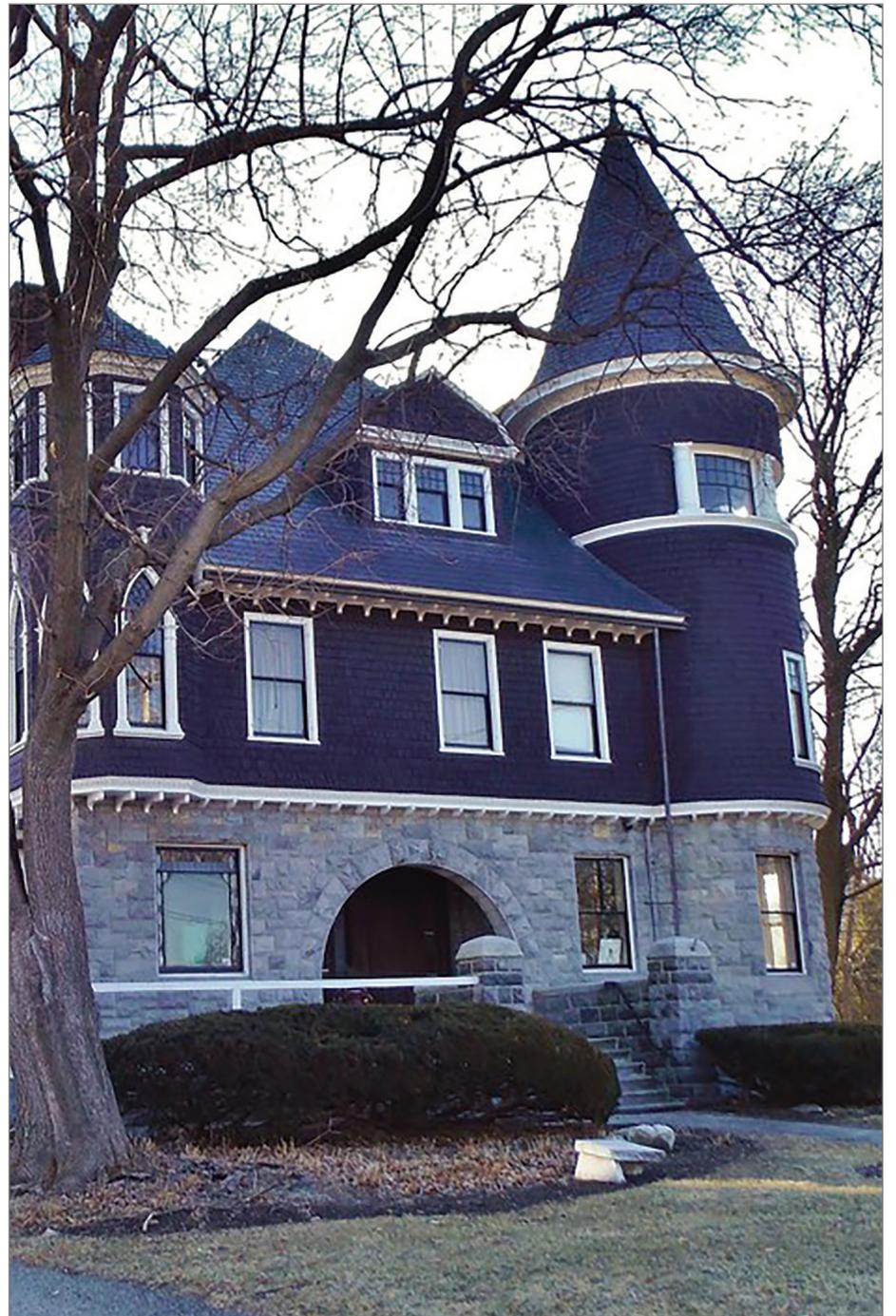
Friday, Sept. 27, 7:30 p.m. – WEST RUTLAND – For its' opening of the 20th season, Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre will present an adapted staged reading of the classic "Moby Dick" by Herman Melville. The show will be presented at the West Rutland Town Hall Theatre, 35 Marble Street, on Friday, Sept. 27 and Saturday, Sept. 28 at 7:30 p.m. with a matinee on Sunday, Sept. 29 at 2 p.m.

The play is based on the sailor Ishmael's narrative of the maniacal quest of Ahab, captain of the whaling ship, Pequod for vengeance against Moby Dick, the giant white sperm whale that bit off his leg on the ship's previous voyage.

Gary Meitrott, playwright and director of the show, said, "This is a staged reading, however its cast members will use pantomime elements of being on a whaling ship of the 19th century. The cast members have also memorized sea shanties, which will be used throughout the play. They will also play instruments like the penny whistle, banjo, Irish drum and the concertina.

Tickets are \$20 a piece and may be purchased at the door with cash or a check. They can also be bought at paramountvt.org.

For more information, contact the company at: actorsreput@gmail.com



Submitted

The Chaffee Art Center is launching a public "Reimagined: The Art of Recycling" exhibit, celebrating its 63-year history, featuring artists using recycled materials.

New recycling exhibit opens at the Chaffee Art Center

Friday, Sept. 27, 5-7 p.m. – RUTLAND – The Chaffee Art Center, invites the community to the opening of its new Exhibit "Reimagined: The Art of Recycling". The exhibit will be both inside the mansion and outside with sculptures on our historic property.

The exhibit will feature Artists of all mediums whose work includes recycled materials, as well as a special Community Gallery area where members of the community will also have recycled pieces on display. Thanks to our in-kind sponsor, Mac Equipment & Steel Co.

Stop by this free event and enjoy a glass of wine and nibbles while you explore the galleries full of recycled art. Chaffee artist members' works will be on display and for sale throughout the mansion, as well as in the Gallery Shoppe that is filled with handmade treasures and gift ideas for any

occasion. There are "recycled" sculptures outside near the 100-foot Pollinator Garden with native plantings, growing Sculpture Garden, and over a dozen gardens on the property. The Exhibit is on display until Oct. 25.

As Chaffee celebrates 63 years as an art center in the Rutland Community, the public is invited to join as an artist, single or family member to help the Chaffee to continue to inspire and cultivate creativity, while impacting the vitality of our community through the arts.

For more information, visit: chaffee-artcenter.org and the Chaffee Art Center Instagram and Facebook pages for updates on events, classes and more. Call 802.775.0356, info@chaffeeartcenter.org, or stop by the Chaffee Art Center at 16 South Main Street in Rutland, VT.



Courtesy Poultney Rotary Club

Poultney Rotary Club hosts 34th annual chili cook off

Saturday, Sept. 28, 11 a.m.-1 p.m.—POULTNEY—Every fall for more than 30 years, downtown Poultney has hosted the annual chili cook off. This year, Poultney Rotary Club is thrilled to announce that the event will be filling the streets once again on Saturday, Sept. 28, from 11 a.m. to 1p.m.

In addition to the Chili Cook Off competition and tasting, EnerJazz Big Band will play, a silent auction will line the center of Main Street, Wonderfeet Museum will provide fun activities for the kids and the famous Chili T-shirts will be back.

A thousand dollars in prizes will be awarded this year for all those cooking! There is no charge for cookers. Anyone interested in entering as a chili cooker should reach out to

Rotarian Craig at bmwide2012@yahoo.com or text 518-321-6354.

The 34th Annual Chili Cook Off serves as the club's largest fundraiser and it's businesses and individuals in Poultney that make the club's ongoing work possible. Poultney Rotary Club has been instrumental in providing many scholarships to our Poultney High School graduates every year, contributions to various summer recreation programs, and an annual back to school drive. Some other highlights of our activities include Green Up Day, downtown Poultney holiday decorations and activities, Josh the Otter (kindergarten water safety program), food shelf support, and various other community service activities.

Okemo Mountain School is ready to host its 14th annual benefit golf tournament

Saturday, Sept. 28, 12-6 p.m. —SPRINGFIELD—The Okemo Mountain School (OMS) golf tourney, Okemo Mountain School's 14th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament will be held on Saturday at Crown Point Country Club in Springfield.

Lunch and registration start at noon and lunch and a drink is included in the registration fee. 18 hole shotgun start at 1 pm.

All proceeds will go towards our Financial Aid and Scholarship Fund to make OMS an affordable and accessible experience for all. There will be lots of great prizes including a \$15,000 hole in one, a Yeti cooler, a 7 night worldwide getaway, Tour Edge EXS golf clubs, rounds of golf to local courses, skis and much more. Every player will receive an OMS hat.

For more information, visit: okemomountainschool.org.



Submitted

Okemo Mountain School will host its 14th Annual Benefit Golf Tournament on Saturday, Sept. 28, at Crown Point Country Club in Springfield, with proceeds supporting its Financial Aid and Scholarship Fund.

Killington Brewfest returned

Killington Brewfest returned to the Pico Mountain Base Area on Saturday, September 21, offering attendees a perfect blend of Vermont's autumn foliage, live music, and a wide selection of craft beers, ciders, and seltzers. The event kicked off with a VIP tasting session, followed by a general tasting, attracting craft beverage enthusiasts from the region. The day before, the Killington Classic golf tournament added to the weekend's festivities, making it one of Killington's most celebrated annual events.



By Jerry Leblond





Fall is near

As autumn arrives, cooler temperatures and shorter days signal trees to prepare for winter. The process begins when trees stop producing chlorophyll, the green pigment responsible for photosynthesis. As the chlorophyll fades, the hidden pigments in the leaves—such as carotenoids, which produce yellow and orange hues, and anthocyanins, which create reds and purples—become visible, creating the vibrant display of fall foliage. This transformation is both a natural response to environmental changes and a beautiful hallmark of the season.



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Submitted

Okemo Valley Women's Club hosts food drive

Saturday, Sept. 28, 10 a.m.-2 p.m. – LUDLOW/SPRINGFIELD/PROCTORSVILLE – The Okemo Valley Women's Club will host a food drive to benefit local food shelves and raise awareness of food insecurity in the US. In 2023 more than 47 million Americans suffered from food insecurity.

There will be 3 food collection sites at Shaw's stores in Ludlow and

Springfield, in addition to Singleton's Store in Proctorsville where non-perishable goods will be collected.

Everything collected will be donated to local food shelves in the area.

The Okemo Valley Women's Club in part of GFWC, an international women's organization dedicated to improving the lives of others by volunteer service.

Rockin' the Region with Stacy Harshman of Sparkle Barn

I've heard about the Sparkle Barn in Wallingford for years, but never had the chance to go. I drove past it many times, and noticed how cool it looked, but didn't have time to stop in. Friends told me how much I would like the place, and boy were they right. On June 30th, I DJ'd their 7th Anniversary Party, and even though it rained, it was a good time. It's an amazing place, both inside and out. Everywhere you look, there's some really cool art. I could spend hours in the gift shop. My friend Stephanie Cassineri told me it has everything

I don't need. I disagree, there was so much I do need. I'll definitely be back again. After I posted about it, so many friends commented how much they like the place. As soon as I walked in I knew I needed to write an article about it, so I spoke with owner and artist Stacy Harshman to learn more.

The Sparkle Barn is called "Unique gifts in a magical environment." Stacy said, "It's like a gift shop and immersive art experience in one, that's full of life and color."

Stacy lived in Manhattan, prior to moving to Vermont in 2015. She suffers from depression, and first came here to Spring Lake Ranch in Cuttingsville, for therapy. She stayed there for about 9 months and then moved to Rutland. She was painting in her apartment, and put her art online, and got a following on her Facebook art page of about 20,000 people. Please visit "Stacy Harshman Art" on Facebook/Instagram and stacyharshman.com to see more. Stacy said, "I sold a few pieces a week so that gave me some confidence, and the idea I could sell my work and other artist's work too. I wanted a shop, and a barn so I looked in Rutland real estate and found this place."

Stacy did art projects in NYC, not really becoming an "artist" until moving here. She had a business making glass lighting, she sourced and sold vintage antique tribal rugs, and she wrote a book, "Crowning Glory - An Experiment in Self-Discovery Through Disguise", and before all that she did music. She said, "I've been creative, just not necessarily art. I've gone up and down with depression my whole life. I was in a slump and ended up buying this long, red wig. It kind of changed me into this power goddess, which I didn't expect. I went out, into the world in Manhattan, and I got so much attention. After a week or two, I wondered why since I didn't get this much attention as me, it was ridiculous." She hired a "research assistant" and they went out on the town, each week with a different colored wig: blonde, brunette, redhead, and documented everything that happened. Stacy added, "It wasn't a serious scientific experiment but like an experiment of discovery. I also did a week with my hair, and felt quite vulnerable because I wasn't in disguise." The red got the most attention, it was flashy, she was asked out the most as a blonde, and blended into the scenery as a brunette. I'm going to have to check out this book, which took about 2 years to write.

If you search "Stacy Harshman Music" you'll find the 6 albums she made. When she was younger, in France, she wrote a bunch of songs on guitar. She moved to Manhattan



Stacy Harshman

The Sparkle Barn in Wallingford, founded by Stacy Harshman, celebrated its 7th anniversary.

to record an album with a friend, of a friend. Stacy said, "I never met him, which was awkward, but for the time I think it was really good. I kept recording more music, and I did play out with another person in Manhattan, and played some gigs." She played piano, but said, "I wrote the songs with some crazy tunings on guitar."

Art has definitely helped with her depression. She said, "The whole Sparkle Barn is kind of my art therapy project. I want to make it as beautiful as possible, and put as much of my creativity into it as possible. It pays off, people enjoy it, and that makes me feel good." I'm one of those people. There's so much creativity, everywhere you look. The gift shop sells unique items, but it's the art that is really unique. Upstairs is what they call "The Bloom Room". They're working on expanding that. When I went up there, I felt like I was in an "Alice in Wonderland" type of playroom. It is very colorful, with flowers everywhere. It's something you need to see, to believe. Stacy said, "I get to create a beautiful space with different elements of furniture, fabric, and giant

flowers. It's great for me to intellectually be stimulated, and having a goal really helps. I've had a really good run with the Sparkle Barn the last 7 years." The "Bloom Room" should be finished in about a month and then they plan on having events up there like Open Mic, Story-telling, Art Classes, Plays, Comedy, etc.

As soon as you park, you'll see the "Magic Garden" out front with a giant unicorn. Before the pandemic, little girls were coming there wearing their sparkliest outfit, making it an outing so Stacy wanted to make something special for them. She said, "I thought that was

so sweet. I wanted to give a bigger experience, more than just a gift shop. I took the corner of the parking lot, and had my way with it, just kept building. I wanted to give kids, and adults, more of an experience."

In the nicer weather months, there's a dragon story walk out on the front lawn. When you do the walk, each dragon has a podium with their story that you can read. At the end, there's a box that says, "Find the source of your inner sparkle." When you open the box, you find a mirror. There's also dragon cards that say, "You're an honorary member of the land of Sparkle Dragons. What's your magic power? Go forth and sparkle." Stacy said, "It's something that's imaginative, and fun."

Stacy, and her partner/fellow artist Garrison Buxton are working on converting a 26 foot truck, that will have the aesthetic and vibe of the "Bloom Room" upstairs, and be rented for parties. It will be like an immersive art experience of being in a garden, but in a truck.

Stacy ended with saying, "I'm always thinking about how I can be more creative, and provide more experience. I like to come up with ideas, so to have a canvas where I can make my ideas a reality, is pretty exciting. I like when people enjoy my art, when it has a life outside of me."

Please visit the Sparkle Barn on Facebook and Instagram to see more of their colorfulness, and uniqueness.



Rockin' the Region
By Dave Hoffenberg

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ArtistsTree hosts Milonga with live music by Trio Tango Norte and lessons by Tango Champions

Sunday, Sept. 29, 3 p.m.—SOUTH POMFRET—Join Tango Norte for a milonga (social dance) at Artistree. Grab a partner – or just yourself, and head to Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road in South Pomfret to learn the Tango with an advanced/intermediate lesson starting at 3 p.m. and a beginner lesson at 4 p.m. Stay for the dance that follows or skip the lesson and just come to dance at 5 p.m.

Adriana Salgado and Orlando Reyes, national stage and salon tango champions, have danced internationally for 25 years. They will teach us a few steps so we can dance the Argentinian style of tango, which is a social and improvisational style of dance. There are many versions of tango, but this style is not choreographed. In other words, a milonga! Trio Tango Norte will provide live music for dancing.

- 3 p.m.: Intermediate/advanced dance lesson
- 4 p.m.: Beginner dance lesson
- 5 p.m.: Dance begins

Bob Merrill – Piano

He has been performing in the Upper Connecticut River Valley for longer than he cares to admit. He has accompanied ballet classes for Pacific Northwest Ballet, for Jacques d'Amboise's National Dance Institute tour of New Hampshire schools, and for Michael Blevin's artist-in-residence theatre projects at the Pomfret School and many other theatre projects. He has produced albums, jingles, and music for video and film, and has been composer/accompanist for Dartmouth Film Society's silent films since 1989. By day he is a composer, producer, audio engineer, and technical consultant. He grew up in Oregon, and now makes his home in Wilder, Vermont. The day before this milonga, he and Joy Kosta will have just completed the first public reading of their new musical, *Tango Tonight!*

Peter Concilio - Bass

The founder and Artistic Director of the Hartland JazzFest, Peter plays occasional First Fridays at Skunk Hollow Tavern in Hartland, with local and regional jazz musicians. In 2014, he launched "Silo Jazz" on the third Friday of the month at Silo Distillery in Windsor, Vermont where he performed with pianists Fred Haas and Bob Merrill, and guitarist Billy Rosen, among others. More recently his offerings have been at Vermont Distillery in Quechee. He is one of the original members of Tango Norte, and looks forward to playing more tango in the coming months.

Susanna Stein, violin

Susanna Stein first fell in love with tango on the dance floor, and soon began to play tango violin. Living in New York City, she played in the *Tango y Tango* theater show, the Ravinia music festival, milongas, and several recordings with the late great bandonista Raul Jaurena and his band, and in Carnegie Hall with Horacio

Laguna's Guitartango. While Susanna's focus is classical chamber music, she has also played in salsa and mariachi bands. She is happy to be able to contribute to the tango scene in the Upper Valley, where she now lives.

For more information, visit: artistreevt.org/artistree-events.

SUN

9/29





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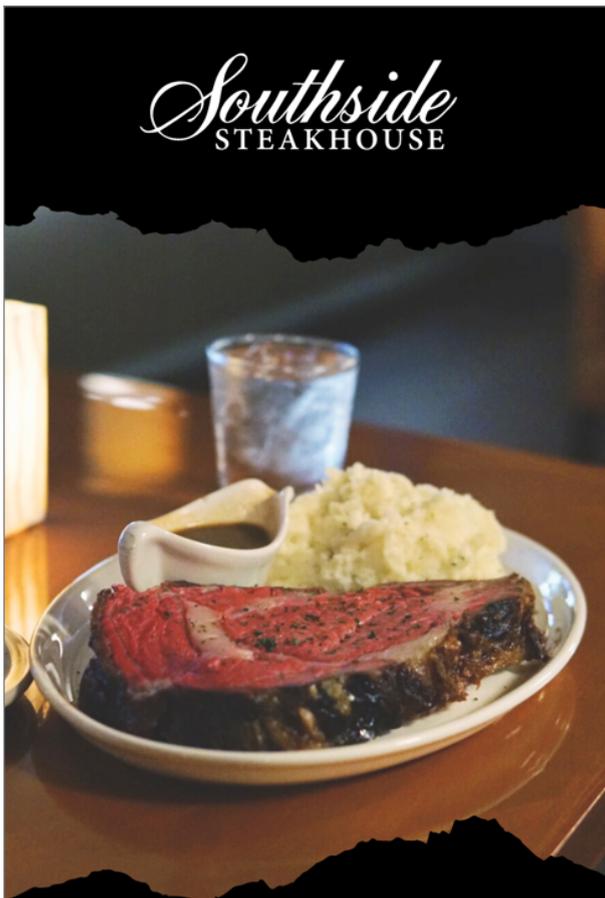
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Looking for something a little different? Hit up McGrath's Irish Pub for a perfectly poured pint of Guinness, live music on the weekends and delicious food. Casual dining at Rosemary's Restaurant. Visit innatlongtrail.com, 802-775-7181.



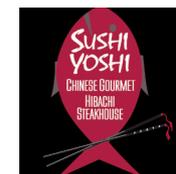
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killington market

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Take breakfast, lunch or dinner on the go at Killington Market, Killington's on-mountain grocery store for the last 30 years. Choose from breakfast sandwiches, hand carved dinners, pizza, daily fresh hot panini, roast chicken, salad and specialty sandwiches. Vermont products, maple syrup, fresh meat and produce along with wine and beer are also for sale. killingtonmarket.com 802-422-7736 or 802-422-7594.



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Shaker Bridge Theatre opens 17th season with 'The Thanksgiving Play'

Thursday, Sept. 26, 7 p.m., —WHITE RIVER JUNCTION—Shaker Bridge Theatre will open its 17th season with *The Thanksgiving Play* at the Briggs Opera House, 5 So. Main St., White River Junction. The production will run from Sept. 26 through Oct. 13. The play, written by Larissa FastHorse, presents a satirical take on modern-day political correctness as a group of well-meaning teaching artists attempt to stage an elementary school pageant that honors both Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage Month without causing offense. The result is a comedic exploration of the challenges and missteps of "woke" culture.

The cast of *The Thanksgiving Play* features Shaker Bridge Theatre alumni. Amy Hutchins, who portrays Logan, returns for her sixth season with the theatre. She has previously appeared in *Ironbound*, *Taking Steps*, *Outside Mullingar*, *Constellations*, and *How the World Began*, as well as in other productions across theaters like New York Classical Theatre, ACT of CT, and Florida Rep.

Michael Stewart Allen, playing Jaxton, returns for his fifth performance at Shaker Bridge. His past roles include productions of *The Book of Will*, *The Lehman Trilogy*, and *Macbeth*. Lauren Woyasz, who plays Alicia, also returns for her fifth season with the company. Woyasz has been seen on Broadway in *Wicked* and *For The Girls* and Off-Broadway in productions like *Emmet Otter's Jug Band Christmas* and *The Marvel-*

ous *Wonderettes*.

Scott Sweatt, cast as Caden, appeared in Shaker Bridge's production of *The Minutes* last season. His previous credits include performances in *Little Shop of Horrors* and *Clue* at New London Barn Playhouse, and *The Cherry Orchard* at Classic Stage.

The production will be directed by Shaker Bridge Theatre founder Bill Coons, who has directed numerous plays in the company's 17-year history. Coons describes FastHorse's work as a satire that "skewers liberal pretensions with glee."

The creative team for *The Thanksgiving Play* includes Production Stage Manager Clif Rogers, Set Designer Craig Mowery, Costume Designer Martie Betts, and Lighting Designers Brian Kenyon and Clif Rogers.

Larissa FastHorse, the playwright, is a member of the Sicangu Lakota Nation and a 2020 MacArthur Fellow. She is the co-founder of Indigenous Direction, a consulting firm for Indigenous arts and audiences. *The Thanksgiving Play* is one of the top ten most produced plays in America this season, marking FastHorse as the first Native American playwright to achieve this distinction. Her other works include *What Would Crazy Horse Do?*, *Landless* and *Cow Pie Bingo*, and *Vanishing Point*.

Tickets for The Thanksgiving Play are available on the Shaker Bridge Theatre website or by contacting the box office at 802-281-6848.



Amy Hutchins



Michael Stewart Allen



Laura Woyasz



Scott Sweatt

Submitted

Slate Valley Cares hosts 4th annual fall fundraiser

Sunday, Sept. 29, 4-7 p.m. —BENSON— Slate Valley Cares will host its 4th Annual Fall Fundraiser at 1293 Park Hill Road, Benson. The event will feature live performances by the Bird Mountain String Band and *The Wheelin'*, along with chicken and biscuits provided by The Wheel Inn. A vegetarian option will be available upon request. Attendees will also have the opportunity to participate in a live auction and enjoy a cash bar.

Proceeds from the fundraiser will sup-

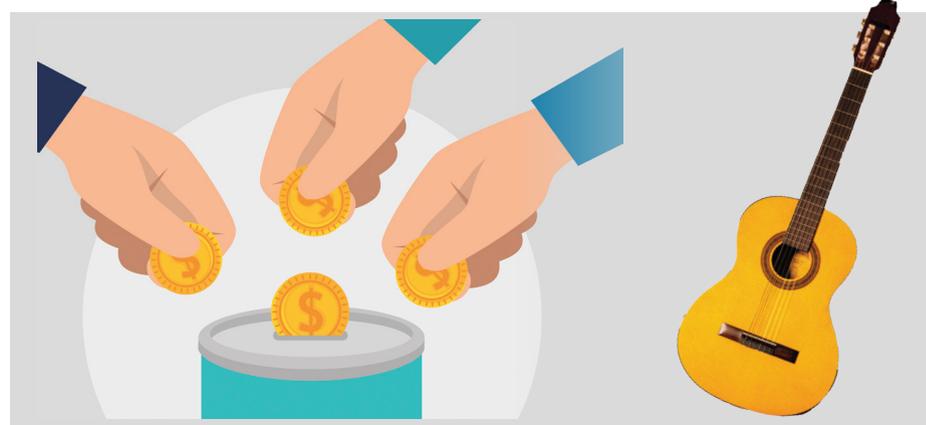
port Slate Valley Cares' mission to promote food sovereignty and community empowerment in the Slate Valley region.

The organization aims to ensure equitable access to food and resources for all members of the community.

Tickets are \$50 and can be purchased online at givebutter.com/c/EviSge or by mailing checks to 49 Main St., Fair Haven, VT 05743

(please note "Fall Fundraiser" on checks).

For more information, contact Slate Valley Cares at hello@slatevalleycares.org.



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Itty Bitty Committee (IBC) stick figure event will transform Fair Haven's Park for fifth year

Saturday, Sept. 28, 1-4 p.m.—FAIR HAVEN— This will be the 5th year putting up stick figures around the Fair Haven park. Participants do not have to be from Fair Haven to take part. This year stick figures will be installed all around the perimeter of the park. Participants may pick up the stick figures in the gazebo at 47 So. Main Street (home of the flamingos) any day from Sept. 21-27. There will be supplies there that may be taken to decorate your figure. There will also be a

clipboard included to add name, address and phone number.

This is a family event. IBC reserve the right to refuse inappropriate figures. There will be a 'Danger Zone' for Halloween characters. The figures will remain up until November 2 (take down time is from 1 p.m.-3 p.m.)

For more information, contact: IBC members: Lorraine Brown 802-265-3843 Judy Sheldon, Cindy Pritchard, Jud Sutherland, Ceil Hunt



Submitted

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Vermont brands team up to create cocktail-inspired meat stick

Vermont Smoke & Cure and WhistlePig Whiskey unveil Maple Old Fashioned Smoked Meat Sticks

Vermont Smoke & Cure, a rural smokehouse maker of premium meat products, and WhistlePig Whiskey, acclaimed for its exceptional rye whiskey, on Monday, Sept. 23, announced a groundbreaking collaboration: Maple Old Fashioned Smoked Meat Sticks. This innovative product marks a creative partnership in the premium meat sticks category, combining Vermont's rich culinary traditions with the artistry of craft cocktails.

Inspired by the classic Maple Old Fashioned cocktail, the unique meat sticks are slow-cooked in Vermont Smoke & Cure's smokehouse using locally-sourced WhistlePig Whiskey, custom made chips from whiskey barrel staves and WhistlePig's Barrel-Aged Maple Syrup. The result is a sophisticated snack that pairs perfectly with whiskey and elevates the cocktail experience.

Made with pork raised without antibiotics or added hormones, these sticks contain no artificial colors, preservatives, or flavors, staying true to both brands' commitment to quality.

"We're thrilled to partner with WhistlePig to create something truly special for snack enthusiasts and cocktail aficionados alike," said Michael Schafer, commercial business lead of Vermont Smoke & Cure. "This collaboration represents the best of Vermont craftsmanship and innova-

tion."

Meghan Ireland, chief blender at WhistlePig Whiskey, added, "Our partnership with Vermont Smoke & Cure allows us to extend the WhistlePig experience beyond the glass. These meat sticks are the perfect complement to our whiskey and embody the spirit of Vermont's maker culture."

"The idea to present these meat sticks as a cigar-like experience came naturally to our team," said Catherine Weiner, senior brand manager at Vermont Smoke & Cure. "We recognized the longstanding tradition of pairing whiskey with cigars and saw an opportunity to echo that in our unique smoking process. This playful concept bridges the gap between traditional

"The idea to present these meat sticks as a cigar-like experience came naturally to our team," said Catherine Weiner, senior brand manager at Vermont Smoke & Cure.

pairings and innovative snacking, offering a new way to savor the flavors of Vermont craftsmanship.

The Maple Old Fashioned Smoked Meat Sticks will be available for purchase starting Sept. 23, 2024, National Snack Stick Day, through select retailers and online platforms.

The product comes in an 8-count, 1-oz pouch, perfect for sharing, savoring solo, and garnishing your favorite cocktail. "The best Vermont combo since flannel and jam bands," states the VtSmokeWhistlePig.com collaborative website.

For more information about the product and where to purchase, visit VtSmokeWhistlePig.com.



Vermont Smoke & Cure and WhistlePig Whiskey are collaborating to create Maple Old Fashioned Smoked Meat Sticks, a cocktail-inspired snack made from locally-sourced, non-antibiotic pork.

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The Mountain Times encourages readers to contribute to our community paper by writing letters to the editor. Opinions are not endorsed by the Mountain Times, nor are the facts checked. We ask that opinions remain focused on issues; refrain from name-calling.

Please keep them to 300 words or they will be printed only at the editor's discretion if space allows. Email letters to editor@mountaintimes.info

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Queer dance party to close BarnArts music series

Thursday, Sept. 26, 6-9 p.m.—BARNARD—BarnArts is celebrating their last Feast & Field music series event of the year with a queer dance party on Thursday. DJ gEndEReNdeR & DJ kell will get everyone dancing (and keeping warm) on a crisp autumn evening in the orchard.

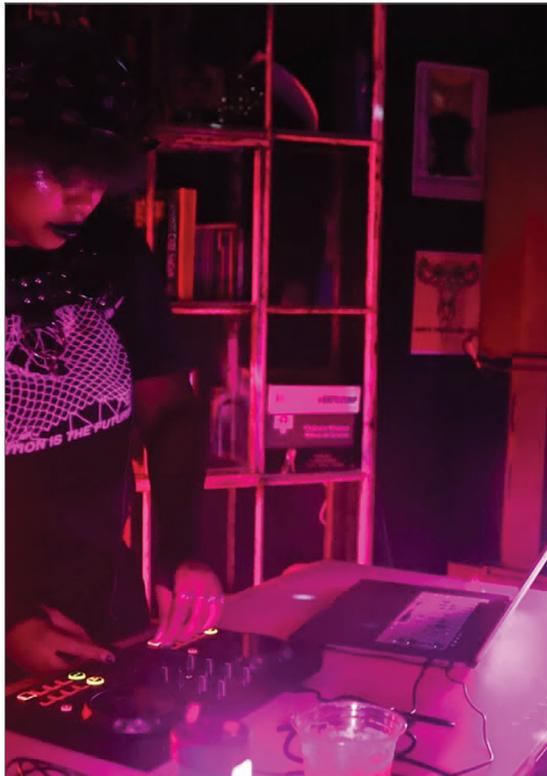
DJ gEndEReNdeR is a sometimes filmmaker, amateur DJ, and professional shenanigans instigator from South Florida. They love organizing the working class, and playing music for the gay people. DJ kell, is a queer, trans critter who is a community change artist, the director of Health & Wellness programs at Pride Center of Vermont, and organizes the Queer Dance Party (QDP) at

Babes.

Music will be under the 60x40 performance tent if weather demands.

All are welcome. Sliding-scale entry for each week - \$5-25/pp - free for those under 12. No outside food or drink permitted. Chairs and blankets welcome. Pets are not permitted for everyone's safety and comfort.

Gates open & food is available from the Feast & Field farmers at 5:30 p.m. with music starting at 6 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at feastandfield.com.



Courtesy BarnArts

It's apple-picking season, and Vermont's apple growers expect a great year

By Catherine Hurley/VTDigger

Vermont's apple growers are expecting a bountiful harvest this year, following a season affected by a late-spring frost in some parts of the state last year.

"Reports of an excellent apple season are true overall," said Terence Bradshaw, a University of Vermont professor and fruit specialist. "Most are reporting above average yields."

One night in May 2023, temperatures in Vermont plunged into the 20s. Apples, blueberries and grapes were already in bloom, and the unusually cold frost decimated crops in the region. The freeze affected 80% to 85% of orchards in Vermont, half of which experienced significant damage and lower yields, according to Bradshaw.

But this year, things are different.

Apples are produced on branch wood that's 2 years old or older, meaning this year's crop started developing in 2022. That two-year cycle allows trees to save up and direct their resources into growing buds for the next year, meaning orchards with a low crop yield last year had the potential for a bigger crop this year, Bradshaw said.

Peck Farm Orchard in East Montpelier lost 60% of its crop in the 2023 freeze, according to co-owner Daniel Bair. This year, he's expecting one of the largest crops he's ever had.

"Last year was very challenging ... but that's ag. That's farming," he said. "Anyone who doesn't experience anything like that, I guess, is very lucky."

Bair said the freeze made last year's fruit look "really ugly," but this year, the "fruit's looking great."

Vermont growers produce about 1 million bushels of apples each year, according to the Vermont Tree Fruit Growers Organization. That's around 40 million pounds. Availability for most apple varieties begins between August and October, and visitors at Vermont's pick-your-own orchards pick about 200,000 bushels each year.

The U.S. Apple Association, a national trade group, predicts another high-performing year for apples nationally, after record-breaking production last year. According to the organization's analysis of U.S. Dept. of Agriculture data, nearly 282 million bushels will be produced in the U.S. during the 2024-25 crop year, a 2% decrease compared with last year.

Devin Hackett, orchard manager at Hackett's Orchard in South Hero, is also expecting a



Submitted

great harvest this year. The farm is located on the Lake Champlain islands, which provides "kind of a micro climate," Hackett said, that avoids big weather swings because of the lake. The orchard's crop looks to be on par with last year's, which was not affected by the freeze.

"If an orchard could see Lake Champlain last year, the buffering effect of the lake allows for some protection from frost," Bradshaw said. "They were in an enviable position last year."

Jessika Yates, owner and operator of Yates Family Orchard in Hinesburg, experienced the same.

"There were a handful of us in the Champlain Valley that were spared," she said of last year's freeze. The orchard offered pick-your-own apples as usual that fall, and this year, Yates is optimistic.

"When you have a good crop, people are really excited to come out to farms and have an orchard experience," she said. "It's looking like a beautiful season. Apples are plentiful and abundant."

Bradshaw said Vermont's orchards have been less affected by flooding, even though perennial crops like apples, which grow in the ground for many years, do not do well in saturated soil.

"For the growers that have the bumper to bumper crops this year, it won't be like this next year," Bradshaw said, but barring extreme conditions, there should still be a good crop.

This year, Peck Farm Orchard's crop came in earlier than usual, while Hackett's Orchard pushed its apple picking back by a week because the farm's blooms started a week later than normal in May.

"We thought the apples needed a little bit more time to develop flavor and color," Hackett said, adding that cooler temperatures at night this week have been a positive for the apples.

He's also looking forward to the start of the season.

"Generations of families come here to pick, and we enjoy seeing them year after year," Hackett said. His message to them: "Enjoy the fall weather, and come out and pick your favorite type of apple."

Protect pets both inside and outside the home

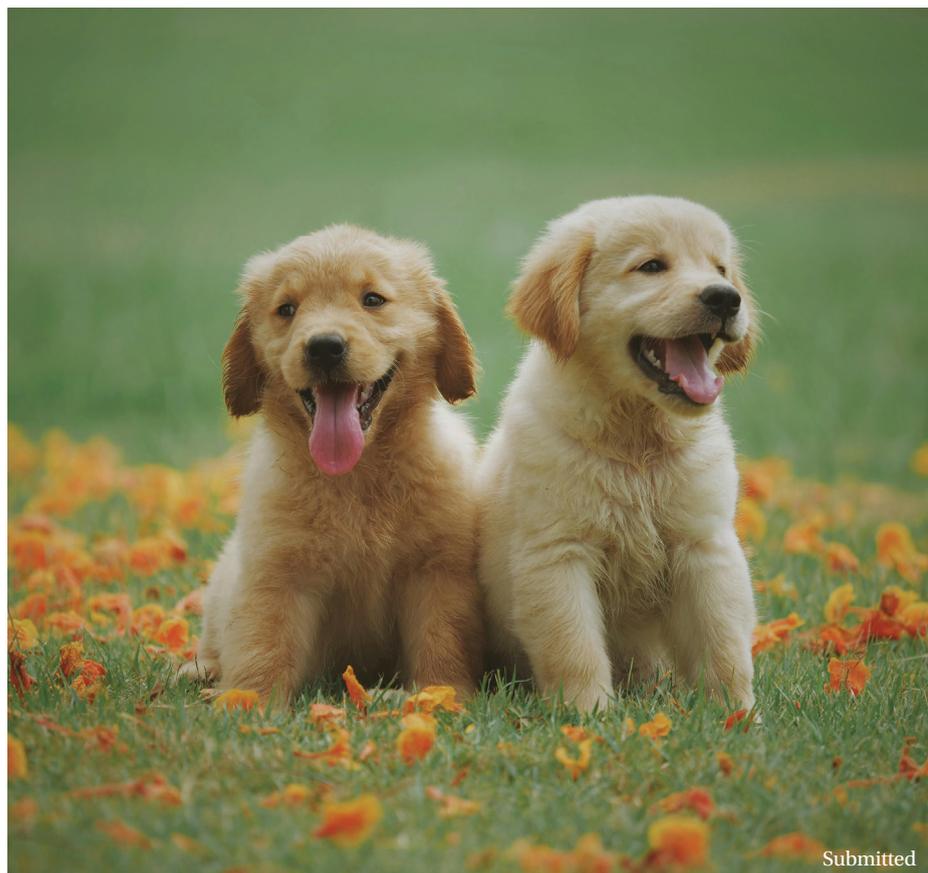
Newly adopted pets waste little time becoming beloved members of a household. But much like young children, pets are a significant responsibility, and they rely on their human caretakers to ensure their safety.

Pets are susceptible to illness and injury just like their human companions. The Pet Poison Hotline reported a 51 percent increase in the volume of calls between 2020 and 2021. Banfield Pet Hospitals also saw about half a million more pet visits in 2020 than in 2019. Furthermore, Dogster reports that 47 percent of pet owners had to deal with a serious medical issue or took their pets to emergency care in 2021.

Keeping cherished pets safe in and around a home is no small task. But with some diligence, it is possible to ensure health and happiness for companion animals. Follow these tips, courtesy of the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission, Old Farm Veterinary Hospital and Security.org.

- Consider an indoor and outdoor security camera system. Having eyes on pets while you're away from home enables a quick response should something happen.
- Avoid leaving pet food outdoors overnight. Dog and cat foods can attract other animals, such as bears, raccoons, foxes, and opossums, depending on where you live. Wild animals grow accustomed to receiving easy meals and this could decrease their trepidation about being around a home or yard. Run-ins between your pets and wild animals should be avoided at all costs.
- Skip the retractable leash. Walking a pet on a non-retractable leash allows better control of the pet in the event of an encounter with a person or another animal.
- Be cautious with chemicals. Carefully consider any chemicals you use in your yard, including pesticides and weed killers, as well as any cleaning products used indoors. Pets can ingest or inhale these products and get sick.
- Pick up potential choking hazards. String, small pieces of toys, rawhide bone fragments, and other items can be choking hazards to pets. Be diligent about removing these items from the floor so that pets will not swallow them.
- Tap on your car hood. Families who allow their cats outdoor access should thump on the car hood when it is cold outside, as sometimes cats take shelter near a warm engine block. Cats can become injured if you start the car while they are under the hood.
- Stay up-to-date on vaccinations. Whether pets never step outdoors or have free rein, always vaccinate companion animals against common parasites and other pests.
- Microchip your pets. Microchips not only protect pets should they get lost, but they also can help track down animals that may have been stolen. Remember to keep microchip data current to ensure a swift recovery.
- Keep foods and medicines out of reach. Many human foods can be toxic to pets, as can medications that are kept in a home. Pets can be curious and easy access to these items may make them quite ill.

Pets need their owners to take key steps to safeguard their well-being.



Submitted



Submitted

Curry is a spicy mix of spices used in South Asian cuisine, often paired with a specific dish. It's a hearty, delicious meal, especially for cold weather, and can be prepared easily.

Spice meals up with curry

The word "curry" is used to describe a variety of things. First it is a mix of spices that often combines coriander seeds, turmeric, cumin, chili peppers, fenugreek, clove, mustard, and even nutmeg or ginger. This produces a warm and robust spicy taste that can flavor various foods. Curry also is used to describe a specific dish. Curry is a recipe made with a sauce or gravy seasoned with spices (like those in a curry mix) and is traditionally associated with south Asian cuisine. Curry also is a type of tree, and curry leaves are reminiscent of lemongrass and anise. These leaves often are included in Indian cooking.

Curry can make a hearty, delicious lunch or dinner, and it is ideal when the weather starts to get chilly. This recipe for "Coconut Chicken Curry," courtesy of "Clueless in the Kitchen: Cooking for Beginners" (Firefly Books) by Evelyn Raab, is creamy and easy to prepare.

Coconut Chicken Curry

Serves 4 to 6

- 2 pounds skinless, boneless chicken breasts, cut into 1-inch chunks
- 1 teaspoon salt
- 1/2 teaspoon black pepper
- 1 tablespoon vegetable oil or coconut oil
- 2 tablespoons curry powder (hot or mild)
- 2 medium sweet peppers (any color), cut into 1/2-inch squares
- 1 medium onion, chopped
- 2 cloves garlic, minced or pressed
- 1 fresh jalapeño (or other) hot pepper, seeded and sliced (optional)
- 1 14-ounce can coconut milk, regular or light
- 2 cups canned diced tomatoes (or diced fresh tomatoes)
- 1 tablespoon granulated sugar

In a bowl, toss the chicken chunks with the salt and pepper. Set aside.

In a large, deep skillet or Dutch oven, heat the oil over medium heat. Sprinkle in the curry powder and cook, stirring constantly, for about 1 minute, or until combined. Add the onion, garlic and jalapeño pepper (if you're using it), and continue to cook, stirring to coat with the spices, for 3 or 4 minutes, or until the onions are beginning to soften. Dump in the chicken chunks, raise the heat to medium high, and cook, stirring often, until the chicken has turned mostly opaque.

Add the coconut milk, tomatoes and sugar to the pan, and bring to a boil. Lower the heat to medium, and simmer, uncovered, stirring occasionally, for 15 to 20 minutes. Serve with plain basmati or jasmine rice.

Crossword

Solutions from page 11

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P	E	A	R			F	I	E		P	A	C	A	S
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P	L	E	D			L	A	C		R	A	B	B	I
P	A	L				E	Y	E			M	E	S	A

Sudoku

Solutions from page 11

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

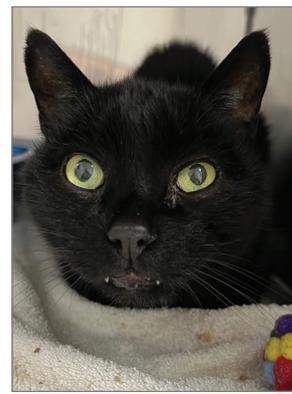
Rutland County Humane Society



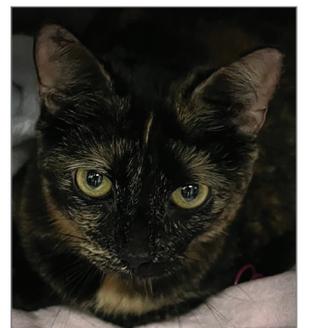
Roxie—5-year-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.



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



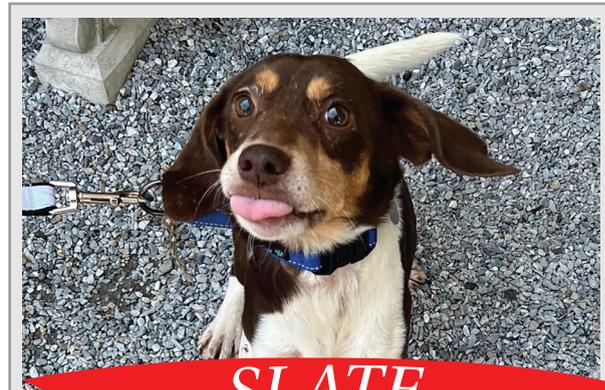
Midnight—13-year-old. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Mocha—2-year-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.

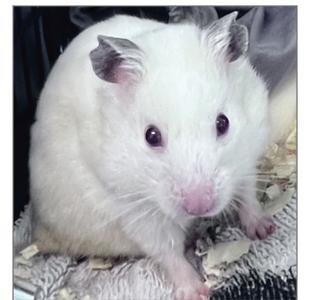


Birdie—1-year-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.



SLATE

Slate—3-year-old. Neutered male. Hound mix.



Spring Roll—Young. Female. Chinese hamster.



Octavia—2-year-old. Female. American Staffordshire terrier.

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

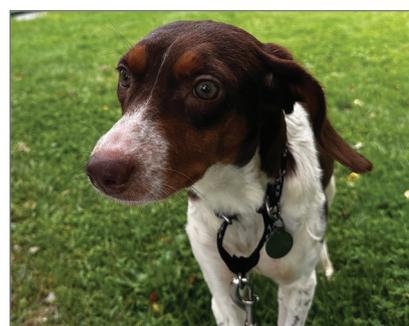


Buttons—8-year-old. Spayed female. Domestic medium hair.

GOT NEWS?
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Oreo—1-year-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.



Alara—3-year-old. Spayed female. Hound mix.



Snickerdoodle—3-year-old. Spayed female. Hound mix.

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 *(By appointment only at this time.) lucymac.org

PIPER

Cosmic Catalogue



Aries March 21 - April 20

You're generally not one to go along to get along. So why have you been trying to do that? Maybe it's working, maybe it's not. Regardless, you need to consider what your actual motivations are for doing so. Maybe they aren't as balanced or diplomatic as they appear. Do be cautious of the choices you make now. Your intention is everything. Be clean and clear with it. Choices made now will reverberate in to your future for some time yet.

Leo July 21 - August 20

When you're clean and clear, life is actually quite simple. This week, you'd benefit from a social media detox or removing yourself from whatever doesn't move you toward your highest purpose. In an age of distraction, it's easy to see opportunities where there really may not be one. Know thyself is the key to everything now. The more you can figure out your own mind, the better off you will be. Time with family or at home may also be a grounding or restorative influence.

Sagittarius November 21 - December 20

Life probably feels like a box of chocolates to you right now. With so many options, it can be hard to choose. However, it's important that you don't confuse opportunities with distractions – and there are also plenty of those on offer now. What you really need to do this week is to take some time out for yourself and clear your mind. Breathe in some fresh air, shake of the noise and reconnect with your inner most desires. Shut out the noise.

Taurus April 21 - May 20

You've been doing more than your fair share when it comes to keeping the lights on. This week, ask yourself for how much longer can you continue to be doing what you're doing? Some tough choices may need to be made. However, if you can be honest and upfront about them, you and everyone else will be better off for it. You don't have to be the only person carrying the load now. Other's can pull their weight, too.

Virgo August 21 - September 20

Your planet, Mercury, is on the move this week. As it shifts in your money zone, you're going to have to take a good look at your finances. Do you need to spend less? Do you need to earn more? Maybe it's a combination of both you need. Regardless, you do have to see what is going on, one way or another. The only way to improve your situation and boost your confidence and abundance is to know your numbers and rebalance your budget.

Capricorn December 21 - January 20

The worst thing you can do is to hold on to a mistake just because you spent a long time making it. Not that I'm saying your current career, job or life direction is a mistake, it's not. It may be time for you to consider other options and get honest about whether you're actually happy or not. You're always going to find a summit to climb. You just want to be sure that it's one worth the time and effort.

Gemini May 21 - June 20

You've been having so much fun in recent weeks and it's only going to get better. If you've been devoting your time, energy and effort to a romantic situation, a creative hobby or outlet or even a child in your life, then things are only going to go to the next level. As they do, you may discover that what once filled your heart with joy doesn't have the same effect anymore. This is making room for better things to come.

Libra September 21 - October 20

You've been changing a lot and chances are, there have been some people who haven't appreciated this much. You see, you're usually the one who goes along to get along and doesn't rock the boat too much. You've been saying no more than is normal for you. Good for you! This is a sign of growth and maturity. It's OK if other people rise up to meet you on occasion rather than it being the other way around all the time.

Aquarius January 21 - February 20

A charming approach could be just what you need this week. Do be careful though, not everyone is going to be responsive to your smooth operations. More often than not, it's better to be honest than impressive. In business, this is about under promising and over delivering. You do really need to be careful about how much you can do or offer now. Less is more. You need to avoid taking on more than you can handle.

Cancer June 21 - July 20

If you're feeling irritated or crabby, it might be worth your while doing your best not to express that too much. Instead, you're better off taking responsibility for your own emotions and reactions. While other people may be pushing your buttons, it's you that chooses the reaction. Do yourself a favor and blow off steam that doesn't further upset the apple cart. Spend more time exercising or doing something that's just for you. You'll thank yourself later if you start now.

Scorpio October 21 - November 20

Your magnetic powers of attraction will receive a cosmic boost this week. If you've noticed a bright star in the evening sky, that's Venus. This week, she moves into your sign as she does each year. As they say, it's time to wish upon a star. That said, do be careful what you wish for because you'll likely get it. It may be wise to really reflect or meditate on what you need and want first. Anything is possible for you now.

Pisces February 21 - March 20

Are you feeling a tad overstretched financially? Maybe you've bitten off more than you can chew in terms of your debts or expenditure. If you're lucky, you may be thrilled to discover that you're closer to paying off debt sooner than you thought. In either scenario, you can start to look at your numbers and workout a plan of action. You can't really make any longer term decisions until you do so. Do plan for a rainy day.

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Empowering you to lead a divinely inspired life.

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

What does balance actually mean?

For the most part, it's recommended to see a balanced perspective on things. The more points of view you take in, the more likely you'll gain a well rounded approach to things. The consensus model can be wonderful like that.

That said, there has never been a time in history where we have been subjected to the opinions of other people, whether those opinions are worth being subject to or not. Some opinions are wise and thought provoking, some are provocative for algorithm purposes and others, just plain dumb.

Despite this, these opinions still seep into the subconscious even if we think they don't.



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall

With so many screaming voices in the room, it can become ever so easy to get to a state of imbalance.

In an upside down world where the good guys have become the bad guys and the bad guys the good, it's time to reassess what balance actually means. Sometimes, in order to do the right thing means having to do the hard thing.

Nobody likes hard anymore.

This week, you have the opportunity to strike deep into the chord of what matters to you most. When it is all said and done, sometimes being balanced means taking the side you never even considered — your own.

The shade of my heart

Intro

I saw on the internet the other day a woman commenting on online dating: "If you are 'still figuring it out,' then maybe you should take a minute and do that before dating."

After thinking about it, I agreed. While I know everyone does things at their own pace and in their own way, it did make me wonder what 'figuring it out' meant for me. I think that starts with figuring out what I bring to the table — who I am.

The shade of my heart

The shade of my heart is light. Packed tight with blinding sunlight beating down in the center of an endless flower filled field. The sun's rays filling me with dreamy inspiration. It is a sprawling forest filled with California Redwood and Vermont Sugar Maple trees that shade me from the heat. The purest energy beaming through the canopy and illuminating my path. The mountain air helps me stay close

to the vibration of the earth, grounding me. The pine needles, fresh grass, the unmistakable scent of falling leaves kissed with the recent rainfall. The sound of rustling in the tall grass as squirrels and chipmunks run

amok. The whispering breeze brushing against all living things to my tingling ears. My destination constantly shifting, but always rooted in following the sound of the rushing water — in the cleansing and healing of a mountain waterfall. The inner peace achieved when lost in a breathtaking sunset as the bugs start coming out. Where the symbiotic relationship between all living beings becomes clearer. Paying close attention and being aware

of subtle shifts in energy and tone. Not allowing myself to become sucked in to the manufactured reality outside, but leaning on the deep trust in the organic.

The shade of my heart is dark. The back
Dream in Color →67



Dream in Color
By Will O'Donnell

Are you having the time of your life?

By Meira Droznah

Ah, synchronicity.
When you know the Creator
is still arranging
the universe just
for your passage
through it
And you are part of the
Arrangement
For someone
Else.
One big puzzle
That fits
Together perfectly
This is
Joy.



How wet weather affects Fall foliage

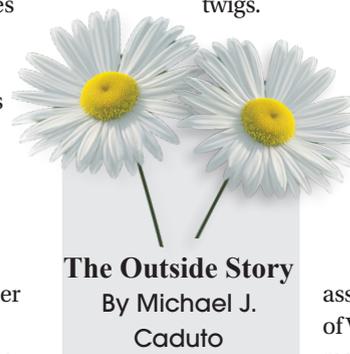
The Northeast is famous for its fall foliage, as the lush, green leaves of summer transform into bright hues, turning hillsides and valleys into quilts of scarlet, ochre, and gold. Among the brightest foliage is that of our region's various maple species. But as our summers have become, on average, warmer and wetter, the celebrated bounty of fall color may fade.

Persistently wet soils, such as the Northeast experienced in 2023, when an entire summer's worth of rain fell in July, can strain trees. Even in typically well-drained areas, soil can become saturated from repeated heavy rainfalls in locations where the topography causes water to accumulate. Research conducted at Purdue University found that when the roots of sugar maples were flooded for eight days straight, the oxygen-deprived conditions eliminated their ability to respire.

The prolonged and frequent rains during the summer of 2023 stressed many maples, and their leaves became infected by anthracnose, a disease that can be caused by several different kinds of fungi. Symptoms include brown spots on the leaf's midrib, major veins, and edges. Sugar maple leaves in many parts of northern New England were covered with dark splotches, autumn leaf colors were noticeably less intense, and leaves dropped earlier than usual. Anthracnose can affect many types of trees, including ash and oak species.

Anthracnose fungi overwinter in dead leaves and in infected buds and twigs. Hot, dry weather discourages the growth of spores. But from spring through late-summer, warm, wet weather produces reproductive spores that are spread by wind and

rain, increasing the infection of leaves and twigs.



The Outside Story
By Michael J. Caduto

"What can be problematic about the wetter conditions we are experiencing is if a prolonged rainy season causes a proliferation of foliar fungal diseases," said Alexandra Kosiba, a researcher, forest ecologist, and assistant professor at University of Vermont Extension. "This is really due not to the amount of rain per se, but prolonged leaf

wetness, which is tied to relative humidity, number of rainy days, the timing of rainfall, cloud cover, and lack of wind — all of which play a role in determining if leaf surfaces are able to dry out or not."

Anthracnose isn't usually lethal to trees unless they are experiencing additional sources of stress. But severe or repeated anthracnose infestations can impact the productivity of leaves and stress trees over time, especially when insects are also damaging leaves. Early leaf drop in a single year won't likely cause lasting damage to a tree, but premature defoliation over the course of multiple years can weaken trees. Mature trees are more resilient in the face of anthracnose infection, but younger trees can suffer lasting damage.

Several factors contribute to autumn leaf color, including day length and weather conditions during and preceding foliage season. Anthocyanin, the pigment that causes a deep red color in leaves, for instance, requires bright sunshine to form. If there are lots of cloudy late-summer days, leaves don't develop these intense red hues.

"The drab foliage we saw [in 2023] was a combination of foliar fungi, plus a lack of

Outside Story → 67

Going the distance

Last Monday, I put my 20-year-old son on a plane to Melbourne, Australia. All in, he was in the air for over 20 hours.

I fly regularly and anything over three hours makes me insane. Sitting in such a cramped space for an extended time makes my body ache and exhausts my mind. I can usually sleep for a bit, but the awkward seating means it's not a good sleep.

Before my son left, I made him promise that he would keep my wife and me abreast of his travels. We didn't demand long dissertations; we just wanted a running update on what he was doing so we could share in his experiences.

Well, things got off to a rocky start with that plan.

He did call us when he landed in Los Angeles for his layover, but that was only because he didn't know what gate to go to. I tried not to be condescending when I told him to pick his head up and locate one of the 1,000 gigantic digital billboards that said "Departures."

I was tracking his flight so I knew when he landed in Melbourne. I sent him a quick text asking how the flight was, but never got a response. After a couple hours and a few more texts, I finally wrote "Proof of life, please!!!"

Shortly after, we received our first text. He apparently didn't have the time to text us actual words but instead sent us a photo of a Lamborghini that was in the airport parking deck. Not exactly what we wanted or were expecting, but it did prove that he was alive.

We didn't get much out of him for the first couple days. For example, to our query, "Hey, what's Melbourne like? Are the people nice?" He replied, "Yup." I was going to write back, "Elaborate much?" but my wife told me to leave him alone and not fuss about his inability to communicate like an adult.

One of the nice things (or so I thought) is that every time he uses his credit card, we get an email alerting us to the transaction. He earned the money for this trip so I don't really care how he spends it, but we wanted to be aware if something went awry with his account.

I happened to glance at one of these emails on his third day and it read, "Your card ending in x1900 was used to make an international purchase of \$67.59 at Blue Lady Tattoo." My heart skipped a beat. I walked into the living room where my wife was sitting and showed her. Her reaction was the same.

I quickly took a screenshot of the email and texted it to him with the words, "Please tell me this isn't what I think it is."

Again, radio silence for 24 hours. At that point, my wife and I were resolved to the idea that he got inked. I didn't think it was the end of the world, but I wasn't entirely happy either.

When the text alert finally chimed several hours later, my wife and I hesitantly opened the thread fully expecting a picture of a fresh tattoo of a Pokémon or anime character. Instead, we were met with the words, "Relax, I bought a hoodie."

There is a God!

So, we are now officially one week into our son's grand journey through Australia (with future expeditions to Thailand and Japan in the following months).

When I awoke this morning, I grabbed a cup of coffee and flopped onto the couch. I went through my usual routine of checking work email and looking at the daily weather forecast. And then I remembered that my son wasn't upstairs sleeping, which prompted me to check for a text from him.

My stomach jumped when I saw the thread was lit up with a little red icon signaling that he'd sent a message.

When I opened the text, I was met with these words: "I could not have asked for anything better. Thank you guys so much for giving me the amazing life I have."

My eyes welled up as I walked into the bedroom where I found my wife staring at her phone reading the same text. We both agreed at that moment that letting go of your kid is one of the hardest things a parent has to do.

In this week's feature, "Never Let Go" starring Halle Berry, we meet another parent who is having trouble letting go of her children, except in her case, it's because they live in a remote cabin where an unspeakable evil lurks in the nearby forest.

It's the time of year when horror films take center stage and while this one is far from a classic, it was creepy and weird enough to make it interesting to watch. The film rests on Halle Berry, who gives a convincing portrayal of an unstable mother who may or may not be full of good intentions.

Check this one out if you're in the mood for a solid psychological thriller, just don't expect to understand what's going on for most of the film.

An unexpected "C+" for "Never Let Go," now playing in theaters everywhere.

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



The Movie Diary
By Dom Cioffi



Foliage: where and how to see it best

Besides Vermont in general, where do you like to watch your foliage from? We always talk about where the color is the best via location — the state of Vermont even puts out an interactive map where tourists and locals alike can figure out where to spend the day across our great little state.

But location is not the only important component to checking out the color in our great state. Because it's not just what part of the state you are in, but where you are relative to the leaves themselves that can make or break the foliage.

Most of us drive around Vermont, whether on four wheels or two, glancing up at the walls of color on the mountainsides as we roll along through the hills. You go up and over all gaps — and enjoy that moment as you top out and look out across the green mountains for miles. That view as you come up Mad Gap from Waitsfield is just killer. But it's really hard to snap a picture or revel in the moment as you're going by at the speed limit. You either end up parking on the side of the road, pissing off the locals, endangering your family and hoping that your car door doesn't get ripped off. Or you hope that you got that pic as you drove by.

But that's only one way. And it's actually not my favorite at all. I've got a few suggestions for you all as you make your foliage journeys this year.

Stop at the top of the mountain. Take the gondola up Killington Peak or Hike to the top of Camel's Hump or Deer Leap. Stop. Eat a sandwich and just give yourself time to absorb all the nuances in the colors. See how the trees are all mingled together and not in

segregated clumps. Really take the time to notice the softness and see how our mountains truly come alive. You might find peak that way, but you won't find yourself amidst an impressionist painting like on Bald Mountain Trail.

Driving and Summits only show the top layer of the colors. The tops of the trees. There is so much going on underneath the tops of the trees that you would have no idea that you were missing it until you saw it. I remember the first time I found myself in a tri-color forest: the leaves

on the ground were a darker red, the lower level of the trees were still bright green but the tops had begun to turn a bright yellow. I don't think I had ever tripped so much on that walk because I wasn't looking at my foot placement ever. I wasn't just looking at the foliage, I was surrounded by it. Encompassed by it. Was actually part of it. Hike, bike, walk — whatever pace you enjoy works for this. You just have to get underneath.

Get on the water. Preferably in the early morning because the reflection of the colors on the shoreline reflect into the calm waters and oftentimes you feel like you are paddling through a three dimensional painting. It's different than driving 60 mph in a steel frame. Here you are floating. There might be some leaves lying on the water, individual spots of color that just jump out at you. Also, in a drier season, the colors are still vibrant right at the water's edge. Kent Pond is famous for this. Everything else could be muted, but Kent Pond is singing with vibrancy and gloriousness. I've spent most of this week on the pond, gazing at the colors in the water.

Living the Dream → 67



Living the Dream
By Merisa Sherman

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← Housing as health emergency:..... from page 8

and find refuge. Places to belong until there are other options besides perpetual displacement and loss. These sanctuaries would need social and physical infrastructure to provide safety and to protect public health (security, water, waste management, electricity, etc.). Many offered to contribute their ideas and labor to the design, construction, and maintenance of encampments, shelters, and housing and some already have skills, training, and work experience in the trades.

Here are some government actions that we agreed would make a difference right now:

Work with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the creation of safe spaces and sanctuary zones for temporary encampments and parking with social and physical infrastructure that meets both basic and special needs in lots, on lawns, and within garages.

Prioritize paying the sheriff or other security to guard the Marketplace Garage at night instead of in the day during mutual aid food distribution.

Provide more food and supplies for basic and special needs to those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

Engage those experiencing homelessness in the design, construction, and maintenance of transitional and permanent housing, especially supportive housing options that meet any special needs.

These immediate actions would reduce the harm of the housing crisis on public health and safety for not only our unhoused neighbors, but also all other residents of our community.

I plan to continue bringing food to people at night and invite anyone interested to join us or to connect with existing efforts of other mutual aid or community-based service providers. I encourage my colleagues from other districts to share the impact of the housing crisis in your region, especially the stories, needs, ideas, and dreams of those experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

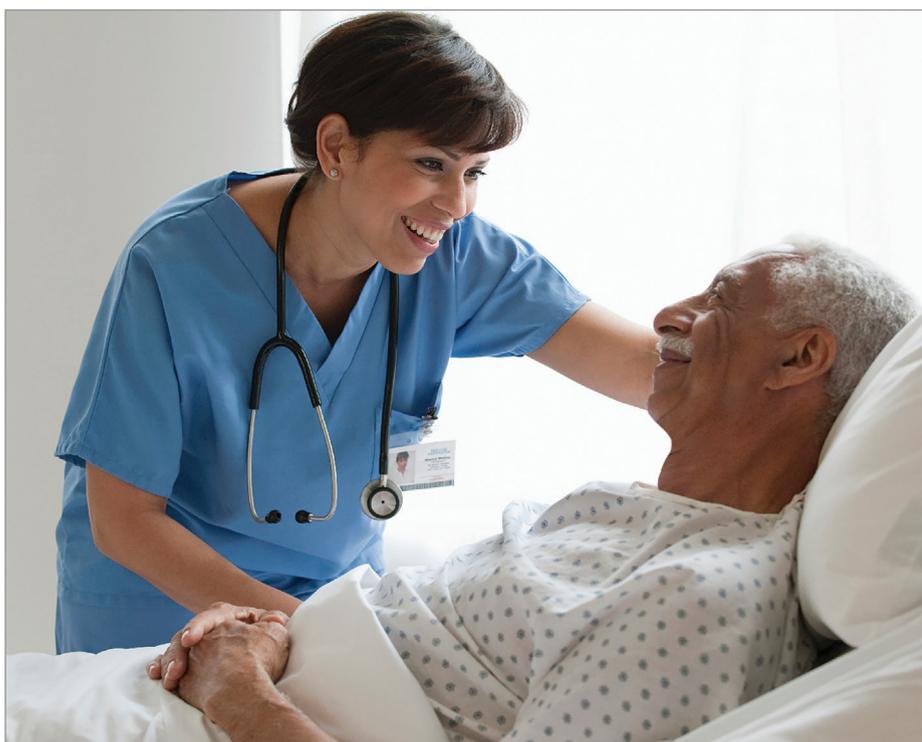
What else can we do right now to address the growing public health emergency of this housing crisis?

← Hospital budgets:..... from page 9

GMCB elected to not take action to enforce NVRH or Porter Hospital's FY23 budget overages.

UVMMC had requested a 6.8% budget increase for FY25, GMCB approved a 3.4% increase but with the enforcement action, the net change is a decrease of -1.0%. For RRMC, they requested a 2.8% increase, which was approved, but with the enforcement, received a net 1.2% increase.

"Vermont statute requires hospitals to comply with budget orders, which are a critical tool to protect Vermonters from runaway healthcare costs and hold hospitals accountable for expense growth," said Owen Foster, Chair of the Green Mountain Care Board. "In FY23 UVMMC was approved for a 14.77% commercial effective rate, and RRMC a 17.40% change in charge. Today's budget enforcement decisions remediate Vermonters' paying hospital commercial rate increases that FY23 performance demonstrate were unnecessary and that patients did not need to bear considering significant unbudgeted government payments and patient volumes. These decisions will lower hospital prices which will allow for increased patient access without imposing undue financial burden on Vermonters."



Submitted

Variables that could elevate your risk for stroke

The World Stroke Organization notes that more than 12.2 million individuals experience stroke each year across the globe. Perhaps even more telling, the WSO reports that, globally, one in four people over age 25 will have a stroke in their lifetime.

Stroke is indeed a threat to public health. However, despite the prevalence of stroke, individuals are not helpless against it. Various risk factors for stroke are within individuals' control, and it's never too early for adults to prioritize stroke prevention. With that in mind, the following are some of the most common risk factors for stroke, courtesy of the WSO.

- **Elevated systolic blood pressure:** The American Heart Association notes that an elevated systolic blood pressure means the upper number on a blood pressure reading is between 120 and 129. Systolic blood pressure measures the pressure your blood is pushing against the artery walls each time the heart beats. Individuals diagnosed with elevated systolic blood pressure are urged to discuss the ways to lower that number, as the American Stroke Association notes high blood pressure is the most significant controllable risk factor for stroke.

- **High body mass index:** A 2022 study published in the journal PLOS One found that body mass index was associated with stroke risk among diabetes patients. The study found that the risk of ischemic stroke, which occurs when a blood clot or fatty plaque blocks a blood vessel in the brain, was higher among obese patients compared to patients who are overweight or normal-weight.

- **Smoking:** The WSO reports that someone who smokes 20 cigarettes a day is six times more likely to have a stroke compared to a non-smoker. One of the links between smoking and stroke risk surrounds carbon monoxide and nicotine. Smoke from cigarettes contains both carbon monoxide, which reduces the amount of oxygen in a smoker's blood, and nicotine, which makes a smoker's heart beat faster. Those variables combine to raise blood pressure, which

has already been noted as a significant risk factor for stroke.

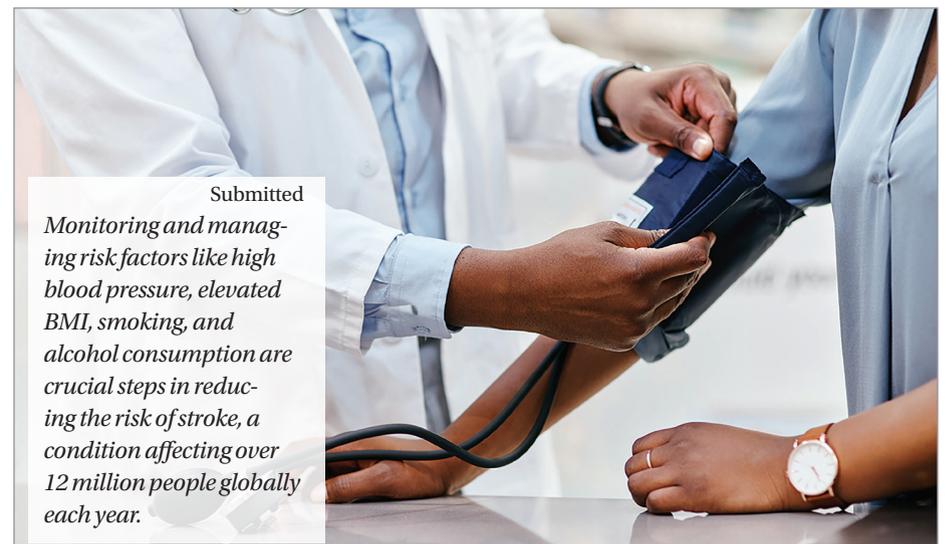
- **Alcohol consumption:** A 2022 study published in the journal Neurology examined the link between alcohol consumption and stroke. The study found that high levels of alcohol consumption are associated with a higher risk for all types of stroke, and even moderate intake, defined as between seven to 14 drinks per week for women and seven to 21 drinks per week for men, was associated with higher risk for all types of stroke.

These are not the only common risk factors for stroke. In fact, the WSO reports high fasting glucose, air pollution, low physical activity, poor diet, high LDL (i.e., "bad") cholesterol, and kidney dysfunction are some additional common risk factors for stroke.

Though stroke affects more than 12 million individuals across the globe each year, many of its more common risk factors are manageable. More information about stroke is available at stroke.org. overweight or normal-weight.

- **Smoking:** The WSO reports that someone who smokes 20 cigarettes a day is six times more likely to have a stroke compared to a non-smoker. One of the links between smoking and stroke risk surrounds carbon monoxide and nicotine. Smoke from cigarettes contains both carbon monoxide, which reduces the amount of oxygen in a smoker's blood, and nicotine, which makes a smoker's heart beat faster. Those variables combine to raise blood pressure, which has already been noted as a significant risk factor for stroke.

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Submitted
Monitoring and managing risk factors like high blood pressure, elevated BMI, smoking, and alcohol consumption are crucial steps in reducing the risk of stroke, a condition affecting over 12 million people globally each year.

← **TOS:**
from page 64

sunlight from cloudy days,” said Kosiba. How can we distinguish between the impact of New England’s famously unpredictable weather on the intensity of fall foliage color in any given year, versus the long-term trend being driven by a changing climate? While the quality of autumn foliage varies from year to year, over time the warming climate is shifting the season later and causing more frequent periods of meteorological conditions that are not conducive to vibrant fall foliage. “The climate impacts we’re seeing on foliage are mostly due to warmer temperatures leading to a longer growing season which has extended the timing of peak leaf color over time,” said Kosiba. What is in store for fall foliage this year?

While some areas in our region experienced severe flooding during the summer, we escaped last year’s long stretches of cloudy skies and record-breaking summer rains. So far, September has featured many dry sunny days and cool nights — conditions that bode well for a vibrant foliage season. That is, unless the weather changes, again. *Michael J. Caduto is a writer, ecologist, and storyteller who lives in Reading, Vermont. He is author of Through a Naturalist’s Eyes: Exploring the Nature of New England. The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org.*

← **Dream in Color**
from page 64

drop of the infinite with a gentle, but haunting moon. The endless array of stars pulsating and sparkling, as if there were one for every living being. The shapes and patterns in the night sky teaching us about our past, present, and future without a word being spoken. Without the ever flowing movement of the evening sky, I would think time had ceased to exist. The solitude and cold of space. The longing to be an equal with all things, to be one. And the pain that comes with rejection or being seen as invalid. With a vast landscape in front of me keeping my dreams and ideas ever flowing. The perfect muse for the wandering mind, reminding me to keep my goals big and my intentions pure.



been honest, like the sun is set to rise and fall each day? Have I transferred energy effectively through physical touch: with hugs, kisses, high-fives and pats on the back? Have I complimented others today and reminded them of their individuality? Have I encouraged myself and others to pursue their dreams and to see their own value? Have I celebrated the beauty and the joy that all living things bring to our world? Have I considered my own mortality and finite life-span enough to contribute my best on a daily basis? Have I embraced new connections, allowing the love and light in the world to expand and strengthen? Have I done my best today?

Outro

When I consider what ‘figuring it out’ means and think about what I want to do in this world, I am at least confident that I am starting that conversation by knowing myself and the value that I bring while I look for a life partner, a queen to rule a kingdom with me, an equal of the highest order. Someone who’ll embrace me as family. As essential in their life. Where there is mutual love, respect, and desire for each other. Where getting to know each other becomes a way to get to know ourselves better. Who enables us to lift each other up to reach our shared and individual goals, by having an open mind and being willing to grow together. I know that process starts with someone who truly knows themselves and is willing to connect on a deeper, intimate level to share love with me and bring love to the world. I wonder if all of that will fit in a dating profile?

← **Living the Dream:**
from page 65

Go to the same spot every day for a week or a month and actually watch the change. Every morning, I have my morning “coffee” on the front porch at my home and study the trees. I love to see which tree has made a move overnight, which tree has poofed and lost even more leaves, and which ones may or may not begin to change over the next few days. Instead of just looking for the end results, you can actually watch the change happen in real time. There are three trees right in front of Fall Line condos on East Mountain Road in Killington. They are the same kind of tree, all planted at the same time, and yet each one turns colors at a different pace than the other two. I love watching the progression and trying to figure out which one will turn next. So as you go peeping this autumn, be sure to study all the different angles and really explore the beauty of the season. Look at the world from more than just one viewpoint, open yourself to new sights and wonders and experiences. *Merisa Sherman is a long time Killington resident, member of the Development Review Board and town Lister. She is a global real estate advisor and also Coach PomPom. Reach out to her at merisa.sherman@sothebysrealty.com.*



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