



IT'S HOLIDAY WEEK!

Christmas and Hanukkah kicked off this holiday week, Dec. 25, followed by Boxing Day and the beginning of Kwanza Dec. 26-Jan. 1. New Year's Day ends the festivities, Jan. 1, as we begin the new year.



2024 Year in review

YEAR IN REVIEW: LOOKING BACK AT THE LOCAL NEWS OF 2024

Join us for a look back at the year in summary. Central Vermont has seen a lot of growth and changes in the past 12 months! Additionally, MountainTimes.info has received 1 million views this past year! (That's averaging 83,000+ views/month!)

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OUTDOOR REC ECONOMY HITS \$2.1 BILLION

Vermont held its second place rank for outdoor recreation with 4.8% of Vermont's gross domestic product (GDP) coming from that sector. Skiing and snowboarding are among the largest contributors.

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Submitted

Celebrating the New Year with reflections, resolutions, cookies and cocktails

As 2024 comes to an end friends and family will gather to reminisce and reflect on the year that was, while ringing in the new year with hopes, goals and resolutions. Locally, celebrations abound with fun for all ages at all times of the day and night. Start the year right with the festivities that best suite your style, see page 15-18.

Community breaks ground on Marble Village Apartments

The West Rutland community recently celebrated the groundbreaking of Marble Village Apartments, a transformative project co-developed by The Housing Trust of Rutland County and Evernorth. This initiative aims to provide 24 energy-efficient, permanently affordable homes for low- and moderate-income households.

The redevelopment project involves remediating three vacant properties into a three-story building featuring outdoor community spaces, gardens, green areas, and off-street parking. Ideally located in the Village Center, Marble Village Apartments is within walking distance of Marble Village → 12



Courtesy Housing Rutland

Community members gathered to break ground on Marble Village Apartments in West Rutland.

Minimum wage increases to \$14.01

Beginning Jan. 1, 2025, the state's minimum wage will increase from \$13.67 to \$14.01 per hour — an increase of \$0.34. If full-time, a minimum wage worker would earn \$29,140 in a year.

This annual adjustment also impacts the minimum wage for tipped employees. The "Basic Tipped Wage Rate" for service, or "tipped employees," equals 50% of the full minimum wage. On Jan. 1, the tipped minimum wage will increase from \$6.84 to \$7.01 per hour.

The state's tipped minimum wage law allows employers to pay a lower hourly rate, as long as the employee receives tips equal to, or greater to than, the standard minimum wage during a given shift. In cases where the employee does not receive enough in tips during a workweek to equal the standard minimum wage per hour, the employer is required to pay the difference in order to ensure the tipped wage employee is compensated at the non-tipped minimum wage amount.

The minimum wage and tipped minimum wage are adjusted annually in accordance with Vermont law and take effect at the start of the new year.

If an employee believes they are not being compensated fairly, according to this law, they are encouraged to contact the Dept. of Labor's wage and hour unit at 802-951-4083 or online at Labor.Vermont.gov/Rights-and-Wages.

For more information, visit: labor.vermont.gov.

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MOUNTAIN TIMES

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Sherburne UCC "Little White Church," Killington, VT



By James Kent

The Grey Bonnet Inn, off Route 100 in Killington, appeared closed on Dec. 16, but its parking lot was surprisingly well plowed.

Open or closed?

Solving the Mystery of the Grey Bonnet Inn

By James Kent

On its website, the newly renovated Grey Bonnet Inn boasts an array of amenities: a restaurant serving breakfast and dinner, an on-site bar, a game room, a seasonal outdoor pool, premium rooms, and executive suites. With Killington and Pico buzzing with winter activity, one might expect the Grey Bonnet's return to include a bustling parking lot filled with visitors. Yet, on Monday morning, Dec. 16, the Mountain Times found an empty, albeit well-plowed, lot.

The uncertainty surrounding the Grey Bonnet Inn's status had piqued the curiosity of locals like Alan Savenor, a Killington resident. "We were excited to see construction activity," Savenor said. "But then it's been hard to tell if it's open or not. Sometimes the flag is up; sometimes it's not."

Conversations among neighbors yielded the same question: Is the Grey Bonnet open for business?

An initial attempt to contact the inn revealed little. Calls to its number were met with a voicemail directing inquiries to its website. The online reservation system listed no availability until Dec. 26. It seemed like the inn might be gearing up for a post-Christmas opening—but why the mystery? A short time later, the managers of the Grey Bonnet Inn reached back out and invited the Mountain Times to tour the inn.

A storied past

To understand the Grey Bonnet Inn's current state, it helps to revisit its history. The property, located on 25 scenic acres bordering the national forest, had been a beloved part of Killington's lodging scene for decades. However, sometime between 2015-2017, the inn fell into foreclosure. It remained shuttered for years, changing hands a few times before being purchased by its current owner in 2020.

"When he bought it, it was in a very dilapidated state," said Brett McManus, the Grey Bonnet's new manager. "There was a foot and a half of water in the basement, and inspectors told us it had been gutted to the studs. It was unrecognizable."

The new owner, based in Massachusetts, began an extensive renovation during the pandemic, investing millions to bring the building back to life. However, Brett noted, "He did it under the radar, not involving local groups or community networks. That's why there's been so much mystery around it."

A new chapter

Brett and his wife, Casey, are no strangers to reviving old properties. Known for their work on the Happy Bear Motel—now rebranded as The Apres Inn—the couple documented that project on their Instagram page, "Inves-Grey Bonnet Inn → 6



By James Kent

Above: The sign at the front entrance of the Grey Bonnet Inn is a recognizable Killington marker on Route 100.

Below: Casey and Brett McManus took over the management of the Grey Bonnet Inn this past September.



By Jerry LeBlond

A moose outside the Grey Bonnet Inn is blanketed in snow.

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FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 28 | 7:30 PM

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FRIDAY, MARCH 28 | 7:30 PM

CHRIS JANSON

SATURDAY, APRIL 5 | 7:00 PM

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SATURDAY, APRIL 19 | 7:00 PM

iLUMINATE THE TOUR

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Courtesy Killington Turkey Trot

Pico Foundation benefits from Turkey Trot

The Killington Turkey Trot presented a check for \$15,000 to the Pico Ski Education Foundation. Pictured from left to right: Kasie Munson, Killington Turkey Trot, Dan Cole, VP PSEF, and Missy Karr, president PSEF.

Celebration of life held for Nessie Bale, Jan. 4

A celebration of life will be held for Nessie Bale at the Clear River Tavern in Pittsfield on Saturday, Jan. 4, from 2-5 p.m.

Agnes "Nessie" Bale, a longtime resident of Ossining, New York, passed away on Thursday, Aug. 22, at her home surrounded by her loving family.

Nessie was born in Glasgow, Scotland, on July 7, 1942, the daughter of the late Thomas and Mary (Lee) McLean.

She was a former secretary for NBC and 30 Rockefeller Center and then president of McLean Rebar in Elmsford. She was a communicant of St. Augustine's Church in Ossining and Lady of the Mountain in Killington.

Nessie was well-known as an avid skier in Vermont for 40 years. She also enjoyed golfing, Lindy Dancing, and the twist.

She is survived by her husband, Walter; her two



Submitted

Nessie Bale

children, Wally (Stephanie) and Tom (Leighann); her two grandchildren, Stella and Owen; her siblings, Ann McKiell, Margaret Gallagher, and Tom McLean; sister-in-law Carol Bale; and predeceased by her sister Josephine Dougans and Brother-in-law, Gerald Bale.

Please join with friends and family to share memories and celebrate the life and spirit of Nessie Bale.

James T. Bowse Health Trust announces 2025 grant awards

On Thursday, Dec. 11, Rutland Regional Medical Center's James T. Bowse Health Trust (BHT) committee announced funding for three important projects in the Rutland region.

The ARC-Rutland Area, Inc., Come Alive Outside, and the Tapestry Program of Rutland City Public Schools have been awarded funds over the next three years to implement important projects in the Rutland community. Each project addresses priority needs identified in the 2021 Community Health Needs Assessment with a focus on improving health equity in the areas of housing, childcare/parenting, mental health, and supporting the aging community. As the Bowse Health Trust transitions to using the recently completed 2025 Community Health Needs Assessment priority areas, these projects will also address critical needs identified for populations of focus within the community.

ARC- Rutland Area Inc.

The Enhanced Vital Community Enrichment Program will be a transformative project to improve health outcomes and reduce health inequities for individuals with intellectual and developmental disabilities across 18 towns in the Rutland region. The initiative will promote independence and connection through life skills, wellness, and social opportunities while addressing loneliness through expanded social activities.

Come Alive Outside

The Outdoor Community-Led Affinity Group Project aims to enhance mental health, social inclusion, and physical well-being for priority populations in the Rutland region. The project will establish sustainable outdoor aff-

Health Trust grants → 6

Rooted in Community

Best Wishes for a Happy and Healthy 2025!

Thank you for helping RRMC make a difference in our community.



Long-time Killington Town Clerk, Treasurer Lucrecia Wonsor passes torch to Peggy Neisner and Monika Legayda

By Karen D. Lorentz

Friday, Dec. 20, was Town Clerk and Treasurer Lucrecia Wonsor final day on the job after working 24 years for the town of Killington.

Peggy Neisner, CMC, who stepped into the role of assistant town clerk in November 2021 was appointed the new town clerk by the Select Board on Dec. 18 and Monika Legayda who served as assistant treasurer since 2018 was appointed the new treasurer. (Legayda also has served as an assistant town clerk since 2022 and continues in that capacity as well.) Bot were given the oath of office by Wonsor, who is a Notary, on Dec. 20.

Wonsor, who was honored at a surprise luncheon and party by town employees, Representative James Harrison, and clerks from around the state, said she has “no special retirement plans other than spending time with my husband and family.”

Praising Wonsor as a mentor, Neisner said the town of Killington was fortunate to have had her dynamic leadership as a town clerk for over two decades. “She’s been a powerhouse, even presenting before the Vermont Legislature to advocate for higher recording fees for towns.” Beyond that, she noted Wonsor served on committees throughout New England and even internationally and has guided many town clerks in Vermont.

Before Wonsor joined the town office staff in 2000 and became town clerk in 2002 and treasurer in 2013, her experience included: working for a pharmaceutical company, 1978-1992; assisting a New Jersey attorney doing real estate closings and estate planning, 1992-1998; and working part time for Killington Resort in reservations, 1998-2002.

Wonsor said that the myriad duties of the town clerk include: recording all land records, permits, maps, cemetery deeds, and vital records (births, deaths, marriages); running all elections and maintaining the voter checklist; administering oaths and oaths of office; providing notary services; issuing licenses (liquor, dogs, marriage, hunting and fishing); keeping and maintaining all town records, grand lists; serving the Board of Civil Authority and managing its tax appeals; being a member of the Board of Abatement; working with title searchers to get documents from other town departments; and assisting residents, second homeowners

“There is a lot of other little things we do in the clerk and treasurer’s office — this office is like Mikey in the cereal commercial. Need an answer to a question? Call the town clerk,” said Wonsor.

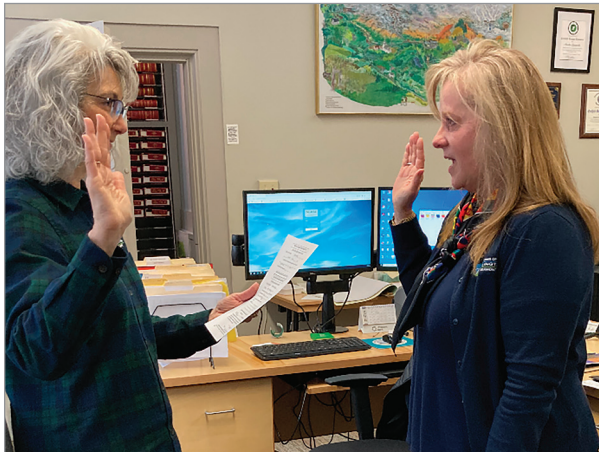
and the general public with any question they may have.

“The clerk’s office is usually the first office someone reaches out to either via phone, email or in person when they have a question or need, and we do our best to help them,” Wonsor said.

Asked about serving as town clerk, Wonsor said, “I have enjoyed the job very much over the years. Elections, even though they have become more labor intensive, are still exciting and one of my favorite jobs.”

She also cited the fun of issuing marriage licenses and hearing how couples met; welcoming new babies into town; and registering dogs and giving them a Milkbone. “Helping residents, property owners and visitors with anything they needed,” also made the work very fulfilling, she said.

The town treasurer’s duties include managing the town, golf course and cemetery bank accounts. That entails: depositing all town receipts (tax payments, recreation



Submitted

Lucrecia Wonsor swears in Peggy Neisner as town clerk (left) and Monika Legayda as town treasurer (right).

program registration, monies from the State and Federal governments and any other town receipts); depositing and posting all golf receipts (pro shop and restaurant); handling all cemetery funds and paying cemetery invoices; reconciling town, golf and cemetery accounts; and investing town funds when possible to maximize interest earnings.

As treasurer, Wonsor said she enjoyed reconciling the accounts the most, along with the challenge of keeping a watchful eye on the town’s cash and communicating to the town manager and selectboard on the status of the cash balance.

“There is a lot of other little things we do in the clerk and treasurer’s office — this office is like Mikey in the cereal commercial. Need an answer to a question? Call the town clerk. Need help navigating your Homestead Declaration? Call the town clerk. Need to know how to get your free burger ticket on Green Up Day? Call the town clerk. Need to know where to get a Porta Potty? Call the town clerk. And we do not mind. Call, walk in any time and we are happy to help,” she said of the multi-faceted position.

Asked what changes she’s seen during her years working for the town, Wonsor said, “The job has become more complex particularly in regard to elections. There is less mail but the number of emails have quadrupled and continue to increase. There is less time to devote to special projects such as back scanning and indexing Vermont Property Transfer Returns and other miscellaneous records that predate 2009. The clerk’s office and treasurer’s office has always picked up the slack whenever there is a transition or change in town administration to keep things moving smoothly.”

As for things running smoothly, Wonsor said, “I am extremely fortunate to have found two very qualified individuals who are committed to the town of Killington — both its residents/voters and property owners. Peggy and Monika will serve this town well. My success in my role as town clerk and treasurer is because of them and their commitment to the job and their work ethic. The offices of town clerk and treasurer are a team effort.”

New town clerk

Peggy Neisner, who has also been a Killington Justice of the Peace since 2003, began her career as a legal assistant in St. Louis and continued in that capacity after she and her attorney husband the late MB Neisner moved to Killington in 1989. She worked for a Rutland law firm for three years after his death and then joined the Killington Town Office at Wonsor’s encouragement.

Asked about the clerk’s job, she said, “There’s no manual

on how to be a town clerk, just a mountain of tasks to conquer! From receiving, recording, and indexing deeds, land-use permits, liens, and violations to filing Property Transfer Tax Returns with the Vermont Dept. of Taxes, the town clerk wears many hats.”

Describing the multitude of forementioned town clerk tasks, she noted that what she likes about the job is “learning something every day.”

Beyond the paperwork, Neisner notes the town clerk is the bridge between residents and town government, whether tracking down answers to puzzling questions or helping out as the “go-to” person.

In addition to learning on the job under Wonsor’s patient mentorship, Neisner graduated from the New England Municipal Clerk Institute and Academy with a Certified Municipal Clerk designation and has attended CMC conferences as well as the Vermont Municipal Clerk and Treasurer Association meetings. She also attended three International Institute of Municipal Clerk conferences where clerks from around the world gather to share insights.

“My educational journey includes an array of fascinating classes from election law and record keeping to cybersecurity and ethical leadership,” she said.

Noting she has enjoyed her job as the assistant, she said that she “gets a kick out of issuing marriage licenses to happy couples,” adding, “it’s like playing Cupid with paperwork.”

Figuring out which parcels are active versus inactive while doing land recordings is her “version of a treasure hunt,” and visiting with residents brings the joy of catching up with folks she hasn’t seen in ages, she said, noting she looks forward to meeting the challenges of being Killington’s new town clerk.

New Town Treasurer

Monika Legayda, who was born in Poland, first came to work in Killington as a student on a Visa program in 2004 when she worked at Mountain Meadows. Asked to come back when she finished college, she returned after receiving an accounting and finance degree from the University of Agriculture in Szczecin in the spring of 2005.

She moved to Killington in September 2005 to complete a graduate internship program by working at Mountain Meadows doing accounting and also worked weddings. During this time, she met a skier whom she married in 2006. As the mother of three boys, Legayda continued to work part-time at Mountain Meadows. She also did property management and worked with some homeowners in Killington for about 10 years.

Wonsor passes torch → 12

← Grey Bonnet Inn: from page 2

tors.” Their efforts caught the Grey Bonnet’s owner’s attention. “He saw what we did up the road and approached us to manage the Grey Bonnet,” Brett explained.

The McManuses officially took over in September, finding a property that had been meticulously renovated but lacked operational infrastructure. “Every room was clean, the dining room was set up, but it was like a ghost town,” Brett said. “It just needed people.”

The couple worked quickly, opening the inn in time for the Spartan Race weekend in September. They operated through the fall foliage season, achieving near-full occupancy on weekends, before closing briefly in stick season to address maintenance, renew health permits, and make improvements like upgrading linens and furnishings.

Focusing on value

Now partially open, the Grey Bonnet is positioning itself as a value-driven alternative to Killington’s higher-end lodges. “We’re not right on the access road, and we’re not trying to compete with luxury properties,” Brett explained. “This is a clean, comfortable place at a reasonable price.”

With 42 rooms, the inn aims to accommodate families and groups, offering amenities like a full breakfast on weekends and a game room in the basement. While the indoor pool awaits final occupancy permits, the McManuses expect it to open for ski season.

Restaurant Plans? Not Yet

One question from the community has been about the restaurant. While the website touts dining options, the McManuses are taking a cautious approach. “Opening a full-service restaurant is a big commitment,” Casey said. “It’s staff-intensive and high-risk, especially if the demand isn’t there.”

For now, the focus is on a bar with a

limited tavern menu. “We’ll offer pub-style food,” Brett said, “but it’ll be counter service, not full table service. This allows us to provide an amenity for guests without overextending ourselves.” If demand grows, they’ll consider expanding the offerings.

Reconnecting with the community

The McManuses recognize that the Grey Bonnet holds a special place in local history.

“We’re not right on the access road, and we’re not trying to compete with luxury properties,” Brett explained.

“This is a clean, comfortable place at a reasonable price.”

The recent “Cookie Party,” a Killington area fundraiser for the New Story Center, marked the inn’s first significant community event in years. “So many people came just to see what’s been done,” Casey said. “There’s a lot of nostalgia here.”

Brett added, “We want to create an atmosphere where people feel welcome and comfortable. Hosting events like this is a great way to reintroduce the Grey Bonnet to the community without overpromising.”

Looking ahead

With bookings picking up for the holiday season and plans to fully reopen after Christmas, the Grey Bonnet is poised for a strong winter. The McManuses hope their thoughtful approach will build trust and establish the inn as a go-to lodging option for visitors and locals alike.

“It’s all about setting realistic expectations,” Brett said. “We want people to come here and feel at home. Whether it’s for a weekend ski trip or a community event, we’re here to make it happen.”

The mystery of the Grey Bonnet Inn was easy to solve. It’s open and ready for visitors.

For more information, visit: greybonnet-killington.com.

Governor Scott awards 16 projects with \$1.5 million in tourism grants

Governor Phil Scott and the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing announced Dec. 17 the recipients of the Transformational Tourism, Events, and Regional Marketing (T-TERM) Grant Program. The T-TERM grant program was created to help events and communities offering unique visitor experiences to expand and/or market themselves to attract more out-of-state visitors and increase overnight stays.

“These grants are funding projects that will help revitalize communities across the state,” said Governor Phil Scott. “Tourism is an important part of our economy, and our small businesses, restaurants and shops all benefit from the revenue brought in by visitors coming to Vermont.”

Sixteen organizations will share \$1,496,838 in T-TERM funding. Of the 16 grants, three are for state-wide initiatives and 13 are regionally based. Grants fit into the following categories: arts and culture events (one award), development of creative assets and targeted marketing campaigns (five), outdoor recreation events and promotion (three), festivals (two), and destination development (five).

Local T-TERM grant recipients include:

- Come Alive Outside will use \$79,000 to expand Rutland County’s Winterfest into a multi-day event by adding a chili cook-off, freestyle snowboarding competition, and a snowmobiling expo. They will also expand the Winterfest Drag Show and turn the snow carving event into a U.S. National Snow Sculpting qualifier.
- Kelly S. Brush Foundation will use \$62,750 to engage and inspire individuals to take advantage of adaptive-accessible mountain biking opportunities.
- Mad Valley Sports is using a \$52,970 grant to expand the Mad Marathon by adding a Kids Fun Run, Mad Mile for teenagers, and expand participation to adaptive athletes in the Mad Half, 10K, and 5K events. There will also be a promotional campaign targeting hearing-impaired guided runners and hand cycle athletes.
- Okemo Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce will use a \$78,000 grant to launch a social media, influencer, and digital marketing campaign to promote tourism, create virtual tours, and promote eight regional events.
- Vermont Cheese Council will use an \$85,000 grant to transform the Vermont Cheese Festival into Vermont Cheese Week to take place between Labor Day and before foliage season begins. The council intends to market the event to younger and more diverse people with an advertising and social media campaign.
- Vermont Mountain Bike Association (VMBA) will use a \$150,000 grant to encourage multi-day tourism by creating a statewide visitor guide to mountain biking featuring 36-, 48-, and 72-hour itineraries along 12-16 trail-centered destinations. The guide will also list resources for lodging, food, gear shops, and more.

“By design, these grants are funding projects that have the potential for long-term impact in attracting more visitors,” said Tourism Commissioner Heather Pelham. “We’re really excited to see these creative projects come to life to fuel visitor spending in regions throughout the state, now and into the future.”

← Health Trust grants: from page 4

ity activity groups tailored to diverse community needs. The goal is to reduce health disparities for historically marginalized groups through accessible and inclusive nature-based experiences.

The Tapestry Program of Rutland City Public Schools- Kindergarten Readiness Camp will provide a vital bridge from home or early childcare to school, preparing students and families to transition into primary education confidently. By familiarizing students with school routines and fostering connections with peers while offering parents opportunities to learn about school and community support, the program will strengthen resiliency, confidence, and community ties for families entering the educational system.

For nearly 30 years, the BHT has awarded grant funds to collaborative community programs that measurably improve Rutland

County residents’ health. The selection process engages a wide variety of community leaders to choose innovative programs that help improve the community’s health. Ongoing reflection and collaboration with the BHT Committee help agencies secure year two and year three funding, as awards are based on the grantee’s attainment of goals and outcomes.

These three new grantees and current grant recipients, along with 60+ programs funded in the past, touch and improve the lives of Rutland County residents. The opening of the next grant cycle will be announced in May 2025, as grants are awarded annually.

The volunteer Health Trust Committee includes Renee Bousquet, Chair; Mary Beerworth; Nanci Gordon; Doug Norford; Lisa Ryan; Chrispin White; and Joe Kraus.

For more info, visit: rrmc.org/about/bowse-trust.



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Vermont's outdoor rec economy grows to \$2.1 billion

Green Mountain State maintains No. 2 ranking for outdoor recreation as part of GDP

New data released by the U.S. Department of Commerce's Bureau of Economic Analysis (BEA) on Dec. 19 reinforces outdoor recreation's significant and growing impact on Vermont's economy. The BEA found outdoor recreation created \$2.1 billion in value added for Vermont in 2023, accounting for 4.8% of Vermont's gross domestic product (GDP). This makes Vermont second in the country, behind only Hawaii, for the highest contribution to state GDP for the second consecutive year.

"Outdoor recreation is not just an integral element of our visitor economy, but it is baked into the Vermont experience enjoyed by residents and visitors alike," said Commissioner Heather Pelham of the Vermont Dept. of Tourism and Marketing. "Vermont's world-class outdoor recreation opportunities draw visitors to communities throughout the state and is a large part of the quality of life cherished by many who call Vermont home."

Vermont's strong outdoor recreation economy is rooted in small businesses all over the state, from gear manufacturers to bike rental and repair shops, to four-season resorts, guide services, retail stores, and lodging providers. According to BEA findings, in 2023 the highest economic contributor to Vermont's outdoor sector was snow activities which include skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, dog mush-

ing, tubing, and snow shoeing. Those activities contributed \$220 million to Vermont's GDP, up from \$170 million in 2022. Other top contributors included RVing, game areas that include tennis and golf, and boating and fishing.

Other findings in the BEA report include:

- Accommodation and food services grew 9% to \$733.5 million
- Retail sales increased 4.5% to \$412.8 million
- Outdoor manufacturing rose 15% to \$135 million
- Tour operations grew 8.1% to \$41 million

The highest economic contributor to Vermont's outdoor sector was snow activities which include skiing, snowboarding, snowmobiling, dog mushing, tubing, and snow shoeing. Those activities contributed \$220 million.

"We are seeing widespread participation in biking and hiking activities as well as many new groups seeking experiences in the outdoors, which led to steady bookings in 2023 for guiding services in all seasons," said Rick Sokoloff, owner and operator of 4 Points VT based in Stowe.

Outdoor recreation also drives job creation and strengthens business in rural communities

who rely heavily on activities to attract visitors. The BEA report found that employment in the outdoor recreation sector rose to 16,283 which is a 4% increase from 2022.

"We've made promising progress in supporting the development of the outdoor workforce," said Kelly Ault, executive director of Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA).

"Continued investments in outdoor businesses are key to helping us develop equitable career pathways and lead a cli-



mate resilient sector. Making sustainability adaptations now positions outdoor businesses to maintain operations, products and experiences to visitors and Vermonters year-round."

In 2017, Governor Scott identified outdoor recreation as an important economic driver in Vermont by establishing the Vermont Outdoor Recreation Economic Collaborative (VOREC). Since then, VOREC, with administrative support from the Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recre-

Rec economy → 12

Environmental group projects Vt will miss 2025 emissions deadline by 10%

By Emma Cotton/VT Digger

The Conservation Law Foundation expects Vermont to miss its first legally mandated deadline to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 9%-12%.

The group's estimates marked the latest in a debate between state officials and data experts over the accuracy of the data used to assess Vermont's compliance with its emissions deadlines.

A 2020 state law, known as the Global Warming Solutions Act, set three deadlines for reducing emissions that contribute to climate change. Policies must be in place to bring emissions down to 26% below 2005 levels by 2025, to 40% below 1990 levels by 2030 and 80% below 1990 levels — or net zero — by 2050. The law also allowed lawsuits to be filed against the state if it failed to meet the deadlines.

In September, the Conservation Law Foun-

dation used that provision to sue the state, alleging that the Agency of Natural Resources was using inaccurate data to claim that Vermont is on track to meet the 2025 deadline.

Until recently, the state has used data from its annual Greenhouse Gas Inventory to predict future emissions, but this year, it switched to using a new model from the Energy Futures Group, which was created to determine how certain policies could impact Vermont's emissions. The Conservation Law Foundation and other data experts argue the model wasn't created to measure Vermont's compliance with the climate law.

To meet the 2025 deadline, Vermont must have policies in place to hit 7.3 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent, the metric used to track

emissions — down from 9.86 million metric tons in 2005.

Of the 2.56 million metric tons Vermont needed to reduce, Hopkins said Wednesday that he expects the state to miss the mark by between 230,000 and 310,000 metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent — between 9% and 12%.

Elena Mihaly, vice president of Conservation Law Foundation Vermont, said 300,000 metric tons is the equivalent of "Vermonters driving more than 785 million miles in gasoline powered passenger vehicles over the course of a year."

"What's, frankly, so alarming, is that the agency has spent the last year telling the Climate Council, leaders of our state legislature and the public that we are on track, that it does not need any new rules or updates to ensure meeting the 2025 mandate," Mihaly said.



TOWN OF
KILLINGTON
VERMONT

Thank you Lucretia for many years of dedicated service!

December 17, 2024

Tom Yennerell, Interim Town Manager & Killington Select Board
PO Box 429, Killington, VT 05751

Dear Tom and Select Board Members,

I am writing to formally announce my retirement from my position as Town Clerk & Treasurer, effective December 20, 2024. After 24 years of dedicated service to the town, I have decided that it is time for me to step down and enjoy the next chapter of my life with my husband and family.

It has been a true honor to serve the residents of Killington in this capacity. Throughout my tenure, I have had the privilege of working with highly dedicated and professional employees, Select Boards and Town Managers. Together, we have worked toward the shared goal of ensuring that the town's operations run smoothly and efficiently. The collaborative efforts and camaraderie I have experienced with my fellow employees have made my time here both fulfilling and rewarding.

As I retire, I am confident that the town is in good hands. It brings me peace of mind knowing that my assistants will continue the important work we have done together. Their knowledge, skills, and commitment to the town will ensure a seamless transition, and I have full trust in their ability to handle the responsibilities moving forward.

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the Town Manager, Select Board, the staff, and the residents for the trust and support I have received over the years. I will always look back on my time as Town Clerk & Treasurer with fondness and pride.

Thank you once again for the opportunity to serve. I wish the town continued growth and success in the future.

Sincerely,

Lucretia Wonsor
Town Clerk & Treasurer



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Commission on public education shies away from specific cost-saving ideas

By Ethan Weinstein/VTDigger

The Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont approved its preliminary findings on Monday, Dec. 16, without making any recommendations about how to contain costs in the short term.

During the 2024 legislative session, as average education property taxes were slated to rise almost 14%, lawmakers created the commission as a vehicle to steer the state's public education system toward a more sustainable future.

Despite being tasked with producing "preliminary findings and recommendations, including short-term cost containment considerations" by Dec. 15, the commission decided not to include a slate of money-saving proposals in its report.

The group spent much of Monday's meeting discussing whether to include a list of ideas that could save money, brainstormed by a subcommittee focused on finance. The naysayers ultimately won out, arguing the list, which the full commission hadn't vetted, would come off as recommendations rather than merely ideas. Members of the 13-member body, composed of lawmakers, state leaders and education officials, said the December deadline had left them little time to meet their mandate.

Among those who argued against the list's inclusion was Zoie Saunders, Vermont's education secretary.

"I think we've all acknowledged that the list is not ready yet," she said. "The public will interpret this as a set of policies."

Others agreed that such a list of non-recommendations would be rife for misinterpretation.

The commission ultimately voted 8-3 to adopt the preliminary report, deciding to link to — but not include — the list of cost-containment proposals.

Still, some voiced concern over the absence of any suggested solutions. Oliver Olsen, who represents the Vermont Independent Schools Association, suggested the group could release target budget metrics to guide school districts and independent schools during the budgeting process already underway.

"We can get everybody working towards a common goal," he said, adding that budget recommendations for the upcoming fiscal year were one of the limited ways the commission could contain costs in the short term.

But with their preliminary findings already overdue, the commission's members decided to move ahead, handing off a report short on answers to the Legislature. Instead, the document offers an assessment of the current situation facing public education in Vermont, some key education data trends and a call for continued collaboration by all interested parties.

Democrats and Republicans in Montpelier, as well as Republican Gov. Phil Scott, have signaled they will prioritize education finance reform in the looming January session. That work will coincide with — and potentially overtake — the commission's work, which is oriented towards a final report expected by December 2025.

Despite loud promises of education reform, lawmakers and state officials have so far been quiet about specifics, as Seven Days recently reported, much as the future of public education commission has, thus far, avoided endorsing any policy recommendations.

The commission's report does, however, offer a summation of the challenge ahead: "Substantive change will require difficult decisions and significant political will."

Vermont sees continual migration of wealth into state

On Wednesday, Dec. 11, Campaign for Vermont Prosperity (CFV) released a report examining migration patterns into and out of the state using Census and Internal Revenue Service (IRS) data.

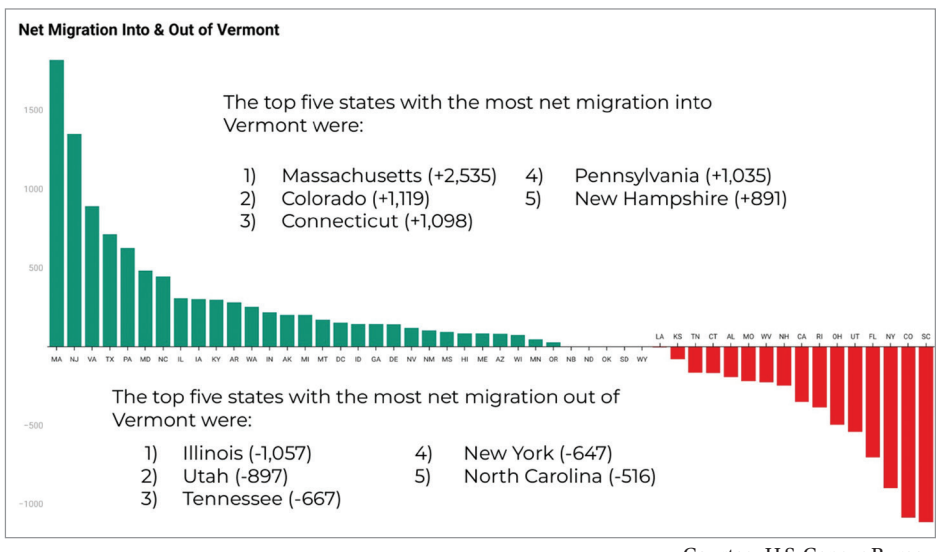
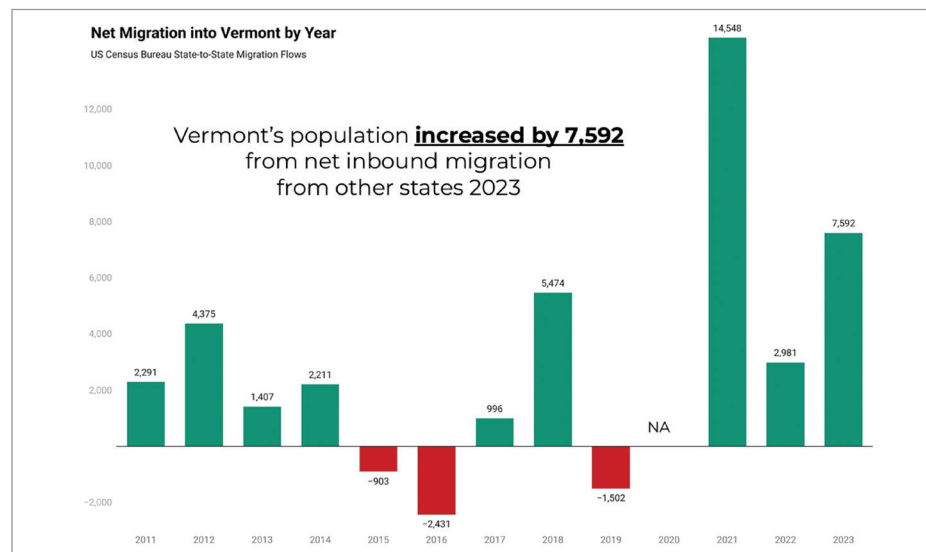
CFV is a nonprofit, nonpartisan advocacy organization comprised of over 20,000 Vermonters dedicated to creating a more prosperous Vermont by growing the middle class.

The report found that Vermont's domestic and international in-migration is not significant and is insufficient to keep pace with the deficit of deaths to births in the state, contributing to the state's demographic problems. Further, the report found that people leaving the state historically have generated more income than those moving into the state, however this reversed during the pandemic. It is unclear at this point whether this reversal from previous trends is permanent, or just the lingering effects of the pandemic.

"We see these results as cautionary," said Ben Kinsley, interim executive director of CFV. "There are real demographic issues that our state is facing and focusing on availability of housing and rebalancing our incentive programs to target specific occupations that are critical to our social infrastructure should be the priority. At the same time, it is unclear how mobile high-income earners are in a post-Covid world and policymakers should proceed with caution when considering additional revenue from these taxpayers."

The report found that recent Census and IRS data needs to be used and interpreted with care since both underlying sources of migration data were likely influenced by tempo-

Wealth migration → 12



Treasurer's analysis shows Vermont gained 7,500 new residents in 2023

Vermont experienced a net gain of 7,500 residents moving from other states, according to a Treasurer's Office analysis of recent U.S. Census data.

The report highlights Vermont's strong appeal in the post-pandemic era.

In 2023, Vermont had the highest per capita net migration in New England and the third-highest per capita net migration of any U.S. state. Over the past three years net migration to Vermont has already significantly exceeded the net migration of the previous decade (+25,121 for 2021-23 vs. +16,067 for 2010-19).

Treasurer Mike Pieciak noted remote work flexibility and outdoor recreation opportunities have helped attract new Vermont residents—which has brought both opportunities and challenges.

"Vermont has fewer young people today entering the workforce, so it's critical to attract new people to live and work here. Additionally, more people living in Vermont means we have more revenue to help shoulder the cost of providing high-quality education and other important investments in the economy," said Treasurer Pieciak.

"At the same time, more people moving

to Vermont puts pressure on our housing market, because we are not building fast enough to meet the demand. This drives up housing costs across the board and makes it less affordable to live here," said Treasurer Pieciak. "We need to lower costs, attract young people and families to our state, and create new opportunities for Vermonters by continuing to invest in building more housing."

Vermont's 2023 net in-migration of 7,592 people is more than double 2022; that year, a net 2,981 people moved to Vermont from other states. In 2021, amid the pandemic,

Vermont experienced a net in-migration of 14,548 people.

On a net basis, most people moved to Vermont in 2023 from nearby states in the Northeast, with nearly a third of new residents arriving from neighboring Massachusetts (+2,535). Other states with the highest net migration into Vermont were Colorado (+1,119), Connecticut (+1,098), Pennsylvania (+1,035), and New Hampshire (+891).

The states with the most net migration out of Vermont were Illinois (-1,057), Utah (-897), Tennessee (-667), New York (-647), and North Carolina (-516).

Courtesy U.S. Census Bureau

GUEST EDITORIAL

No victory on property taxes this year

By Ben Kinsley

Editor's note: Ben Kinsley has over a decade of Vermont public policy experience working for non-profit organizations. He currently serves as the interim executive director for Campaign for Vermont, a non-partisan advocacy group seeking to grow the state's middle class.

As a property taxpayer, I was relieved to see that the Dec. 1 letter from the Tax Commissioner did not warn of another double-digit tax increase. However, as a public policy advocate, that relief dissipated as I dug into the details.

While education spending is not projected to increase as steeply as it did last year, there is still \$115 million in new education spending predicted from school districts. On top of that, there is \$69 million in one-time funds that the Legislature used last year that will fall to property taxpayers this year. In total, that means \$184 million in new pressure on taxes (an 8% increase). When compared to last year's increase of \$182 million in new spending, we realize there is no meaningful change. Yes, new spending is down this year, but the total increased liability for taxpayers is indistinguishable.

So, if the increase in total tax liability is the same, why are property taxes not up by double digits again? Well, there are a couple factors, but it mostly has to do with economic drivers. First, there is a \$33 million surplus that is projected from FY2025 (revenues from current taxes are higher than

expected). The second reason is that projected consumption tax revenues are up \$21.9 million for FY2026. Finally, a hefty 14.7% increase in property values that are not evenly distributed around the state will also help mitigate the increased tax burden on some households (unless you are one of the unlucky ones at the high end of the increasing grand list values). Additionally, new tax sources like the short-term rental surcharge and the cloud tax are part of the calculation this year that were not a factor last year. Again, artificially decreasing pressure on property taxes despite the appetite for spending.

While it is tempting to consider, in the context of last year, a 5.9% increase in Vermonter's property tax bills a victory, when we reframe the context around what that actually means for the household budgets of our friends and neighbors, the story changes.

The U.S. inflation rate for Q4 of this year was 2.3% and looking ahead to Q3 of 2025 (when the FY2026 property taxes would go into effect), it is projected to be the same. This means that the increased tax burden is 2.6x higher than inflation. A strong indicator that incomes will not keep pace with this tax increase.

The average property tax bill in Vermont is \$4,697 annually, which translates to another \$277 that taxpayers can expect to shell out for the 2025/26 school year. That is more than a full week's worth of groceries for a typical Vermont family.

Property tax → 11



The world on the brink by Arcadio Esquivel, Costa Rica

LETTERS

Clean Heat Standard is just too expensive

Dear Editor,

In last week's article by James Kent, "House Republicans mull a plan to repeal the environmental Clean Heat Standard," he incorrectly suggests the cost impact on heating fuel is only a couple of cents per gallon, citing a report by Energy Futures. We wish that were true, but unfortunately it is not.

Act 18 (Clean Heat Standard) calls for the Vermont Dept. of Public Service to complete a thermal sector carbon reduction study that would assess and quantify the impact of the legislation. The department contracted with Optimal Energy, a Hinesburg, Vermont consulting firm acquired by NV5 Global (Nolte Vertical 5) in 2021, to conduct the study analysis. The results were published in September.

According to the analysis by NV5, the price of a gallon of fuel oil could increase by \$4.04 and propane by \$3.22. Those numbers would decrease if they were

Clean Heat costs → 11

Balancing public interests in wildlife policy

Dear Editor,

Let's look at the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Board and Department and tell me if it needs modernizing. And for those unaware, the Board is a 14-member volunteer group comprising hunters, trappers, hound hunters, and anglers from every county. The Board makes public policy decisions on our shared public wildlife without fair representation from the Vermont public.

There are a lot of double standards when it comes to Fish & Wildlife regulations. They tell us not to feed wildlife but allow hunters to set out bait piles to attract coyotes, bobcats, and other animals for sport, even on public land. They tell dog owners to keep their dogs leashed but allow hound hunters to unleash packs of hunting hounds that run miles away from the hunter in pursuit of bears, coyotes, bobcats, and other wildlife. This has created dangerous conflicts with landowners, motorists, and the general public.

Wildlife policy → 11

Let's welcome asylum seekers

Dear Editor,

Picture a young woman, nine months pregnant, compelled by forces beyond her control to leave home and make an arduous journey with her betrothed to a foreign land, unsure of their welcome there.

At this time of year, most of us raised in the Christian tradition would pretty immediately, if unconsciously, imagine this young woman as Mary, "heavy with child," compelled by a decree by Roman ruler Caesar Augustus to travel with Joseph to Bethlehem, to be counted in a compulsory census. Given the secularization of the Nativity story, even people of other faiths--or no faith at all--know Jesus's birth story, if only through secular sources like Linus standing in the spotlight on stage to recite the story in the animated classic, "A Charlie Brown Christmas."

But what if this story is not Biblical at all but contemporary? In fact, this story is that of one of the asylum seekers who came

Asylum seekers → 24

Affordability and a healthy environment can coexist

Dear Editor,

As 2024 draws to a close, I resolve to start the new year with optimism and determination to protect what we care about. Our shared connection to the natural world lies at the heart of Vermont's identity. We love the beauty and bounty of our state. We also know that a healthy environment is essential to a healthy economy. Our state relies on its brand of a clean and protected environment to attract residents, visitors, and businesses.

But I am wary of a false choice: that we must choose between an affordable Vermont and a clean and healthy Vermont. Protecting our environment and health saves our state money and helps our local economies by protecting Vermont's greatest assets - our clean air, water, land, and vibrant communities.

We all know affordability is a significant problem, and the status quo isn't working for many Vermonter. For

Coexistence → 24

CAPITAL QUOTES

A government shutdown was narrowly averted when Congress approved a hastily revised short-term government funding bill after a previous attempt failed to pass the House earlier in the week. President-elect Donald Trump and billionaire Elon Musk torpedoed the earlier bill. The new bill funds federal operations and disaster aid but does not address President-elect Trump's demands to raise or abolish the debt ceiling. President Biden signed the bill on Saturday, Dec. 21.

“It’s kind of interesting; we have a president, we have a vice president, and we have a speaker. It feels like as if Elon Musk is our prime minister,”

said **Tony Gonzales** a Republican representative from Texas during an interview on CBS News’ “Face the Nation.”

“No, he’s not going to be president, that I can tell you. And I’m safe. You know why he can’t be? He wasn’t born in this country,”

said **Donald Trump** at a Turning Point USA event about Elon Musk, who was born in South Africa.

“If Congressional leaders intend to leave DC before the holidays without passing disaster recovery, they should be prepared to spend Christmas in the Capitol. I’ll use every tool available to block a CR that fails Western North Carolina communities in need of long-term certainty,”

said North Carolina Senator **Thom Tillis** on X when passage of a bill to avert a government shutdown appeared less likely.

“It’s clear who’s in charge, and it’s not President-elect Donald Trump,”

said U.S. Representative **Pramila Jayapal**, adding that Trump followed the lead of “Shadow President Elon Musk.”

Property tax: from page 10

The average property tax bill in Vermont is \$4,697 annually, which translates to another \$277 that taxpayers can expect to shell out for the 2025/26 school year. That is more than a full week’s worth of groceries for a typical Vermont family. It’s also more than two months’ worth of electricity.

For a family that is not income-sensitized, the increase is even more pronounced. On a \$500,000 home in South Burlington, for example, a family paying based on their property value instead of income could expect to see a \$534 increase in their property tax bill next year.

As pointed out by Tom Pelham earlier this year, the reason we are in this mess to begin with is that we have consistently seen annual increases in education spending (school budgets) in the double digits over the last five years (a total spending increase of 30% from FY2019-24). Federal funds and the growth in sales taxes have largely masked this skyrocketing spending, but it’s now catching up with us in the form of higher property taxes.

Fixing this propensity for spending requires structural reform that introduces more accountability and transparency into our education funding system. We spend the second most per student out of any state in the country, yet our results are far from second best.

What we have is a distribution of resources problem. The resources we have are not making it to the right places to improve (or even maintain) outcomes for students. Educators, administrators, and policymakers have been constantly distracted by new shiny objects. The good news is that this is fixable if policymakers set a laser-focus on the common outcomes we all want (improved test scores, post-secondary readiness, college placement, etc.) and create the incentives to hit them and empower folks on the ground to strive for greatness. Today, too many of the incentives are misplaced — leading to disproportionately high spending and declining outcomes. I hope legislators are up to the task.

Clean Heat costs: from page 10

subsidized. That is why you see a range of \$1.79 to \$4 per gallon in their report.

When the legislation (then S.5) was under consideration last year, I had even offered an amendment to limit the expected price impact to no more than 20 cents per gallon. The amendment, offered

to add some guardrails to the initiative, was soundly rejected by the legislative supermajority.

Act 18 was enacted by the Legislature over a veto by Governor Scott in 2023. While the final rules to fully implement the measure still need legislative approval, I believe its clear Act 18 is too

expensive for Vermont and should be scrapped.

I am pleased to be a co-sponsor of legislation that will be introduced in January that repeals the measure.

Jim Harrison, state representative of Chittenden, Killington, Mendon and Pittsfield

Wildlife policy: from page 10

Fish & Wildlife refuses to change the land-posting requirements, forcing landowners to file and pay a fee to their town yearly, walk their land, and post an approved sign every 400 feet. Other states have adopted a “Purple Paint” law that is a one-time, no-fee task. Vermont’s current draconian law makes it nearly impossible for Vermonters to post their land to keep hunters off legally. For an older person or someone with a physical disability, it’s even more challenging to post land. And for those who DO successfully post their land, packs of hunting hounds trespass every year since the hounds can’t read posted signs. Landowners have few rights and are held hostage to privileged special interest groups. Hunters should be required to ask permission

before hunting someone’s private property. That would solve the problem!

Despite the science, Fish & Wildlife allows coyote hunting for sport, with no limit, all year, day and night. Coyotes maintain stable populations regardless of human intervention and are not a threat to native wildlife. Studies have shown that hunting them increases populations and fractures the fragile social pack hierarchy, which can create conflicts with humans. They allow the use of steel jaw leghold, body-gripping, and drowning traps, even on public land. Traps are indiscriminate and are responsible for injuring/killing protected and endangered

species, as well as dogs and cats. Why are they still legal?

They tout the importance of science but then ignore their science to accommodate their “customers” — license-holders. A great

[The state] tells dog owners to keep their dogs leashed but allow hound hunters to unleash packs of hunting hounds.

example is that their studies recently revealed that 100% of fishers, a vital predator species, were poisoned by rodenticides. Yet, they still allow these animals to be trapped for recreation without bag limits.

Please speak up for wildlife and hold those in power accountable to the people and our cherished wildlife, not privileged interests.
Dean Percival, New Haven

← Wealth migration:

from page 9

rary population movements due to the Covid pandemic. Some examples of this were provided in the report.

Art Woolf, author of the report, urged that “policy-makers should examine longer term trends for a better look at any patterns of migration in and out of Vermont by age and income groupings instead of looking at one-year snapshots. This is particularly true during the pandemic timeframe when migration patterns departed

from their historical trends.”

The report also found that, prior to the pandemic, the only age groups with net in-migration were 26-45 year olds (+208), but the numbers were not large enough to offset the number of people under the age of 26 who were leaving (-507). Further, the report found that only 4% of Vermont’s population is comprised of immigrants, compared to an average of 14% nationally.

“We hope that the Leg-

islature takes note of these findings,” said CFV President Pat McDonald, “the demographic challenges in Vermont are not improving and we believe the inaccessibility of housing is preventing more young people from moving here or staying here. Adding tax surcharges for the wealthy also does not seem to be the answer as there are real questions about tax flight and what that might do to our overall tax base and the state’s revenue streams.”



Submitted

Lucrecia Wonsor (center) was joined by friends and colleagues at a farewell party Dec. 20.

← Wonsor passes torch:

from page 5

“When Lucrecia learned I had a degree in accounting and asked if I would join the town office, I started as an assistant town treasurer in 2018,” Legayda said.

She added assistant town clerk to her duties in 2022 and with Wonsor’s retirement, the Select Board appointed her town treasurer. Addressing her move to America, Legayda said, “I spoke little English at that time but was hoping for a good life experience. I fell

in love in this town and decided to stay in 2006. I’m a Killington homeowner since 2013 and became a U.S. Citizen in 2018. Asked about working at the town office, she said, “This job is about people, the interaction. I love to hear the stories about people’s lives and to be able to help and share my expertise. Also, believe it or not, I like to do reconciliation of town accounts every month. I love when the numbers come together.”

← Marble Village:

from page 1

essential services such as a supermarket, pharmacy, restaurants, post office, library, and West Rutland School. Its proximity to downtown Rutland, just a 10-minute drive away, and seven-day-a-week Marble Valley Regional Transit services make it an ideal location for residents.

“We appreciate the support of our partners and funders in making these much-needed affordable homes a reality,” said Mary Cohen, Executive Director of the Housing Trust of Rutland County. “Marble Village Apartments is a critical step in addressing housing needs and providing safe, stable homes.”

President and Co-Founder of Evernorth, Nancy Owens, highlighted the long-term benefits: “We are so glad to be breaking ground today on homes that will remain a community asset in West Rutland forever. Like investments in roads, sewers, schools, and municipal buildings, this housing will serve the community as a valuable resource.”

A combination of public and private sources funds the \$13 million development. Evernorth’s Housing New England Fund VI contributed \$7.8 million in tax credit equity, administered by the Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA). Additional funding included a \$750,000 LIAC Loan from VHFA, over \$2.3 million from the Vermont Housing and Conservation Board, and grants from the Vermont Agency of Commerce & Community Development, including \$475,000 from the CRRP Grant and \$600,000 from the Brownfield Revitalization Fund. Other contributors include Green Mountain Power, Efficiency Vermont, and NBT Bank, which provided the construction loan. The Rutland Housing Authority will provide project-based rental assistance.

Designed by VT Integrated Architecture and managed by Naylor & Breen, construction is expected to be completed by October 2025.

For more information, visit: housingrutland.org.

← Rec economy:

from page 7

ation (FPR), has invested over \$10 million in municipal and non-profit led projects in every county of the state to strengthen trails and other infrastructure like signage and parking areas, develop marketing plans, conduct research, and complete planning and community engagement to tie outdoor recreation to downtown centers and generate economic activity.

“We are celebrating the continued growth of Vermont’s outdoor recreation economy reflected in the data from BEA,” said Becca Washburn, director of the Division of Lands Administration and Recreation within the Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation and chair of the VOREC steering committee. “To ensure outdoor recreation continues to be a major contributor to Vermont’s economic success we cannot lose sight of much needed investments that strengthen and support the stewardship of our outdoor infrastructure and allow our outdoor recreation economy to adjust to a changing climate.”

VOREC is spearheading Move Forward Together Vermont as part of that effort. The initiative is a collaborative, inclusive, and data-driven effort designed to ensure the sustainability and continued growth of the state’s outdoor recreation economy.

Jackie Dagger, VOREC program manager shared, “We are working to keep the sector on its upward trajectory by aligning partners around fostering healthy and vibrant communities through outdoor recreation using priority actions that support stewardship, wellness and economic development.”

For more information, visit: fpr.vermont.gov/move-forward-together-vermont.



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WORDPLAY

MERRY CHRISTMAS WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards

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

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|-----------|----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|------------|
| ANGEL | CHURCH | EVERGREEN | GREETING CARD | MERRIMENT | STAR |
| BIRTH | COMPANY | FRIENDS | HOLLY | MISTLETOE | TRAVEL |
| CAROLS | DECEMBER | GARLAND | MAGICAL | REMINISCE | TREE SKIRT |
| CHRISTMAS | DINING | GIFTS | MANGER | ROAST | WREATHS |

SUDOKU

Solutions → 28

How to Play

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

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

Level: Intermediate

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Solutions → 28

CLUES ACROSS

1. Central processing unit
4. Taxi
7. Body part
8. Papal court
10. Young women making their public debuts
12. Metal shackles
13. Joseph's wife
14. Licensed professional
16. Partner to cheese
17. Mild fruits
19. File format
20. Province of Indonesia
21. Beloved grilled foods
25. Bar bill
26. Don't know when yet
27. Whale ship captain
29. Touches softly
30. Mock
31. Red-brown Pacific sea bream
32. Summer entertainment options
39. Protective crust
41. Cool!
42. Behave

- in a way that belittles
43. Denial
 44. A place to sleep
 45. Electronic counter-counter-measures
 46. Intestinal pouches
 48. SE Asia family of languages
 49. Sound
 50. Select
 51. Give the impression of dishonesty
 52. Witness
- CLUES DOWN**
1. Of cadmium
 2. Deliver a sermon
 3. Inner regions of a shadow
 4. Aggressive dog
 5. Smells
 6. Twofold
 8. Former OSS
 9. Computer language
 11. Indian groom
 14. Automobile
 15. Hairstyle
 18. Atomic #76
 19. Guy (slang)
 20. Ladies' undergarments

1	2	3				4	5	6						
7						8					9			
10				11					12					
13						14	15				16			
17				18			19				20			
21					22	23				24				
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			27	28				29						
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			32				33			34	35	36	37	38
39	40					41				42				
43					44						45			
46				47							48			
49												50		
	51												52	

22. Furniture with open shelves
23. Back-arc basin
24. Partner to flow
27. A type of horse
28. Possesses
29. Split pulses
31. Small amount
32. Flat-bottomed riverboat
33. Not good
34. Atomic #31
35. Assist in committing a crime
36. Chauvinists
37. Get away
38. One of a people who speaks a Semitic language
39. Civil rights college organization
40. Combustible dark rocks
44. Grocery container
47. Central nervous system

GUESS WHO?

I am an actor born in New York on December 27, 1995. I made my acting debut in 2008 and studied at Fiorello H. LaGuardia High School. I received an Academy Award nomination for my first leading role in 2017. Soon I'm starring in a Bob Dylan biopic.

Answer: Timothée Chalamet

LOCAL PEOPLE. LOCAL SERVICE.

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- **HEATING** - Boilers, Furnaces, Space Heating
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THURS
12/26

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

Intermediate Line Dance

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

Chaffee: 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

Survivors Support Group

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

Bone Builders

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

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

Vinyl Night with Ken

6-9 p.m. Poultney Pub, 158 Main St., Poultney. Join Ken and the crew for a night of classic vinyl records. Browse his collection, make a request, and enjoy great tunes in a lively atmosphere. poultneypub.com

FRI
12/27

Bone Builders

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

Tubing Night Presented by

Bubly
4-6 p.m. Killington Tubing Park, East Mountain Road, Killington. Enjoy a family-friendly evening of tubing, free bubly seltzer samples (while supplies last), giveaways, and s'mores. Tickets required for tubing; purchase online. killington.com

West Coast Swing Dance Classes

5:30-6:30 p.m. West Rutland Town Hall (upstairs), 35 Marble St., West Rutland. \$15 per class. Learn West Coast Swing with flexible registration options for individual nights or the full series. Pre-registration required. vtwestiebest@gmail.com

SAT
12/28

Vermont Winter Farmers Market

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Vermont Farmers Food Center, 251 West St., Rutland. Free. Shop local produce, crafts, and goods every Saturday through May 10, 2025. vtfarmersmarket.org

Rutland Railway Association & Model Club

11 a.m.-3 p.m. 79 Depot Lane, Center Rutland. See an operating HO scale model railroad set up and displays of hundreds of rare or antique model trains, photographs, signs and more. facebook.com/p/Rutland-RailwayAssociati on-100066761013097/

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

Film Screening:

'Moana 2' (PG)
7:30- 9:15 p.m. Woodstock Town Hall Theater, 31 The Green #2, Woodstock. \$8-\$10. Sequel to the smash hit Disney film. pentanglearts.org

**TUBING NIGHT
PRESENTED
BY BUBLY**

FRIDAY 4-6 P.M.



SUN
12/29

Public Skating

11 a.m.-12:10 p.m. (Sundays) Union Arena, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock. Adult \$8, Youth \$6, Seniors \$5, Child under 3 Free, Super Senior (70+) Free. Skate rentals \$7 (figure or ice hockey). unionarena.net

Film Screening: 'Moana 2' (PG)

3:00- 4:45 p.m. Woodstock Town Hall Theater, 31 The Green #2, Woodstock. \$8-\$10. Sequel to the smash hit Disney film. pentanglearts.org

Rutland County Pride Monthly Potluck

5-7 p.m. Rutland County Pride, 106 West St. Suite 1, Rutland. Join the community for a monthly potluck event open to LGBTQIA2S+ individuals and allies. Bring your favorite dish to share (no peanuts or shellfish). Enjoy great food, conversation, and connections. rcpride.org

MON
12/30

Bone Builders

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

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

Ben & Jerry's Ice Cream Social

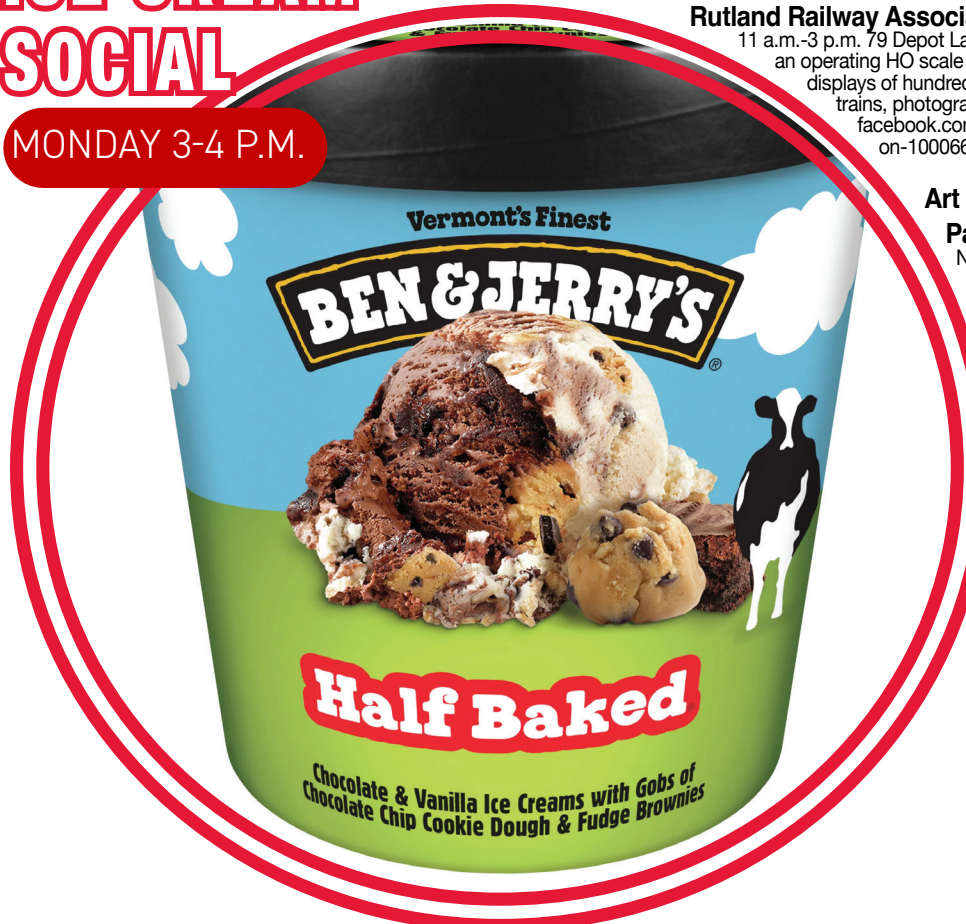
3-4 p.m. Snowshed or Ramshead Base Lodge, Killington. Enjoy free samples of Vermont's favorite Ben & Jerry's ice cream (while supplies last) during this fun-filled social event. killington.com

Film Screening: 'Moana 2' (PG)

7:30- 9:30 p.m. Woodstock Town Hall Theater, 31 The Green #2, Woodstock. \$8-\$10. Sequel to the smash hit Disney film. pentanglearts.org

**BEN & JERRY'S
ICE CREAM
SOCIAL**

MONDAY 3-4 P.M.



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

TUES
12/31

Stick & Puck

1:30-3 p.m. Union Arena, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock. \$10 per session. Helmet required; other gear strongly recommended. unionarena.net

New Year's Eve Dining at Barnard Inn

4-10 p.m. Barnard Inn, 5518 VT Route 12, Barnard. Celebrate New Year's Eve with Chef Will Dodson's special dining experience in the historic 1796 brick chateau. Enjoy a cellar bottle or 802-inspired cocktails. Private rooms available for up to 15 guests; inquire for details. 802-234-9961, events@barnardinn.com, or barnardinn.com

Family-Friendly New Year's Celebration & Fireworks

5-8 p.m. Jackson Gore Inn at Okemo, 111 Jackson Gore Road, Ludlow. Enjoy a festive evening with family, including fireworks in the courtyard presented by Mary W. Davis Realtor & Associates. Register to win a \$250 gift card to Main + Mountain. davisandcompany.com

New Year's Eve Celebration & Fireworks

5-9 p.m. K-1 Base Lodge, Killington. Celebrate New Year's Eve with free family-friendly activities including arts and crafts, live music by the Dan Brown Duo, s'mores by the fire pit (while supplies last), a groomer parade, and a fireworks show presented by Kona Big Wave. A perfect way to bid farewell to 2024 in style! killington.com

Line Dance Classes

5:30-7:30 p.m. (Tuesdays) Bradford Methodist Church, 186 N Main St., Bradford. \$10. Easy line dancing at 5:30 p.m., perfect for novices, followed by a 6:30 p.m. beginner-level class. All ages welcome. Bring water and wear comfortable shoes. No need to register in advance. jeanbeanslinedancing@gmail.com

'Black Tie' Bluegrass NYE

6 p.m.-midnight. Poultney Pub, 158 Main St., Poultney. Celebrate New Year's Eve with live music from Bird Mountain String Band (6-8 p.m.) and a late-night jam by the Poultney Bluegrass Society (starting at 8:30 p.m.). Enjoy dinner, drinks, and a champagne toast at midnight. Formal but flexible attire encouraged. poultneypub.com

Wobbly Barn New Year's Eve Party

6 p.m.-1 a.m. Wobbly Barn Nightclub, 2229 Killington Road, Killington. Kick off the evening with the Krishna Guthrie Band (6-9 p.m.) during the final Happy Hour of 2024, blending rock, blues, and modern influences. After 9 p.m., access requires a New Year's Eve ticket to enjoy Sean Patrick and the Alibis, delivering high-energy performances of classic hits and modern favorites to close out the year. wobblybarn.com

Let's Glow 2025!

7 p.m.-midnight. Woodstock Inn Ballroom, 14 The Green, Woodstock. \$25. Tax and gratuity not included. Celebrate New Year's Eve with this family-friendly glow-themed party featuring glow sticks, face painting, party favors, dancing, and ball-drop countdowns at 9 p.m. and midnight. Cash bar and snacks available for purchase. Full payment due at booking; no cancellations. Limited space available. 802-457-6609 or woodstockinn.com

New Year's Eve Party

8 p.m.-midnight. American Legion, 72 S. Main St., Fair Haven. \$30 per person, \$50 per couple. Celebrate the new year with live music from Spoiler Rock-N-Roll Band, finger foods, and a champagne toast at midnight. facebook.com/FairHavenPost49

Glitz, Glam, and 2025!

8 p.m.-10 a.m. (Wed). Woodstock Inn's Rockefeller Room, 14 The Green, Woodstock. \$150. Tax and gratuity not included. Ring in the new year with an elegant adults-only celebration featuring live music by A House on Fire, a photobooth, cocktails, a midnight toast, and chef-curated savory and sweet bites. Price includes a welcome drink and sparkling wine toast. Additional beverages available for purchase. Full payment due at booking; no cancellations. Limited space available. 802-457-6609 or woodstockinn.com

New Year's Eve Party

10 p.m.-1 a.m. Brandon Inn, 20 Park St., Brandon. \$25 per person. Dance the night away with music, photo stations, party favors, and delicious drinks from the Neshobe Pub. Dress to impress and ring in 2025 in style! Limited tickets available. thebrandoninn.com



LET'S GLOW 2025!

TUESDAY 7 P.M.-MIDNIGHT

WOBBLY BARN NEW YEAR'S EVE PARTY

SATURDAY 6 P.M.-1 A.M.



WED

1/01

ONGOING

Grand Re-Opening New Year's Day Party

2-7 p.m. Prouty's Parlor for Ice Cream, 62 Merchants Row, Rutland. Free. Celebrate the New Year with a ribbon-cutting ceremony, live music, and entertainment at this festive grand re-opening event. facebook.com/p/Proutys-Parlor-for-IceCream-61557840280032/

8th Night of Hanukkah Party

5:30-7 p.m. Shir Shalom, 1680 West Woodstock Road, Woodstock. Celebrate the final night of Hanukkah with a community party. Everyone is welcome—bring latkes and menorahs to share. shirshalomvt.org

A Forest of Lights

Weekends and select weeknights through early January. VINS Nature Center, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. Adults \$13, Youth \$8, Children 3 & under Free. Stroll through magical light displays featuring the Snow Shower Tower, Snow Globe, Whimsical Woodland, and more. Campfire and snacks available for purchase. vinsweb.org

Christmas at Billings Farm

Weekends through Jan. 4. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. Experience Victorian Christmas traditions with natural décor, candle dipping, pie crust crafting, and outdoor activities. Warm up by fire pits with hot cocoa and explore the Museum Gift Shop for unique, Vermont-made holiday gifts. billingsfarm.org

Cooking Classes at Mission Farm

Check website for classes and registration. The Kitchen at Mission Farm, 316 Mission Farm Road, Killington. Learn to cook, host an event, or teach a class in Mission Farm's open kitchen space. missionfarmkitchen.org

Disney's 'Beauty and the Beast'

Through Jan. 1, 2025. Northern Stage, 74 Gates St., White River Junction. \$24-\$94. Directed by Carol Dunne. northernstage.org

Holiday Exhibit

Through January, 2025. Chaffee Art Center, 16 South Main St., Rutland. Free. Annual holiday exhibit. chaffeeartcenter.org

Holiday Art Market

Brandon Artists Guild, 7 Center St., Brandon. Free. A festive holiday art market featuring handcrafted ornaments, pottery, stained glass, jewelry, photography, fiber art, and gifts for all ages. Open daily throughout the holiday season. brandonartistsguild.org

Rutland Killington Commuter

BUS SCHEDULE NOV. 28, 2024-MARCH 31, 2025

OPERATING DAILY FROM 7:15 AM UNTIL 12:45 AM



FREE RIDES ALL WINTER SEASON

* Operating schedule is subject to change, visit: TheBus.com for the most current times and locations.

MARBLE VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT

Rutland to Killington

RMATC*	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	6:15 PM	7:15 PM	8:15 PM	9:15 PM	10:15 PM	11:15 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	6:16 PM	7:16 PM	8:16 PM	9:16 PM	10:16 PM	11:15 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	6:17 PM	7:17 PM	8:17 PM	9:17 PM	10:17 PM	11:17 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	6:23 PM	7:23 PM	8:23 PM	9:23 PM	10:23 PM	11:23 PM
Mendon Mtn 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	6:24 PM	7:24 PM	8:24 PM	9:24 PM	10:24 PM	11:24 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	6:32 PM	7:32 PM	8:32 PM	9:32 PM	10:32 PM	11:32 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	6:36 PM	7:36 PM	8:36 PM	9:36 PM	10:36 PM	11:36 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	6:38 PM	7:38 PM	8:38 PM	9:38 PM	10:38 PM	11:38 PM
Killington Motel **	7:40 AM	8:40 AM	9:40 AM	10:40 AM	11:40 AM	12:40 PM	1:40 PM	2:40 PM	3:40 PM	4:40 PM	5:40 PM	6:40 PM	7:40 PM	8:40 PM	9:40 PM	10:40 PM	11:40 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	6:41 PM	7:41 PM	8:41 PM	9:41 PM	10:41 PM	11:41 PM
Killington Park and Ride	7:42 AM	8:42 AM	9:42 AM	10:42 AM	11:42 AM	12:42 PM	1:42 PM	2:42 PM	3:42 PM	4:42 PM	5:42 PM	6:42 PM	7:42 PM	8:42 PM	9:42 PM	10:42 PM	11:42 PM
Hillside Inn	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	6:45 PM	7:45 PM	8:45 PM	9:45 PM	10:45 PM	11:45 PM
Killington Center Inn **	7:49 AM	8:49 AM	9:49 AM	10:49 AM	11:49 AM	12:49 PM	1:49 PM	2:49 PM	3:49 PM	4:49 PM	5:49 PM	6:49 PM	7:49 PM	8:49 PM	9:49 PM	10:49 PM	11:49 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	6:58 PM	7:58 PM	8:58 PM	9:58 PM	10:58 PM	11:58 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	6:59 PM	7:59 PM	8:59 PM	9:59 PM	10:59 PM	11:59 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	7:00 PM	8:00 PM	9:00 PM	10:00 PM	11:00 PM	12:00 AM

Killington to Rutland

Killington Grand Hotel	8:03 AM	9:03 AM	10:03 AM	11:03 AM	12:03 PM	1:03 PM	2:03 PM	3:03 PM	4:03 PM	5:03 PM	6:03 PM	7:03 PM	8:03 PM	9:03 PM	10:03 PM	11:03 PM	12:03 AM
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	7:06 PM	8:06 PM	9:06 PM	10:06 PM	11:06 PM	12:06 AM
Killington Road Stops ***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***	***
Killington Center Inn **	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	7:12 PM	8:12 PM	9:12 PM	10:12 PM	11:12 PM	12:12 AM
Hillside Inn	8:13 AM	9:13 AM	10:13 AM	11:13 AM	12:13 PM	1:13 PM	2:13 PM	3:13 PM	4:13 PM	5:13 PM	6:13 PM	7:13 PM	8:13 PM	9:13 PM	10:13 PM	11:13 PM	12:13 AM
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	7:14 PM	8:14 PM	9:14 PM	10:14 PM	11:14 PM	12:14 AM
Gazebo Plaza (Stops at 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	7:15 PM	8:15 PM	9:15 PM	10:15 PM	11:15 PM	12:15 AM
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	7:21 PM	8:21 PM	9:21 PM	10:21 PM	11:21 PM	12:21 AM
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	7:23 PM	8:23 PM	9:23 PM	10:23 PM	11:23 PM	12:23 AM
Mendon Mountain View 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	7:25 PM	8:25 PM	9:25 PM	10:25 PM	11:25 PM	12:25 AM
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	7:27 PM	8:27 PM	9:27 PM	10:27 PM	11:27 PM	12:27 AM
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	7:28 PM	8:28 PM	9:28 PM	10:28 PM	11:28 PM	12:28 AM
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	7:30 PM	8:30 PM	9:30 PM	10:30 PM	11:30 PM	12:30 AM
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	7:31 PM	8:31 PM	9:31 PM	10:31 PM	11:31 PM	12:31 AM
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	7:32 PM	8:32 PM	9:32 PM	10:32 PM	11:32 PM	12:32 AM
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	7:36 PM	8:36 PM	9:36 PM	10:36 PM	11:36 PM	12:36 AM
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	7:38 PM	8:38 PM	9:38 PM	10:38 PM	11:38 PM	12:38 AM
RMATC *	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	7:45 PM	8:45 PM	9:45 PM	10:45 PM	11:45 PM	12:45 AM
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	-	6:55 PM	7:55 PM	8:55 PM	9:55 PM	10:55 PM	-	-
RMATC *	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	-	7:05 PM	8:05 PM	9:05 PM	10:05 PM	11:05 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

If weather, emergency and/or traffic conditions force MVRTD to cancel or delay a route, we will post this route change on our website www.thebus.com and on our Facebook page.



MARBLE VALLEY REGIONAL TRANSIT DISTRICT

www.thebus.com | 802.773.3244 (ext.177)

[MUSIC Scene]

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

THURS 12/26

BRANDON

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

BRIDGEWATER

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

CHITTENDEN

6 p.m. Mountain Top Inn – Ryan Fuller

KILLINGTON

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Nick Bredice

1 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Pete Majjer

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto

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

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

6 p.m. Rivershed – Rhys Chalmers

6 p.m. The Foundry – Liz Reedy

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

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Turn It Up

LONDONDERRY

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

LUDLOW
2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Sammy B

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

POULTNEY

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

QUECHEE

6 p.m. Public House Pub – Trvia with Questionable Company

RUTLAND

8 p.m. Angler Pub – A Sound Space Open Mic

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

WOODSTOCK

6 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Red Rooster Riot

FRI 12/27

CASTLETON

6 p.m. Blue Cat Bistro – Live Music

6 p.m. Third Place Pizza – Ryan Fuller

CHITTENDEN

6 p.m. Mountain Top Inn – George Nostrand

KILLINGTON

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Pete Majjer

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Daniel Brown

2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Nick Bredice

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

4 p.m. The Foundry – Just Jamie

6 p.m. Rivershed – E Boro Bandits

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

7:30 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Liquid A

9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Just Jamie

LUDLOW

2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Liz Reedy

5:30 p.m. Main & Mountain – Liz Reedy

8 p.m. The Killarney – Sammy B

QUECHEE

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

RUTLAND

6 p.m. Stonehedge Indoor Golf – Duane Carleton

9 p.m. Center Street Alley – DJ EG

SAT 12/28

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – Comedy Show with headliners Evan Berke

CASTLETON

6 p.m. Third Place Pizza – Ryan Fuller

KILLINGTON

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Nick Bredice

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

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Daniel Brown

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

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

6 p.m. Killington Wine Bar – Rick Webb

6 p.m. O'Dwyers Public House at the Summit Lodge – Rambletree

6 p.m. Preston's – Scott Forrest

6 p.m. Rivershed – E Boro Bandits

6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Jim Yeager

7 p.m. North Star Lodge Star Lounge – Dance Party with DJ Dave

7 p.m. Vermont Craft – Nick Bredice

7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Curragh's Fancy

8:30 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Aaron Audet Band

9 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Liquid A

9 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Nine Deeez Nite

10 p.m. Pickle Barrel Crow's Nest – Jamie's Junk Show

LONDONDERRY

3 p.m. Black Line Tavern at Magic Mountain – Sammy B

6 p.m. New American Grill – Liz Reedy

LUDLOW

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

2 p.m. Jackson Gore Courtyard – Kick Off Après Afternoon with the Gully Boys

2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Ryan Fuller

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Colin Nevins
RUTLAND
5:30 p.m. Moose Lodge – Ryan Fuller

STOCKBRIDGE

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

WOODSTOCK

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Tommy Crawford

SUN 12/29

BRIDGEWATER

CORNERS

3 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – E Boro Bandits

KILLINGTON

12 p.m. Rivershed – Brunch with Nick Bredice

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Rhys Chalmers

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

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Jamie's Junk Show

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Scott Forrest

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tboneicus Jones

6 p.m. Rivershed – Trivia

6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Open Mic hosted by Liz Reedy

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

7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Curragh's Fancy

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

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Mihalidaze

9 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Nine Deeez Nite

LUDLOW

11 a.m. Okemo's Solitude Lift – Sunday's with Sammy B

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

STOCKBRIDGE

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

MON 12/30

KILLINGTON

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Liz Reedy

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

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton

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

6 p.m. Northstar Lodge Star Lounge – Big John's Boys with Arclight and Andrew DiMarzo

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

6 p.m. The Foundry – Blues Night with John Lackard

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

8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Rhys Chalmers

9 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Never in Vegas

9 p.m. Wobbly Barn – DJ Stevie B

LUDLOW

2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Nick Bredice

5 p.m. Little Mexico – Sammy B

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

RUTLAND

7 p.m. Angler's Pub – Trivia hosted by Sunset Entertainment

WOODSTOCK

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Bluegrass etc. Jam with Ben Kogan

TUES 12/31

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – New Year's Eve Comedy Show and Party

CHITTENDEN

6 p.m. Mountain Top Inn – George Nostrand

KILLINGTON

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Rhys Chalmers

1 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Nick Bredice

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Daniel Brown Duo

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

4 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Jamie's Junk Show

5:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – James Joel

6 p.m. Preston's – Pete Majjer

6 p.m. Rivershed – E Boro Bandits

6 p.m. Wobbly Barn – KGB

7 p.m. The Foundry – Aaron Audet Band

7 p.m. Northstar Lodge Star Lounge – Big John's Boys with Arclight and Andrew DiMarzo

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

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

9 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Never in Vegas

9 p.m. Still on the Mountain – James Joel

9 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Sean Patrick and the Alibis

LUDLOW

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

2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Aedie

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – "Black Tie" Bluegrass NYE

RUTLAND

8 p.m. Center Street Alley – EDM Night with DJ EG, DJ Sims and Sunset Dreamz

9:30 p.m. Moose Lodge – Liz & Nick New Year

WED 1/01

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Sammy B

6 p.m. Rivershed – Aedie

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Open Mic with Danny Lang

Ring in 2025 at Killington's New Year's Eve Celebration

Dec. 31 from 7:30 a.m. to 6 p.m.—KILLINGTON— The Killington ski resort invites guests to cap off 2024 with a day and evening of festive fun at the K-1 Base Lodge. Featuring family-friendly activities, live music, outdoor treats, and an exciting fireworks show, this New Year's Eve celebration promises a memorable send-off to the year.

An eve packed with entertainment

The celebration kicks off with activities for all ages inside the K-1 Base Lodge. Families can enjoy mask-making, board games, and a coloring corner, while live music by the Dan Brown Duo fills the lodge with festive energy. Outdoors, guests can gather around fire pits to roast s'mores and sip hot cocoa, savoring the crisp mountain air.

As the day progresses, the event culminates with the Groomer Parade and a spectacular fireworks display. Please note: bringing outside alcohol to this event is strictly prohibited.

Schedule of Events

- Food service in K-1 Lodge: 7:30 a.m. - 6 p.m. K-1 Lodge - 2nd floor
- Pub menu in K-1 Lodge: Late morning - 5 p.m. K-1 Lodge - 3rd floor
- Live music from Dan Brown Duo 2:30- 5:30 p.m. K-1 Lodge - 3rd floor
- Outdoor bar service (weather-dependent): 3:30-6 p.m. K-1 Lodge patio (slope side)
- Mask making: 4- 5:30 p.m. K-1 Lodge - 2nd floor
- Coloring corner & board games 4 - 5:30 p.m. K-1 Lodge - 2nd floor
- S'mores & hot cocoa (while supplies last!) 4 - 5:30 p.m. K-1 Lodge patio (slope side)
- Groomer Parade 5 p.m. Outside of K-1 Lodge (slope side)
- Fireworks show immediately following groomer parade outside of K-1 Lodge (slope side)



Submitted

Ring in the New Year in style

Adults can head to the Wobbly Barn or Pickle Barrel night clubs in Killington to ring in the actual New Year at midnight.

At the Pickle Barrel "Never in Vegas" and "DJ Primary Instinct" will provide the jams starting at 9 p.m. At the Wobbly Barn, the Krishna Guthrie Band (KGB) will kick things off for our final Happy Hour of 2024 from 6-9 p.m. Then, at 9 p.m., Sean Patrick and the Alibis will be taking the stage to cap off the year. Sean Patrick and the Alibis bring the energy to the stage every night with their high-energy performance of all your favorite songs and nightclub sing-alongs. Their contagious energy and electric performances will have you dancing, singing, and fully immersed in the moment.

Pickle Barrel tickets are \$100 per person.

Wobbly Barn tickets are \$85 per person.

All guests must be 21 years of age or older. Valid ID required at the door.

Buy tickets in advance online. Only if the events are not sold out will tickets be available at the door (as long as occupancy allows).

For more information, visit: picklebarrelnightclub.com or killington.com/things-to-do.



2024 year in film: Naughty and nice list



Screens and Streams

By James Kent

As 2024 draws to a close, it would seem fitting to offer up a top-ten best-film list and maybe throw in a worst-of-the-year list, too. However, I live in Vermont, which is not a large market for the film industry, and we hardly have any theaters in the state where new films can be seen, so there is still a batch of year-end movies I'll need to see before I can commit to an official "best of 2024" list.

Instead, I offer some post-Santa vibes for which movies wound up on my "naughty" list and which were "nice."

Horror

It was a better-than-average year for horror movies. Horror isn't my favorite genre unless it's done right.

"Longlegs" proved Anthony Perkins' son, Osgood Perkins, is a filmmaker on the rise. This a-level creep-fest got under my skin in ways few other films this year even tried, and much of that dread is owed to Perkins' exacting direction and pure visual sense of style. Throw in absolutely insane and chilling supporting performances from Nicolas Cage and Alicia Witt (how are these two not in the awards conversation?), and you've got a horror classic whose reputation will only grow over the years.

Thankfully, "The Substance" is in the year-end awards conversation, as well it should be, because it is one of the great screenplays of 2024, matched by some of the most brilliant direction (Coralie Fargeat) and daring performances by Demi Moore and Margaret Qualley. Many films tease greatness but stop short of the gate. This film kicks the gate open and says, "Who's buying me breakfast, lunch, dinner, and fourth meal?"

"Late Night with the Devil" isn't necessarily a great movie or a great horror movie, but what it is an excellent little low-budget B-movie with a fun premise that executes its concept in a brilliant, tight fashion. More films should learn the lesson of "make your point in 90 minutes and get out while the getting is good." Any longer, this film would have lagged, but it hangs around just long enough to leave you willing to recommend this little horror gem to your friends.

Not every horror film I watched this year ended up on my nice list. Here are a few that were too naughty for my taste.

"Salem's Lot." This horror adaptation of the 1975 novel by Stephen King was shot in 2021, reshot a bit in 2022, and has been kicking around on the shelf for the past two years. There were some griping complaints that the film was unceremoniously dumped onto MAX instead of hitting theaters around Halloween. I was one of those griping. Then I watched the movie. I don't know what it is about Stephen King's books—for some unknown reason, only a few directors have been able to crack the code and make a good adaptation. Unfortunately, "Salem's Lot" goes down with 2022's "Firestarter" remake as two of the worst King film adaptations in many years.

On paper, and in the movie's trailer, "In a Violent Nature" sounds like an amazingly original take on the "force-of-nature" slasher genre. This film's premise is a first-person vantage point of Johnny, the dead woodsy being who comes to life after a talisman locket is removed from hallowed

ground. We spend most of the film's run time with Johnny, slowly stalking his prey, a cabin filled with obnoxious and annoying young adults ready for the picking. Hey, if your idea of a good time is watching Johnny sneak up behind an unsuspecting woman performing yoga by the lake and watching him literally turn her inside out, this movie could be for you. But the direction is weak, and any occasional good moment feels like an accident the director lucked upon. Even the 1980s teenage me would have found this boring after a while.

"Strange Darling" isn't even a film I'd call horror, although its many fans do. Okay. "Strange Darling," you horror wanna be, I did not like you. Because it isn't strong enough to work on its thin plot in a linear format, the movie decides to jumble its narrative, ala "Pulp Fiction," to keep the audience guessing. Well, guess what? It doesn't work. Unless you haven't seen many movies, you'll be ahead of this movie every step of the way. It does get a few nice points for its beautiful cinematography (shot on 35mm film) by actor-turned-cinematographer Giovanni Ribisi. Still, it is not enough to save it from the naughty list.

Speaking of films where the director spends far too much time trying to surprise an audience who will, no doubt,

already guess every plot twist way sooner than the filmmakers think, "The Watchers" directed by M. Night Shyamalan's daughter Ishana Shyamalan. The only nice thing about "The Watchers" is that it's slightly better than M. Night's film from this year, "Trap."

"Trap" is so profoundly awful that you'll be scratching your head as to how the same person who made this film was the same person who made "The Sixth Sense." From shoddy AI backdrops subbing for a concert audience to ridiculous plot actions that no one in an actual situation would ever do, just so the film can play out to the conclusion Shyamalan wants, this is a film so bad it would easily be my worst film of the year if only I had

not seen even worse films.

Useless sequels and reboots

2024 saw several naughty film reboots and sequels. I've already mentioned "Salem's Lot," which was already done as a two-part mini-series by Tobe Hooper in 1979 and then again in 2004. Add to the list of naughty the makers of "The Fall Guy," a supposed action comedy starring Ryan Gosling and Emily Blunt, based on the 1980s TV series. The trailer made it look funny. Spoiler alert: it wasn't. I don't think I laughed a single time. The movie is an overlong mess, with a convoluted plot that gets so exhausting as it goes along; at some point, you just give up and wonder how much more time you have to spend with this turkey. Gosling and Blunt are supposedly into each other, and that drives the thrust of miscommunication throughout the movie. Still, we never get a scene that establishes they were ever a couple. This puppy's a rough one. Just stay away.

No film insulted my intelligence quite like the reboot of "Twisters." The shock here is it's directed by the Academy Award-nominated filmmaker of Minari, Lee Isaac Chung. While the original 1996 film boasted then revolutionary new CGI effects and an earnest effort in the script to confront the forces of nature with technology that could potentially help humans understand the nature of tornadoes and generate better storm prediction models, this new film is a Red state vs. Blue state affair where the winner is most de-

cidedly the red states, and the CGI may give the tornadoes a more realistic look, but they don't add anything to what I can already watch on Reels or TikTok. Carefully crafted by the algorithmic geniuses of a Hollywood studio bean counter, this "Twisters" does not mention climate change's effects on the rise of intense and unpredictable deadly weather incidents. Nope. Instead, the fine American scientific ingenuity can solve climate change and stop tornadoes dead in their tracks. Is it magical thinking or alternative thinking? I had a hard time making up my mind over the blaring anthems of country music continually running over the soundtrack, reminding every audience member this film is on the "right side" of American history.

"Ghostbusters: Frozen Empire" is the naughtiest form of fan service. Rather than provide any reason to exist other than to try and make a buck off nostalgia, "Frozen Empire" offers some of the laziest re-tread callbacks to a film I can remember. "Ghostbusters: Afterlife" from 2021 already had enough callbacks to the original 1980s movies that one might expect, but this second installment got cringy after a while. This film shouldn't have happened, but it did. America, can we band together to agree on one thing: let's make sure a third film in this new series never happens?

"Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes." The entire family sat down to watch this one. Within a half hour, we had lost the oldest child, and he slipped away for the comfort of his upstairs bedroom. A few minutes later, the wife was scrolling on her phone. Forty minutes in, the youngest slid off the couch and backward crawled out of the room, trying to go undetected. It was me, the last man standing. At forty-five minutes, I said, "Life's too short for this," and shut off the film. Was "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes" the worst movie I saw in 2024? No, but it was boring. Nonstop CGI action isn't exciting. The apes look great—almost real. But somewhere in that uncanny valley, it isn't enough. I'm not convinced. The fourth time out was not a charm for these apes.

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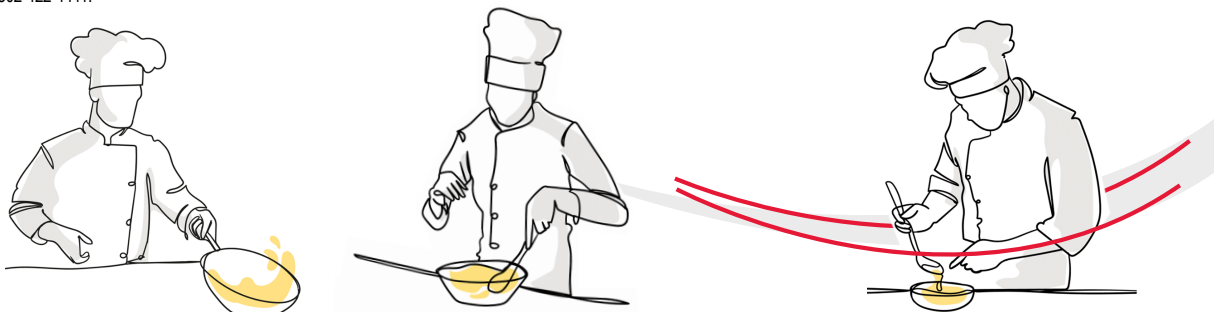
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Three years later, Soup Dog anticipates another successful season on the Mountain

By James Kent

Soup Dog, a cozy seasonal eatery nestled behind Domenic's Pizzeria near the Killington ski resort, has been warming up the slopes for three winters now, and its kettles are ready to fill bellies with soup for its fourth season. Run by Matt Buck, a former commercial photographer turned soup artisan, Soup Dog offers a unique blend of flavorful soups, hot dogs, and a creative community atmosphere.

From commercial photographer to Killington's soup master

Matt Buck's journey to Killington started as a weekend skier from Rhode Island. During the pandemic, a shift in his career as a commercial photographer—and his wife Marianne's transition to remote work—gave them the flexibility to spend more time in the area. Falling in love with the mountain lifestyle, Buck pivoted from photography to a lifelong dream: creating Soup Dog.

"My background in art helped me become a soup guy," Buck explained. "I'm a terrible baker. Baking is too precise; you have to be so exact. With soup, there's a lot of like, let's see what works, and I enjoy that."

A hidden gem with a personal touch

Tucked behind Domenic's Pizzeria, Soup Dog thrives on its intimate "clubhouse" atmosphere. The space is adorned with Buck's landscape photography, which showcases Vermont's snowy peaks and autumnal beauty.

"One thing I enjoy is talking to my customers," Buck said. "The moment you realize people like what you do and see them enjoy the food in front of you, it becomes something special. It's almost better than making the soup."

While its location might pose visibility challenges, Buck viewed it as an advantage. Being off the main road lets him focus on quality and interaction. "If we were on the main road, we might be potentially busier, but I might lose that connected feeling to the customers."

The art of soup—and community

Soup Dog's menu has evolved into a rotation of about 25 core recipes, with occasional new additions. From buffalo chicken soup with a side of ranch or blue cheese to split pea soup in the freezer for diehard fans, each offering reflects Buck's meticulous attention to detail.

"Every soup comes with focaccia bread from Heather at the Wild Fern and carefully chosen toppings. I want customers to experience them the way I enjoy them," Buck explained.

Beyond soups, Buck curates snacks like maple kettle corn and trail mixes from places he frequented before starting Soup Dog. "If it's here at Soup Dog, it's because I like it."



By James Kent

Matt Buck posed with one of his photographs featured at his restaurant Soup Dog.

Creativity beyond the bowl

Buck's artistic roots are evident in his food and photographs that line Soup Dog's walls. His work has been featured locally at Liquid Art Coffeehouse and Domenic's Pizzeria, and he still takes on custom photography projects for customers who connect with his aesthetic.

"I've always loved design and photography. From t-shirts to pint glasses, if I can do it myself, I will," Buck said with a smile.

Looking Ahead

As Soup Dog enters its fourth season, Buck remains committed to fostering growth while preserving its unique qualities. "Every year has been better than the last. I'm looking forward to another positive season," he said.

With its creative flair, dedication to quality, and sense of community, Soup Dog continues to be a hidden gem worth seeking out—whether for a steaming bowl of soup, a hot dog, a snack, a conversation with its passionate owner, or a glimpse of the artistry that defines it.

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← Screens & Streams:
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Okay, how about a little nice?

2024 did have a lot of nice offerings, and some films were very nice. If you've read my reviews since October, you'll know I'm a fan of "Anora," "A Different Man," and "Conclave." These films are some of the best of the year, and when you can see them, I suggest you do so.

"Kinds of Kindness." My favorite film of 2023 was Yorgos Lanthimos' "Poor Things." From top-to-bottom, I loved every moment of that movie. I'm a Lanthimos fan. From his early work in films like "Dogtooth" and "Alps" to his more mainstream offerings, "The Lobster" and "The Favourite," I like the kinds of films Lanthimos offers. So, it's not a big surprise that I am a fan of "Kinds of Kindness," a nearly three-hour triptych of a film starring Emma Stone, Margaret Qualley, Jesse Plemons, and Willem Defoe, playing multiple roles in three thematically-related stories. The tales are strange, uncomfortable, and risqué. They challenge the audience to think. It's also darkly comic and a throwback to Lanthimos' earlier film work. I don't believe this is a film for everyone, but it is on my nice list.

"Civil War." What worked for me in this film was writer/director Alex Garland's decision not to provide the audience with easy answers. In our current nation-divided, left-right, liberal-conservative, "let's agree to disagree on everything" country, Garland makes you decide what is going on in the story. Who is this insane president who suspended the Constitution and granted himself a third term? Are all these various factions different political ideologies or variants of a standard strain? This film is a thinking person's drama with an unsettling journey. At the film's conclusion, it's easy to imagine that a larger conflict will soon arise. A brief sequence with Jesse Plemons as the kind of American patriot you hope never to run into provides the single most intense few minutes of film in 2024.

Naughty and nice

Here are a few films that were naughty but oh so nice: "Hundreds of Beavers." The bea-

vers in this movie a naughty, and there are hundreds of them. The fur trapper in this movie is naughty as well, but because the beavers are even more naughty, he becomes the nice guy you can't help but root for. Director Mike Cheslik's innovative shoe-string budgeted, mostly silent, black & white ode to the WB cartoons of Tex Avery and the brilliant screen antics of Buster Keaton and Charlie Chaplin come together in a dizzying array of endless imagination. A 19th-century applejack salesman gets high on his own supply, loses it all thanks to some spiteful beavers, is hellbent on retribution, and in a creative video-game-like strategy, finds his way back to solvency through trading up at the fur-trapper mercantile. Cheslik stretches a 15-minute premise into nearly two hours of nonstop hilarity. Hands down, this movie was the funniest film I saw in 2024.

"The Bikeriders." This film is about naughty people, much in the way "Goodfellas" was about naughty people. No one saw it when it came out in June. I saw it at the now-shuttered Roxy Cinema in Burlington, and I was glad I did. When audiences finally catch up with this little gem of a movie, they realize they were the naughty ones for missing it.

The naughtiest of them all

"Regan" is a crime of a movie with a sorely miscast Dennis Quaid. Quaid's brother Randy used to do a decent parody of Regan in the mid-80s on Saturday Night Live. I don't know what Dennis is doing with this version, but it ain't good. The movie is a bizarre fever dream that imagines Ronald Regan as a super crusader battling the evil threat of communism in the final stages of the Cold War. He starts off as a young Hollywood crusader, rooting out the evil of communist spies in Tinseltown. To believe this film, blacklisted screenwriter Dalton Trumbo was a sinister communist spy. This film is so bizarre that I almost continued watching it to see how crazy it could get, but I have to confess--after 20 minutes of this drivel, I was

Screens & Streams→23



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out. I couldn't. It was too naughty for me.

"Madame Web" is the pinnacle of Marvel at its most cynical. This film is what happens when a studio believes its audience is so stupid it will watch anything with a comic superhero tagline on it. There isn't a moment in this film that works. It's an embarrassment for all the actors involved. It's lazy, sloppy, and filled with plot holes that even its moniker as a Marvel movie can't forgive. I said "Twisters" was the film that most insulted my intelligence in 2024. That was a lie. No film can match the depths of loathing, disgust, and anger I had towards any film quite like I had watching "Madame Web." The term "hate watch" was invented for movies like this. I wanted to shut this thing off after ten minutes but was compelled to continue because I couldn't believe the film could get any worse. And then it did. It was like The Terminator—It just kept coming and coming.

Thankfully, several year-end movies are still awaiting me that will wipe the naughty taste of the "Madame Web's" of the world out of my mind. Here's looking at you, "The Brutalist" and "The Nickel Boys." Don't let me down. I'm counting on you.

James Kent is the publisher's assistant at the Mountain Times and the co-host of the "Stuff We've Seen" podcast at stuffweveeseen.com.



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← Asylum Seekers:

from page 10

to Vermont just a few years ago with her husband. She walked through the treacherous jungle of the Darien Gap that links South America to Central America and on to the US-Mexico border, all while many months pregnant, to seek asylum from the violence and hopelessness of her native land. And what if you knew that this woman's story, unlike Mary's, is not at all unique, but far too familiar, and one that at times has resulted in the death of the mother and her unborn child, either due to the terrible conditions of the journey or her treatment at the border?

Since 2018, the nine community-based organizations that comprise the Vermont-New Hampshire

Asylum Support Network members have organized in their backyards to welcome strangers like this pregnant woman and her husband. Residents of Vermont towns from Brattleboro to Burlington and St. Johnsbury to Rutland have banded together to provide asylum seekers with safe and warm places to stay and other assistance when little else is available.

Stories of welcoming strangers are not confined to one or another country or culture. Indeed, admonitions to welcome the stranger with extravagant hospitality abound in societies around the globe and across time lest the stranger turn out to be a friend—or perhaps an angel, an ancestor, or even a Savior!

One reason the value of welcoming the stranger has such universal power may be that so many of us—perhaps most of us—have at one time or another been “a stranger in a strange land.” Indeed, most Vermonters have ancestors who came to the United States at some point over the past three centuries, looking for safety, opportunity, and the freedom to pursue their dreams. The asylum seekers coming to Vermont right now are no different from our ancestors. They seek protection for themselves and their children. They yearn for the chance to live free of the threat of violence or persecution for who they are, the color of their skin, their religious beliefs, or their

political perspective. They are ready to work hard, contribute to their communities, and live in peace with their neighbors.

In other words, they are just like the rest of us.

We in the VT-NH ASN groups around Vermont ask that each of us remember our own family's “Coming to America” story and greet the newest immigrants to our country—whether refugee, asylum seeker, migrant worker, or some other designation—with generosity of spirit and the understanding that we—or someone in our background—were also strangers here once, too.

The Vermont-New Hampshire-Asylum Support Network

← Coexistence:

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one thing, people are spending too much money to heat their homes and get around. Costs for fossil fuel heating and transportation are expensive and unpredictable. As one example, in November 2022, after Russia invaded Ukraine, fuel oil prices in Vermont spiked to over \$5 a gallon - more than \$2 a gallon higher than the year before. The Vermont Legislature adopted the The Global Warming Solutions Act (GWSA) in 2020 to ensure that our state would address the growing impacts of climate change while helping Vermonters access more stable, local heating sources and better transportation options. While we debate the most effective ways to implement this law, we must keep working on solutions to help all Vermonters transition to clean and affordable ways to power and heat our buildings and get where we need to go.

Over the last two summers, Vermont experienced devastating floods that are becoming more extreme due to climate change. These floods have upended the lives of thousands in communities across Vermont and have cost our state more than a billion dollars. Earlier this year, the Vermont Legislature enacted the Flood Safety Act, which will help

reduce flood risk by keeping development away from our rivers and out of harm's way. The bill also better protects wetlands, which can act as sponges on the landscape, and improves dam safety. These critical steps forward are just starting to take effect. Still, as they are rolled out in our communities, they will help protect Vermonters' lives and livelihoods and save our communities money - especially because Vermont is, unfortunately, expected to see increasingly intense floods in the coming years.

Vermont also continues implementing the Vermont Clean Water Act of 2015, created to clean up Lake Champlain and ensure healthy waters across our state. When the bill initially passed, Vermonters came together, declaring that we were “all in” and needed to do our part to protect our waters. We recognized that the costs of allowing our waters to become increasingly polluted are unacceptably high. We have invested significant resources in this work, and notable progress has been made. At the same time, the work continues as we still see too many beaches closed due to algae blooms and too many waterways that remain polluted. Vermont must continue to take action,

including creating a more effective system to regulate farm pollution.

Similarly, Vermont and other states are already paying an exorbitant amount to clean up contaminated water. Harmful chemicals like PFAS have been found in Vermont drinking water, and exposure to these chemicals increases the risk of numerous diseases - which also contributes to rising healthcare costs. To help address the human and financial costs of PFAS pollution, the Legislature made it easier to hold polluters accountable for the harm they cause, and they have banned certain products with PFAS from being sold in Vermont. There is more to be done, including banning PFAS from additional products, like dental floss and cleaning products.

In the last two sessions, the Legislature enacted bills encouraging the development of affordable, multi-family housing. As these bills begin to be implemented, we're already seeing these policies spur more housing of all types. By focusing development in and near our downtowns and village centers, we will add to the vibrancy of our communities, protect Vermont's forests and other critical natural resources, and keep municipal infrastruc-

ture costs down. We must unite to successfully roll out these policies around the state so all communities can benefit.

These are just a few policies Vermont has recently adopted to address some pressing issues. If we allow them to work as intended, they will help create healthier, safer communities while reducing the heavy costs of a polluted environment. We are excited to collaborate with every incoming lawmaker to build upon this work.

Vermonters deserve solutions to affordability. But any leader who tells us that we must choose affordability over a healthy environment is simply locking us into today's problems for even longer, pushing even greater expenses onto people's shoulders in the long term.

If we want to create a state that attracts new families and where our children choose to stay, we must create communities where people want to live. Fortunately, policies that protect our land, water, and air, create affordable housing, and build our resilience to climate disasters can help make Vermont the affordable, healthy, and safe place we all deserve.

*Lauren Hierl,
Executive Director, Vt
Natural Resources Council*

Rutland County Humane Society plans new “Home for Hope” in Brandon

PITTSFORD — The Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS) is moving forward with plans for its new “Home for Hope,” announcing a purchase and sale agreement for a historic building at 18 Jones Drive in Brandon. The 15,000-square-foot structure, built in 1923 and part of the former Brandon Training School complex, is listed on the National Register of Historic Places.

The building’s open floor plan offers flexibility in designing a modern, efficient facility for housing homeless animals and delivering pet services to Rutland County residents. Repurposing this existing structure is expected to save RCHS an estimated \$1.5 to \$2 million compared to constructing a new facility. The purchase, funded through RCHS Reserve Funds, reflects the organization’s commitment to sustainable, cost-effective solutions.

“The current building has outlived its ability to provide safe and efficient housing for the animals entrusted to our care,” said Interim Executive Director Mei Mei Brown. “We feel strongly that we could not find a better place to meet our mission and values.”

RCHS Interim Board President John



Submitted

The Rutland County Humane Society announced a purchase and sale agreement for the historic 18 Jones Drive home in Brandon.

Liccardi added, “This opportunity represents both a cost-effective solution and a combined service to the people of Rutland County.”

Preserving history, preparing for the future

As part of the development process, the building is undergoing a Phase 1 Environmental Study and Structural Assessment to ensure it can meet RCHS’s needs. Pending approval by

the Town of Brandon and the District 1 Act 250 office, the organization anticipates closing on the property in March 2025.

RCHS plans to launch a capital campaign later in 2025 to fund renovations. The project aims to create a facility to serve the community and its animals for 50 years or more.

For more information, visit: rchsvt.org.

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The UVM Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Helpline provides gardening assistance online 24/7/365

By Debra Heleba, Extension Community Horticulture Program Director, University of Vermont

Did you receive a poinsettia as a gift and wonder how to extend its life through the winter? Is your favorite houseplant dropping its leaves? Or are you already thinking ahead to spring and want to know when to start your seeds indoors?

The University of Vermont (UVM) Extension Master Gardener Volunteer Helpline can answer all your home horticulture questions. Although the trained volunteers who staff the Helpline won't be taking phone calls again until April 2025, the online Garden Helpline is open 24/7/365. You can go to go.uvm.edu/gardenquestion to post your question at any time.

When you submit your question, please provide as much detail as possible. Photos help, and you will find tips for submitting up to three per question on the website. Volunteers will research your question and provide science-based answers and additional resources via email within three to five business days.

So, who are these trained volunteers?

Currently, more than 30 UVM Extension Master Gardener volunteers staff the Helpline throughout the year. They are all graduates of the Vermont Extension Master Gardener program. After finishing the 16-week comprehensive gardening course, they completed a 40-hour internship to become certified.

As Helpline volunteers, they respond to a wide range of questions, even in winter, from beginning to experienced gardeners and homeowners who need answers about land-

scaping, backyard composting, and other topics. Although at this time of year, the majority of questions pertain to indoor gardening, houseplants, and preparing for the upcoming growing season, your questions don't need to be pertinent to the season.

Did you get a soil test done in the fall? Volunteers can interpret the results and provide management recommendations for implementation this spring. Are you curious why your bush beans failed to sprout this past summer? They can help you find answers to that question as well.

Keep in mind that the Helpline can only respond to questions from Vermonters, but if you live out of state, you can find your Extension Master Gardener program at go.uvm.edu/mg-find. Extension Master Gardener volunteers cannot provide personal site visits to home gardens, nor can they respond to questions from commercial growers. As

a commercial grower, you can submit plant samples and pest and disease questions to the UVM Plant Diagnostic Clinic at uvm.edu/extension/pdc.

The Garden Helpline is a free service provided by the UVM Extension Community Horticulture Program, which offers training and support to Extension Master Gardener and Vermont Master Composter volunteers. In 2024, Helpline volunteers responded to more than 800 questions from the public.

Learn more about the program at uvm.edu/extension/mastergardener. For more gardening information, visit: go.uvm.

Volunteers can interpret the results and provide management recommendations for implementation this spring.



By Debra Heleba/UVM Extension University of Vermont Extension Plant Pathologist Ann Hazelrigg (left) advised Pat Sabalis, a Master Gardener Helpline volunteer from Underhill, as they examined a specimen submitted to the Helpline for identification.

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Enter the 'Faces in Harmony' photo contest

RUTLAND—The Chaffee Art Center invites amateur and professional photographers of all ages to participate in its annual photo contest, "Faces in Harmony." Entrants must submit photos at the Chaffee Art Center during drop-off hours: Jan. 17, noon-4 p.m., and Jan. 18, 11 a.m.-2 p.m.

This year, a professional category will be introduced alongside existing categories for youth (12 and under), teens (13-18), and Adults (18+). Public voting begins when the exhibit opens on Jan. 24. Winners will include 1st and 2nd Overall, with a People's Choice award in each category. Participants can submit up to three 8"x10" mounted or framed photos reflecting the theme "Faces in Harmony," featuring humans, pets, animals, or similar subjects. Photos must be original, unstaged, and unaltered beyond resizing or cropping. Amateurs submit for free; Chaffee members in the Professional Category also enter for free, while non-members pay \$5 per entry (up to three). Unsold photos must be collected on Feb. 28 (11 a.m.-4 p.m.), or they become the property of the Chaffee Art Center.

For more information, visit: chaffeeartcenter.org.



Courtesy Chaffee Art Center
The Chaffee Art Center annual photo contest begins receiving submissions on Jan. 17.

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Rutland County Humane Society

Solutions From page 13

Crossword

C	P	U							C	A	B			
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D	E	B	S						I	R	O	N	S	
M	A	R	Y				C	P	A		M	A	C	
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Sudoku

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

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Jack—2-year-old. Male. American Staffordshire terrier.



Tabitha—1 1/2-year-old. Female. Domestic shorthair.



Chili—2-year-old. Male. Cattle dog mix.

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Aries—3-year-old. Male. American Staffordshire terrier.

STELLA

Stella—2-year-old. Female. American.

SNOWY

Snowy—4-year-old. Male. American.



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Cosmic Catalogue



Aries
March 21 - April 20

If you got the chance to approach a situation and have a conversation with someone from a renewed perspective, would you take it? With your ruling star, Mars, currently in reverse, you might not be as willing to push for progress as usual. Chances are, you made an error or two this year. You can double down or change your mind. Whatever you choose will be the choice you'll need to stick with for some time to come.



Leo
July 21 - August 20

When you get clear about what you want, you have more chances of getting it. Relationships are a key area of growth and discovery now. You can move into these new possibilities or stay in a perpetual loop. Nothing changes unless something changes. Have the conversation. Make the plan. Set yourself up for so much happiness and success for the rest of the year and beyond. If you want to light a fire, you must strike the match!



Sagittarius
November 21 - December 20

There is no debate you can't win and no heart you cannot charm right now. There is such a wonderful free flow of communication and ideas between you and someone special. Whether you're getting to know someone new or you're getting back on track with an established relationship, things really are looking up. Staying grounded while having your eyes on the prize with your future goals is the secret to your success now.



Taurus
April 21 - May 20

Life may feel a bit like a sliding doors moment this week. With so many choices and options available to you, you can do what you've always done or you can do something you've only dared to dream of. I know which option sounds more exciting, do you? Whatever choices you've got to make now, do be sure to choose authenticity first. You might ruffle some feathers in the short term, but you've got to live with your choices in the long term.



Virgo
August 21 - September 20

Striking the right balance between opportunities and responsibilities has been a sore spot in recent months. Chances are you've had to continually say no to one thing while saying yes to another thing. Right now, you have the opportunity to change your mindset about this. What if you could turn this seemingly either/or situation into a both / and one? It won't be easy, but it can be done. Anything worth having rarely comes easy.



Capricorn
December 21 - January 20

Your attitude determines your outcome. Right now, life probably feels like such a huge relief since Pluto exited your sign for good. Now, you need to reconfigure how you see the mundane aspects of your life. You see, it's from little things that big things grow. If you can't take pleasure or show gratitude in the little things, then chances are, they won't turn into big things. Think differently if you want to experience improvements in your life.



Gemini
May 21 - June 20

You have some stellar alignments right now. Relationships of all types are going well, but they are also distracting. The choices and changes you make now could have far reaching consequences. Grapple with all the possibilities and opportunities. What may seem like a limitation could actually be an opportunity. Whatever you choose, you don't lose. You either win or you learn. Stay optimistic and open! Embrace going beyond your comfort zone and heed the lessons you're learning now.



Libra
September 21 - October 20

You've had a taste of some of the potent changes in your love life as well as your sense of fun and adventure. You've worked hard to clear away old habits and attitudes that were a part of your past but not so great for your future. Whatever dreams you have in your heart, commit to them! Other people in your life are going to be a very big part of your future. When you say yes to life, both love and life say yes to you!



Aquarius
January 21 - February 20

Life is going so well for you now. A bit of a spring in your step and having more joy and fun in your life can make all the difference. If you're not experiencing this, then ask yourself, why not? You can still turn this around and in fact, it is recommended. The little chances you take and the opportunities you embrace can really change your life for the better. Don't let the past determine your future. Make the changes you know you need to make.



Cancer
June 21 - July 20

In some ways, when you look at this year, nothing has happened and everything has happened. For the most part, the growth and progress you've experienced has been completely internal. You've learned a lot about yourself and the possibilities that life has for you. Spiritually you've opened up and learned a lot as well. Everything you've done this year really has set you up for success next year. Keep doing what you're doing. Nothing has been in vain.



Scorpio
October 21 - November 20

The sacrifices you've been making might show signs of paying off, even if you can't quite see it yet. You might be thinking about some professional or life direction changes this week, but chances are, you need to be thinking about your hip pocket. You might be frustrated by a lack of progress now. However, avoid throwing out the baby with the bathwater in terms of your professional path. Your patience will be well rewarded soon enough.



Pisces
February 21 - March 20

You've been grinding through life for a while now. However, this week is a great time to press pause for a while and reconfigure things for 2025 and beyond. Do you still want to be working as hard as you have been? If you want more joy, happiness, and fun in your life, then be sure to put a little cash aside for a rainy day. In due time, you'll see the reason you've been through all that you've been through.

The rhythms of nature

The rhythms of nature are completely cyclic. Nothing operates in a linear fashion. This is something to keep in mind if you're holding your breath until 2025.

While you might be excited to bring in the New Year and its stellar configurations, it would be worth your while to reflect on the year that's been this week.

Keeping in mind the circular fashion of the cosmos, there are many opportunities to readdress issues from August and November and even the past eighteen months. What conversations would you have if you had the chance again? What risks might you take now if you knew you couldn't fail? What if you could have the chance to have everything you ever wanted?

Every now and then, the opportunity to tempt your fate, to take the chance to do something you wouldn't normally do comes around again. This chance is rare. If you're too focused on the future or even the past, you'll miss the magic in the current moment.

It is said that God's help comes in the blink of an eye. This week however, God is batting his eyelashes. Don't wait for 2025 for your life to change when you can change it now. The rewards will be well worth the risk.



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall

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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.



Discover the Killington Community



Phase 1 has begun

The first section of Killington Road — from Route 4 to Anthony Way — was reconstructed this summer; kicking off the first major construction of the Killington Forward initiative.

Work is underway for the water transmission line from Route 4 uphill to East Mountain Road, just east of Highridge condominiums. Continuing work on the well house and the high pressure pump station on Route 4 (along “the flats”).

The partnership between private developers and the town’s municipal government to fund public infrastructure will catapult the community into a new phase of growth.

Killington Forward initiative

The Town of Killington is currently undergoing a multi-year infrastructure investment to build its first municipal water system and reconstruct its main road to better serve its residents and businesses as well as support growth. In order to finance the projects, the town qualified for a Master TIF District designation and brokered a development agreement with Great Gulf who will be developing the Killington Village at the Snowshed/Ramshead base area.

Municipal water

A new municipal water system will serve residents and businesses on Killington Road, providing clean, reliable water which is necessary for growth and redevelopment.

New Killington Road

The reconstruction of Killington Road will make it safer for drivers as well as bikers and pedestrians with bus pull-offs, sidewalks and bike paths.

Workforce housing

Once the municipal waterline is extended to the base of Killington Road, a workforce housing development can get underway.

Resiliency

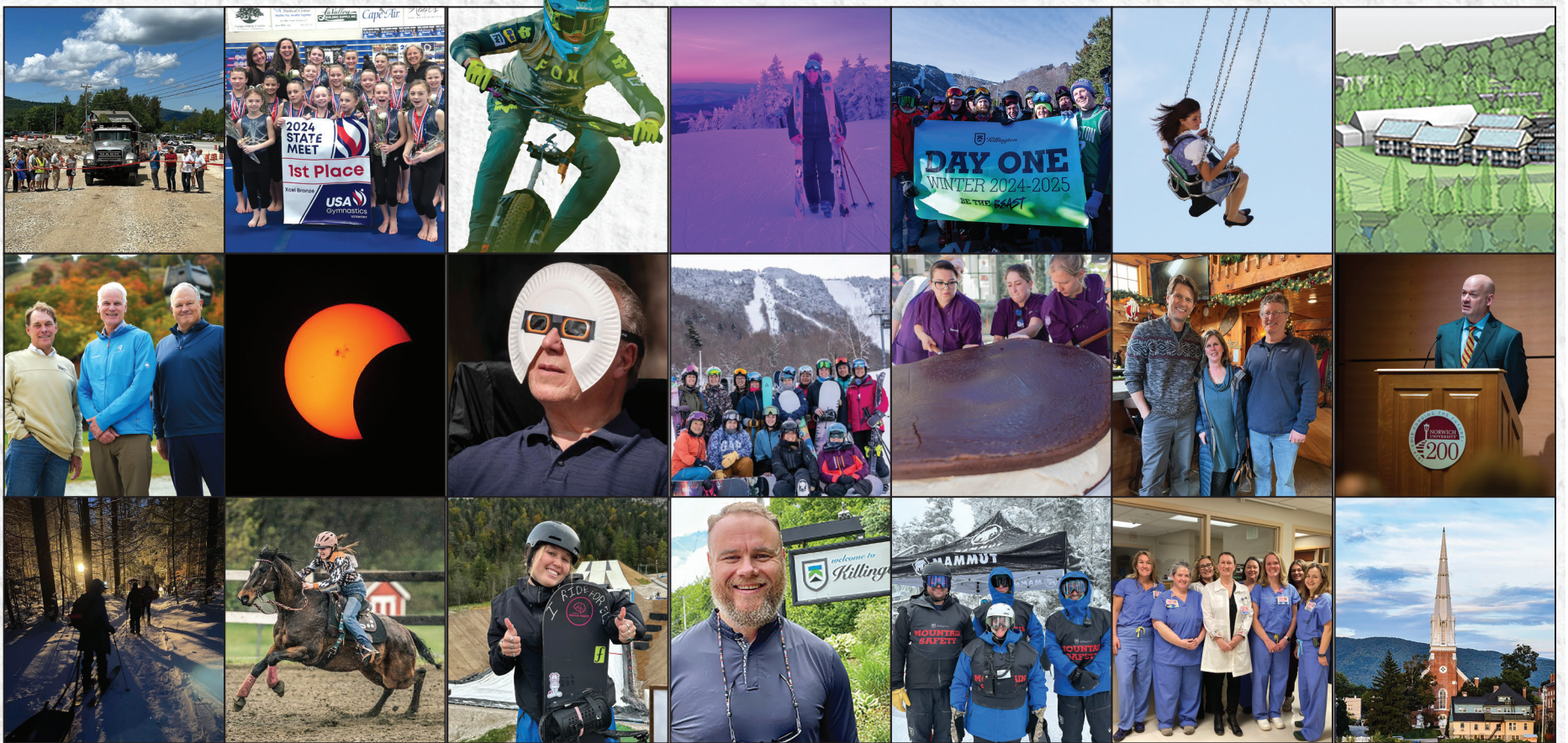
Killington has taken a proactive approach toward roadway infrastructure by adapting a 50-year storm design calculation.



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VERMONT

For more information, visit
KillingtonTown.com
or
Tinyurl.com/K-townTIF





2024 Year in review

Over the past year, our online site MountainTimes.info has received over 1 million views, an average of more than 83,000 monthly views.

JANUARY

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

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

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



By Master Sgt. Donald R. Allen via U.S. Air Force
The Afghanistan evacuation at Hamid Karzai International Airport in Afghanistan on Aug. 24, 2021.

Utilities and environmentalists call for big reforms to renewable energy law

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



Gov. Scott outlines priorities: safety, affordability, and housing

Gov. Phil Scott delivered his annual State of the State address Jan. 4 to a joint session of General Assembly, opening his eighth legislative session as governor.

The governor outlined challenges and opportunities for the state in the coming year. And having already started working with legislators on key initiatives, he dedicated his address to highlighting why it is so critical for them to prioritize three key issues: public safety, affordability, and housing.

Norwich University president out, calls decision 'mutual'

The president of Norwich University said he is departing the military school over three years on the job.

Mark Anarumo said Friday, Jan. 5, that he was leaving by "mutual" decision. Provost and Dean of the Faculty Karen Gaines will serve as acting president, according to Anarumo and an email that Gaines sent to members of the school community, which was obtained by VTDigger and confirmed by a person who works at the school.

"President Anarumo is on leave and may not return to work. ... We cannot discuss the specifics of the President's leave," Gaines wrote in the email, describing personnel matters as confidential. "We will provide information on an as needed basis."

Killington's begins new mountain safety attendant program

Killington and Pico Resorts strive to create an enjoyable environment to participate in skiing and snowboarding. New for this season, they introduced the Mountain Safety Attendant program. These team members will be on hill to directly communicate with guests through verbal and visual cues, seeking to be a positive influence on their choices and etiquette.

Rutland's CEDRR is one of 12 approved for GROW grant Program supports relocation, recruitment, and retention of residents in Vermont

On Wednesday, Jan. 10, the Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing (VDTM) announced that 12 partner organizations were approved for grant funding from the inaugural Grants for Relocation Outreach Work (GROW) program. The grants support local, regional, county-wide, or state-wide organizations conducting new resident relocation, recruitment, and retention activities.

Deirdre Morris retires after 36 years at Killington Resort

On Thursday, Jan. 11, Deirdre Morris was wished happy trails from the team at Killington Resort as she retired from her position as hospitality controller. Her career at The Beast began some 40 years ago in 1983 as the Southside Food and Beverage Manager, responsible for Bear Mountain, Skyeship and the Northeast Passage

23 rescued from Killington's backcountry

On Saturday, Jan. 20, multiple groups of skiers and snowboarders, including six juveniles (two of whom were 5 years old), ventured past Killington Ski Resort boundaries and ended up lost in the backcountry, in an area called Brewers Brook with the closest road, Wheelerville Road, about 2 1/2 miles away in Mendon.

Remembering



Kathleen Demaio, 81
Kathleen A. Demaio, 81, passed away in her home on Dec. 11, 2023. She was born Oct. 31, 1942, in Jersey City, New Jersey the daughter of Frank and Louise (Deluca) Montone.



David F. Minard, 78
David Francis Minard, 78, of Killington died peacefully Sunday morning Jan. 7, 2024, with family by his side. He was born on Nov. 9, 1945 in Rutland.



Leopold "Poldi" Pfeifenger, 82
Leopold "Poldi" Pfeifenger III, 82, passed away at his home on Dec. 31 surrounded by family and friends, as any entertainer would love to have timed properly.

Fire destroys Neil home in Killington, pets perished

A fast-burning fire rendered one of the oldest houses in Killington a total loss early Wednesday morning, Jan. 24.

The Neil family lived at 202 Old Route 4, just east of Killington Road. It's a tucked away remnant of the old two-lane road over Sherburne Pass that preceded the 1960s highway improvements that created the present four-lane highway.

William Lucci joins the CEDRR team as program director of The Hub CoWorks

Chamber & Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR) announce the appointment of William "Bill" Lucci as program director of The Hub CoWorks on Thursday, Jan. 25.

Killington Resort supports local with Play Forever Initiative

Killington Resort has granted over \$300,000 in cash and in-kind charitable donations through its Play Forever commitment in 2023 to support environmental and community nonprofit organizations, according to a news release Jan. 28.



By Bob Giolito
Volunteers search for missing skiers/riders in Mendon.



Construction on Killington's municipal waterline is underway

Construction has begun with an access road from East Mountain Road up to the water storage tank and is about half completed. Casella Construction Inc. with subcontractor Maine Drilling & Blasting has been working on the first section of its Contract 1-3A for the town of Killington since early December.

Mountain Views School Board answers FAQs on proposed \$99m bond

Ever since a new middle school and high school was proposed five years ago, there have been discussions over the true needs and alternative options in order to keep the costs down while continuing to provide excellent educational standards. Now with a bond for a new build on the Town Meeting Day ballot (Article 7), the board explained why this was the most prudent option for taxpayers.

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

Late change affects formulas for all school district budgets, rates
Lawmakers are fast-tracking a bill that would replace a controversial 5% cap on homestead property tax rates with a new tax "discount" on those rates for certain school districts. The bill, H.850, would scrap the blanket 5% property tax cap originally included in Act 127 and instead give districts a 1 cent discount on homestead property for every percent decrease in their "tax capacity" resulting from Act 127.

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

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



Courtesy Killington Ski Resort

Local taxpayers to see double-digit increases in ed tax rates, again

The difference between a projected statewide yield per student of \$10,250 and \$9,775, probably doesn't cause alarm for most. But the effect on local taxes could be significant: to the tune of a 11% increase in the base equalized tax rate and a 15%-30% increase after each town's Common Level of Appraisal is factored in. For a homestead in Killington on the Grand List for \$500,000 that means \$15,373 in education taxes if Mountain Views Supervisory Union's (MVSU) projected yield of \$10,250 proves correct — and \$703 more if the \$9,775 yield is applied.

Agency of Ed endorses plan to build new Woodstock school

The state Agency of Education (AOE) has endorsed Mountain Views Supervisory Union's (MVSU) plans for its new middle/high school construction project. This decision qualifies the project for construction aid upon the state's reinstatement of the program. "The Capital Outlay Financing Formula (COFF) establishes the maximum and minimum square foot parameters by school size (student capacity) and grade range, through a square foot allowance per student or program. The formula also establishes the allowable cost per square foot for construction... A review of the information submittals has confirmed that minimum square footages have been met for all program and service spaces in the proposed design," wrote AOE School Facilities Program Manager Bob Donohue in the state's enforcement letter, Feb. 16.

FEBRUARY

Legislators offer bandaid to bleeding taxpayers



Owners of a modest \$250,000 assessed home in Hartland may face a \$1,100 property education tax increase for FY2025. Homeowners are angry and distraught — some fear they can't afford to stay in their homes. Many blame local school districts, assuming their budgets are bloated.

Little Mexico restaurant opens in Ludlow

The grand opening of Little Mexico in the Okemo Marketplace Plaza took place recently with many Ludlow area members excited to sample delicious enchiladas, tacos, margaritas, and so much more! In addition to Mexican food and drinks the restaurant provides catering and hosts events.

For the ribbon ceremony, Owner Oscar Torres cut the ribbon with two of his team members behind him, Tim McEnaney (left) and General Manager Casey Crompton (right). Assistant Okemo Valley Regional Chamber of Commerce Director Leah Kriebel (left) and Chamber Executive Director Carol Lighthall (right) held the ribbon.



Caption: By Donald Dill

Vermont Farmers' Food Center Surpasses Fundraising Goal, Advances Renovation Efforts

RUTLAND—The Vermont Farmers Food Center (VFFC) is thrilled to announce the successful conclusion of its recent fundraising campaign, marking a significant milestone as the organization moves forward with its renovation efforts in 2024. Thanks to the overwhelming support and generosity of our community, VFFC not only reached but exceeded its ambitious \$70,000 fundraising goal.

'A perfect mess': School construction needs in a chaotic budget year

In fall 2023, the leaders of the Milton Town School District unveiled the design for its new elementary and middle school (pre-K-8) at a cost of \$200 million, which gave the community pause, but it was the challenges of the current annual budget cycle that ultimately led the district to table the much-needed project this year. Initial projections that indicated that property taxes could increase statewide by an average of 20% have the state and district school boards scrambling.

State reminder: Spring construction projects must take measures to protect clean water

All projects over 1 acre require additional state permits
With spring construction season ahead, the Dept. of Environmental Conservation (DEC) wants to remind Vermonters about additional requirements to help protect the state's waterways.

Alternative to new build was presented to Killington Select Board

The \$99,000,000 bond for a middle/high school in Woodstock is not the only option, according to Killington Selectman Jim Haff. Four years ago a much less expensive proposal was presented to the Mountain Views Supervisory Union (MVSU), that would have fixed many of its failing systems and extended the useful life of the building 15- 20 years, according to the proposal made by Johnson Controls, Inc. (JCI).

MARCH

School budgets struggle

The Barstow school budget, Article 10, was defeated by just 4 votes — 379 (no) to 375 (yes). Otter Valley Unified Union School District school budget vote was also defeated with a margin of 891-yes to 1,325-no. Mountain Views Supervisory Union (MVSU) was expected to pass its \$29,756,674 bond, an 11% increase over last year, by a narrow margin. As of 11 p.m. Tuesday, six of the seven district towns had reported results — only Woodstock, which is expected to pass the budget by a wider margin than some other district towns, votes are not tallied.

Nikki Haley wins Vermont, the first state to spurn Trump in primaries

Former South Carolina Gov. Nikki Haley won her first state in the Republican presidential primary on Tuesday — and it happened in Vermont.

Vermonters continue to be sheltered following the new hotel/motel rate

The Dept. for Children and Families (DCF) announced the successful continuation of sheltering all Vermonters currently in a motel and eligible for the General Assistance (GA) Emergency Housing program. This was made possible through collaboration with hotels/motels that accepted the new negotiated rate of \$80 per night, according to a news release Friday, March 1.



The Travel Inn in Rutland was one of at least 75 motels in Vermont where state agencies housed people who would otherwise be homeless.

By Mike Dougherty/VTDigger



Vermonters rejected nearly one-third of school budgets

On Town Meeting Day 29 of 93 school budgets were voted down including four in Rutland County and two in Windsor County

Voters struck down close to a third of school budgets across Vermont on Tuesday, March 5, the highest proportion in at least a decade, according to the Vermont Superintendents Association.



Pippa Scott

Submitted

KMS student named finalist in UVM entrepreneurship competition

Pippa Scott is the sole Vermonter to make cut; winner receives full-tuition scholarship

Pippa Scott, a student at Killington Mountain School in Killington, was named one of five finalists in the University of Vermont's inaugural Vermont Pitch Challenge, a new entrepreneurial-focused competition that gives high school sophomores, juniors and seniors from across the world a chance to win a full-tuition scholarship to UVM by pitching innovative business plans that create a positive impact.

Dick McCormack to retire after 3-decade Senate career

After more than three decades representing Windsor County in the Vermont Senate, Dick McCormack plans to retire next January at the conclusion of his term.

The veteran Democrat disclosed his decision to constituents on Town Meeting Day, March 5.

The Dorset Equine Rescue expands to 178-acre 'Forever Farm'

It's a pivotal moment in the history of The Dorset Equine Rescue. For nearly 12 years the organization has been saving abused and neglected horses, interrupting the slaughter pipeline, supporting horse owners in crisis and partnering with law enforcement on animal welfare investigations and seizures throughout Vermont and beyond.

Killington fire chief resigns

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

VNAHSR CEO Sara King to retire after 23 years

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

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

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

Currently, Saunders works as the chief strategy and innovation officer for Broward County Public Schools, the sixth largest school district in the country.

Vermont House passes modernized renewable energy standard

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

Remembering



Submitted
Bernie Rome, 89

Bernard Rome passed away on Saturday, March 9, in West Palm Beach, Florida, from heart failure. He was 89.



Submitted
Erica Jean (Carbonneau) Hurd, 55

March 6, 2024
It is with great sadness we share the passing of Erica Hurd at home with family at her side.



Submitted
Patricia Ann Job (McGrath), 63

Sept. 22, 1960 - March 12, 2024
Patty Ann Job (McGrath) died Monday, March 12 at the Rutland Regional Medical Center of ovarian cancer. She was 63 years young.

\$50 million assessment at Mountain Green to hit condo owners in July

After decades of calling Killington home, some say it's too expensive for them to stay. Mountain Green condo owners voted in favor of a \$50 million assessment to bring the building into the 21st Century, but some longtime owners said their quarterly payments will be so high they can't afford it and they will be forced out.



Courtesy Nancy Koch
New Killington Deli & Marketplace owner Peter Zelken shakes hands with former owner Cliff Koch in front of the store.

Killington Deli and Marketplace changes hands after 39 years

After 39 years working seven days a week all year long, Cliff Koch and family are ready to pass the torch of the popular Killington Deli & Marketplace on to the next family. The business officially sold to the Zelken family, Monday, April 1, 2024.

All aboard the 'Solar Express'

Sold-out train will run from Rutland to Burlington and back, aims to reduce hassles, traffic during April 8 eclipse. While everyone knows about the Polar Express, on Monday, April 8, it'll be the "Solar Express" that takes passengers from Rutland up to Burlington, to witness the solar eclipse in the path of totality, which will last from about 3:26 to 3:29 p.m.

MVSU Board hears results of district survey on new build

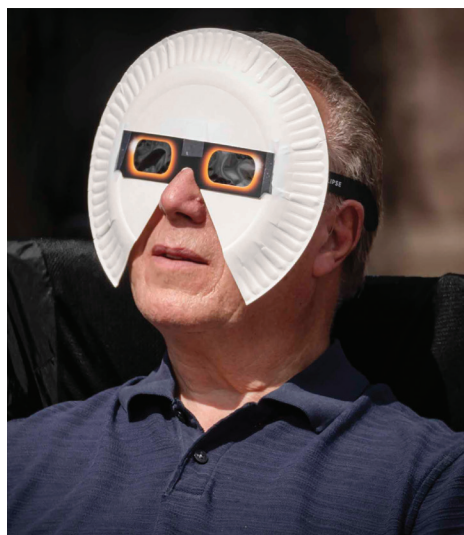
The Mountain View Supervisory Union (MVSU) board's proposal to fund a new middle-high school in Woodstock with a \$99 million bond was defeated about 60% to 40% last month on Town Meeting Day. The board subsequently distributed an information-gathering survey, to which 1,395 people responded. Board vice-chair Ben Ford reviewed survey results at the April 1 district board meeting.

Eclipse wows viewers across the state

Awestruck eclipse-watchers across the state said the event was well worth the effort — and many traveled hundreds of miles to see the rare phenomenon.

"Looking up at where the sun usually is and seeing, like, a hole in the sky, is so weird ... eerie" said Ben Frechette, 34, who came up from Boston.

The next total solar eclipse in the U.S. won't occur until August 2044.



by Glenn Russell-VTDigger
A spectator was well-protected to view a solar eclipse April 8.

APRIL

Killington's Pippa Scott wins UVM 'Shark Tank'-style entrepreneurship competition

Receives full-tuition scholarship

Pippa Scott, a high school junior from Killington, has won the grand prize at the University of Vermont's (UVM) inaugural Vermont Pitch Challenge. The competition offered high school entrepreneurs worldwide a chance to secure a full-tuition scholarship for their innovative ventures.

Rutland Area Robotics qualifies for championship in Houston

A collection of successful scoring opportunities has propelled Rutland Area Robotics' IBOTS FRC team 2370 to a return to the FIRST® Championship in Houston mid-April.

Founded in 1989 by inventor Dean Kamen, FIRST™ is a global nonprofit organization that prepares young people for the future through a suite of life-changing youth robotics programs that build skills, confidence, and resilience.

Mountain Times to debut new website

The Mountain Times debuted its new clear design on Friday, April 26 at MountainTimes.info.

VHFA awards \$40 million for affordable housing

Rutland and Woodstock are two of the five communities selected for apartment developments

The Vermont Housing Finance Agency (VHFA) Board of Commissioners announced April 15, that its annual award of federal housing tax credits will support the construction of 156 in "perpetually affordable" apartment buildings in five communities across the state. The sale of this year's tax credits to investors is expected to yield over \$40 million in funds, covering an estimated 60% of total project development costs.



By Jason Mikula

Killington Forward update: Killington Road Phase 1B

The closure of the Killington Access Road from its intersection at Route 4 to Anthony way continues with a detour via West Hill Road.

This week the Killington Sports sign will temporarily be taken down along with a few light poles to make room for a future retaining wall. Excavation up the hill will continue and fill will be taken down to the Old Route 4 dump site.

Jarvis Green announces the closure of JAG Productions

Jarvis Antonio Green, founder of JAG Productions, a White River Junction and New York City based Black theater company, announced that it will close June 15 in a letter to friends of JAG sent Monday, April 22.

2024 YEAR IN REVIEW

January

Harvard president resigns

Claudine Gay, Harvard University's first Black president, resigns following testimony to Congress on anti-semitism on campus and amid plagiarism allegations.

February

Super Bowl thrills fans in Las Vegas

Super Bowl LVIII is the most-watched TV program in U.S. history, averaging 123.4 million viewers across television and streaming platforms. The Kansas City Chiefs won back-to-back titles and their third in 5 years with an overtime win over the SF 49ers

March

Former Trade Advisor begins prison sentence

Peter Navarro, Donald Trump's former trade adviser, began serving a four-month jail term on Jan. 6, 2021, for contempt of Congress for refusing to comply with a subpoena from a House committee investigating the Capitol riot.

April

Florida reaches population milestone

Florida's population reached 23 million, making it the third most populous state in the U.S.

May

Weather-related incidents wreak havoc

Unprecedented tornadoes and other severe weather-related storms caused more than \$1 billion in damages across the U.S.

June

Biden / Trump debate leads to questions and concerns about the president's fitness

President Joe Biden's weak performance in his one-and-only 2024 debate against the ex-president sparked growing concern amongst Democrats that Biden could not win re-election.

July

An assassination attempt on ex-president shakes the nation

On July 13, an assassination attempt on former President Donald Trump at an open-air campaign rally in Pennsylvania came within centimeters of killing him. The incident was universally viewed as a massive security failure on behalf of the Secret Service.

August

Harris receives historic Democratic nomination

After President Joe Biden announced his decision to not run for a second term, Vice President Kamala Harris became the nation's first Black female presidential nominee of either party.

September

Delay of sentence

Sentencing for convicted presidential candidate Donald Trump in his hush money trial was delayed until after the election.

October

Former president turns 100

Former U.S. President Jimmy Carter turned 100, becoming the only U.S. president to reach that milestone.

November

Donald Trump is elected as next U.S. president

Former president Donald Trump was re-elected as president of the U.S. by the nation. He won the popular vote and the electoral college—much to Vermont's surprise.

December

Breakthrough in Cancer Research Announced

U.S. Scientists revealed a breakthrough in cancer immunotherapy, showing promising results for treating previously incurable forms of cancer. The development brought hope to millions and marked a significant step forward in medicine.



Submitted



Submitted

MAY

Blasting to begin on Killington Road this week

Work to resume on East Mountain Road next week, delays expected

With warmer weather in the forecast this week, Markowski Excavating, Inc. will continue excavation at the base of Killington Road up to Anthony Way. However, this week they'll likely start blasting ledge that they encountered.



The west side of Killington Road is dug out, blasting to come.

By Jason Mikula

Twice defeated: budgets in Rutland County school districts fail again

Last Tuesday, April 30, three of the four school budgets in Rutland County that failed on Town Meeting Day, failed again upon a revote. Voters in Rutland Town School District, Otter Valley Unified Union School District, and Barstow Unified Union School District again voted down school budgets.

The fourth Rutland County district that failed its budget on Town Meeting Day, Slate Valley School District, will hold its revote May 9 — and attempt to overcome a deficit of 534 votes that failed its original budget.

Vt Senate passes modernized Renewable Energy Standard

Tuesday, May 7, the Vermont Senate passed H.289, to modernize the Renewable Energy Standard and set Vermont on a path to delivering 100% renewable electricity across all the state's utilities by 2035.

This would make Vermont only the second state to meet that critical benchmark, and would significantly increase the requirements for Vermont utilities to support the deployment of new renewable energy.

Vermont Legislature adjourns after a contentious 2024 session

Session was shaped by debates over property taxes, housing shortages, flood recovery and public safety

After a tumultuous day of dealmaking on housing, land use and property tax measures, the Vermont Legislature adjourned its 2024 session in the early hours of Saturday morning, May 11. The Senate gavelled out at 1:18 a.m. and the House at 2:07 a.m.

The session was shaped by existential debates over the future of the state. Lawmakers grappled with projected double-digit property tax increases, a persistent housing shortage, the aftermath of a catastrophic summer flood, an outcry over public safety and more.



A Rutland welcoming: New resident opens new business downtown

Art lovers rejoice—a new art supply store is opening in downtown Rutland. Kaleidoscope Art Supply's grand opening is Thursday, May 16, on the second floor of 37 Center St.

Founder and curator Raven Crispino always wanted to open an art store. After leaving New Jersey and moving to Vermont, she decided to take a chance on Rutland and open her business with the Rutland community in mind.

"My thought process for what I was going to buy for the store was very much centered around the people I met in Rutland, what they like, what they are into, and other local businesses where I can collaborate," said Crispino.

Slate Valley school district to hold fourth vote on district budget

In response to the results of the last vote on May 9, and valuable community feedback during the school board meeting on May 13, the Slate Valley Unified Union School District will hold its fourth vote in an attempt to pass the budget on May 30. It will be a revote on the third FY25 school budget presented to taxpayers May 9.

Health premium increases of 16%-19% projected for 2025

Vermonters are again facing steep upward premium growth for 2025 due to the cumulative impact of hospital costs, drug prices and state health care policy choices. Blue Cross and Blue Shield of Vermont projects that these trends will continue and will require rate increases of 16.3% for individual health plans and 19.1% for the small group health plans to pay for the cost of the care for Vermonters covered by Vermont Health Connect.

Center Street redesign takes shape

The redesign of Center Street in downtown Rutland is taking its first steps towards becoming a reality. Rutland City Mayor Micheal Doenges presented the Center Street Redesign project at a recent Community and Economic Development Committee meeting at city hall.



By Zach Godwin/Killington Resort
Killington Resort debuted a new exhibit at Wonderfeet Kid's Museum in downtown Rutland earlier this month.

Killington Resort exhibit in the Wonderfeet Kid's Museum showcases mountain recreation

As part of Killington Resort's commitment to Play Forever, it sponsored a new exhibit at the Wonderfeet Kid's Museum located in downtown Rutland on Merchants Row.

Killington Resort exhibit offers the little ones a chance to be fully immersed in what The Beast has to offer during all four seasons, including pedal bikes and Burton Riglet snowboards

Gov. Scott signs budget, vetoes renewable energy standard bill

On Thursday, May 23, Governor Phil Scott, as expected, signed the budget bill into law H.833, while vetoing H.289, An Act Relating to the Renewable Energy Standard.

Scott has long voiced his opposition to the renewable energy bill because of the cost and complexity in how the law could be carried out and the ultimate cost to consumers. Meanwhile, the governor and lawmakers found enough middle ground on the budget for him to sign it into law.

For the bills he has vetoed, the Legislature will hold a "veto session" on June 17. For the renewable bill, H.289, the vote will be close as to whether his veto will be overridden in both chambers.

Remembering

Judith Hawley, 71

Judith Hawley, 71, passed peacefully on April 3, 2024, in her Pittsfield home with her family by her side.



Submitted
Judith Hawley

Peter Michael Gish, 98

Peter Michael Gish ("Mike"), age 98, died on March 3, 2024. Mike was born on March 2, 1926, in New York City to Carl K. Gish and Helen Baldwin Gish.



Jimmy LeSage, age 74

Jimmy LeSage, 74, founder and director of New Life Hiking Spa in Killington passed away on the morning of May 12, 2024, at VITAS Hospice in Naples, Florida, of natural causes with his devoted wife, Kathleen, by his side.



By Karen T. Bartlett
Jimmy LeSage

JUNE

New options presented for the reconstruction of Woodstock MS/HS

About 70 people attended the Mountain Views Supervisory Union (MVSU) school board meeting Monday, June 3, to hear a presentation by Marty Spaulding and Paul Stafford of PCI Capital Project Consulting, and Kurt Naser of PC Construction, on three options for fixing the 50-year-old middle/high school facilities in Woodstock.

A bond vote for \$99 million to build a new facility failed on Town Meeting Day March 5 by 10 percentage points.

Rutland Town passes school budget, Slate Valley fails again

Barstow, Otter Valley prepare for third budget votes June 11 and 12

On Thursday, May 30, two Rutland County school budgets were up for revotes. Only one passed.

On its third attempt, Rutland Town School District's \$10.57 million budget passed 477-288. On its fourth attempt, Slate Valley Unified Union's \$30.8 million budget failed 962-994.

Since its original budget vote on Town Meeting Day, the Rutland Town board has cut \$124,600 from its FY25 budget.

While Slate Valley will have to go back to voters for a fifth vote, Superintendent Brooke Olsen-Farrell said the margin this last time around was less than it had been, giving her hope.

Gov. Scott vetoes property tax bill, unsettling next year's ed funding

Gov. Phil Scott vetoed the annual property tax bill on Thursday, setting up a veto session showdown on a piece of legislation that must pass for schools to be funded as usual.

"We must provide property tax relief now. This can't wait for another study before implementing cost containment strategies," Scott said in a statement.

Legislature overrides six vetoes, a new record

Of Gov. Phil Scott's seven vetoes only a sweeping data privacy bill was sustained by the Senate. The six vetoes set a new record for the Vermont Legislature, beating the record they set last year with five vetoes in a single day. But Scott made his own record, since he took office in 2017 he's vetoed 52 bills, the most of any governor in state history by far.

With veto override, Act 250 reform bill becomes law

Bill is hailed as a compromise between advocates for housing and environmentalists

Lawmakers have voted to override Gov. Phil Scott's veto of a marquee housing and land-use bill that makes broad reforms to Act 250, Vermont's signature development review law. That means H.687, a bill that seeks to balance promoting housing growth and environmental conservation, will now become law.

Hundreds of Vermont teens to attend a Governor's Institutes this summer

In the coming weeks, six hundred high school students will attend a Governor's Institutes of Vermont (GIV) intensive summer program, according to a news release June 13. They will spend 1-2 weeks on a college campus diving deeply into career-oriented topics with peers from around the state, studying the arts, engineering, entrepreneurship, environmental science and technology, global issues and youth action, health and medicine, mathematical sciences, and technology and design.

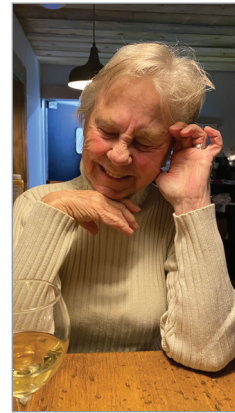


Students gather together in the Arts Institute at Vermont State University Castleton.

Remembering

Margaret Schiessl, 88

After a well-lived life, long-time Killington Vermont resident Margaret "Omi" Schiessl passed away at age 88 on March 4, 2024, in Parrish, Florida.



Margaret Schiessl



Angela Rose Boisvert (formerly Angela Kardos) age 77, of Killington, passed peacefully on June 9 after a long battle with cancer. She was born Angelika Rose Tolmachov in 1947 in Bad Tölz, Germany. She immigrated to the United States with her mother as a young girl. Her early years were spent in New Jersey.



Submitted



Submitted

Angela Rose Boisvert

Killington Road to reopen July 19

"On July 19th, we will open the Access Road to two-way traffic on a gravel surface. It will remain this way going forward until work along edges of the road are completed," Markowski Excavating, Inc. explained in a news release Tuesday, June 25.



Courtesy Vermont rodeo team

Evelyn Mountford of Wallingford is one of four Vermont riders to qualify for Barrel Racing and Pole Bending national events.

Vermont's junior high rodeo finalists head to first-ever national championship

Four Vermont girls from New England's only rodeo team will face competitors from most U.S. states and abroad

A weeklong junior high rodeo is being held this week in Des Moines, Iowa. Events run Sunday, June 23 through Saturday, June 29 and Vermont had representation on that national stage for the first time.

Four girls — Rianna Bagalio of Randolph, Evelyn Mountford of Wallingford, Brie Pikkarainen of Wallingford, and Peyton Nichols of Worcester — are competing in the National Junior High Finals Rodeo, the biggest event in rodeo sports for middle schoolers.

Feds give Killington \$25 million grant RAISE grant adds to \$19.1 million received to date for municipal water and the reconstruction of Killington Road

The town of Killington was awarded \$25 million by the federal government to engineer and construct Phase 2-4 of its Killington Forward development. The town received the Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant approval on Wednesday, June 26 in a letter from the U.S. Dept. of Transportation and held a special meeting to announce the news Friday, June 28.

Paramount Theatre receives \$1 million to complete expansion

Downtown Rutland's Paramount Theatre was one of eight Vermont recipients to receive Northern Regional Border Commission (NBRC) Catalyst grants totaling \$7.9 million. Phil Scott, Senator Bernie Sanders, Senator Peter Welch, and Congresswoman Becca Balint, along with NBRC, made the announcement Thursday, June 27.

After a year, Shaw's reopens in Ludlow

The flood of July 2023 devastated many local communities; among them Ludlow suffered greatly. Now, nearly a year later, Shaw's supermarket celebrated its grand reopening Friday, June 28, at 9 a.m. at its downtown store

White River Junction celebrates the opening of 42 affordable apartments

On Wednesday, June 26, the White River Junction community celebrated the official grand opening of 42 new affordable apartments downtown with a ribbon cutting and an apartment tour.

RRMC named Blue Distinction Center for maternity care

Improving quality of care for birthing has been a laser focus for Rutland Regional Medical Center's (RRMC) Women and Children's Unit and Birthing Center. This past January, the steady work to improve maternal health outcomes paid off when the hospital was formally named a Blue Distinction Center for Maternity Care—the only hospital in Vermont to receive this distinction.



Courtesy RRMC
RRMC Women and Children's Unit and Birthing Center team celebrates becoming the first Vermont hospital named as a Blue Distinction Center for Maternity Care.

Killington braces for tax bills

Town is tops in Vt for homestead rate, non-homestead rate; third for school rate
Last Wednesday, July 3, the state Dept. of Taxes published the list of tax rates for all Vermont towns. Killington topped the 260 municipalities listed for education homestead tax rate (\$3.1981) and non-homestead rate (\$2.6571) — not a big surprise given the fact that the town has long been No. 1 for its gap between published Grand List values and actual market value, which is corrected for using a Common Level of Appraisal (CLA).

Killington locals write a Hallmark movie

One night about five years ago, Killington resident Steve Kent told his partner Pam Rice that she had seen so many Hallmark Channel Christmas movies that she should try writing one herself. That playful remark became a challenge to themselves to do just that. The result is the new Christmas movie "A Very Vermont Christmas" premiering on the Hallmark Channel on Saturday, July 20 at 8 p.m.



Courtesy Pam Rice
Lead actor Ryan McPartlin smiles with Killington writers Pam Rice and Steve Kent.

JULY

Property taxpayers crowd in for Killington reappraisal presentation

"Participating in the reassessment is the most fiscally responsible thing you can do," said Town Manager Michael Ramsey as he opened the Killington informational meeting on the upcoming reappraisal of Grand List properties, Tuesday, July 23. "We don't want others to come in and assume we all have golden faucets, which is what they might do," he warned.

Casella recognized on Time's 'America's Best Mid-Size Companies 2024' List
Casella Waste Systems, Inc. (Nasdaq: CWST), a regional solid waste, recycling and resource management services company, has been named to Time's "America's Best Mid-Size Companies 2024" list. Casella was the only company in the waste, recycling, and resource management services industry—and the only company headquartered in Vermont—among the list of 500, according to a news release July 16.

Remembering

Dave Bienstock, 78
Dave Bienstock of Killington VT passed away from interstitial lung disease, peacefully on June 25, 2024, with his wife, Diane Benton, by his side.

Bienstock, originally a music teacher from Brooklyn, New York, worked for many years at Willowbrook State School in Staten Island, New York. He was passionate about skiing and would travel to Killington to ski every weekend during the winter months.



Submitted
Dave Bienstock

Donald "Don" Williams, 85

Donald "Don" Williams, 85, of Mendon passed away on July 10, 2024. Born on November 28, 1938, in Williamsport, Pennsylvania, Don was well known for his straightforward, honest demeanor, always telling it like it is, yet with a big hearted and kind spirit underneath.



Submitted
Donald "Don" Williams

Charles Richard Parker, 74

Charles (Charley) R. Parker 74 of Pittsford died unexpectedly in the line of duty on a fire call Monday July 8, 2024, at the Chittenden Volunteer Fire Station.

He was born on Dec. 17, 1949, in Rutland, the son of Fredrick G. Parker and Mary (Harmon) Parker.



Submitted
Charles (Charley) R. Parker

AUGUST



Michael Ramsey

Submitted

Killington Town Manager Ramsey resigns

Final day will be Aug. 16, almost exactly a year after he began

On Tuesday, July 30, Killington's Town Manager Michael Ramsey submitted a letter of resignation to the Select Board. The board accepted Ramsey's resignation after an executive session Friday, Aug. 2 at 5 p.m., announcing the news for the first time publicly.

The Paramount Theatre begins \$6 million renovation

Totaling more than 60,000 square feet across two buildings on Center Street in downtown Rutland, the Paramount Theatre has begun a significant renovation and expansion into the adjacent Richardson Building. Expansion includes a 4,000 square foot, multiuse venue on the fourth floor of The Richardson Building.

Vermont rugby star Ilona Maher wins Olympic bronze

Maher becomes the first Vermonter to medal at the summer games since 2016

Her raw strength and speed — and the way she effortlessly stiff-arms opponents — have left Olympic commentators in awe. Her videos with celebrity rapper Snoop Dogg and retired football star Jason Kelce have racked up millions of views on social media. Now, Burlington's very own women's Rugby Sevens star Ilona Maher is an Olympic medalist — the state's first at the summer games since fellow Burlingtonian Laura Graves brought home the bronze medal in the team dressage competition at the 2016 Olympics.

The Killington World Cup Foundation awards over \$330,000 in grants to 33 nonprofits

The Killington World Cup Foundation (KWCF) awarded 33 grants totaling \$330,000 to Northeast area nonprofits in eight states, with five of this year's grantees being new to KWCF. KWCF also donated \$170,000 to support athlete housing at the Killington Cup. These grants were made possible as a result of the 2023 Stifel Killington Cup.

Pawlet Select Board member cited for assaulting farm worker, juvenile

Richard Hulett, owner of Deer Flats Farm and a Select Board member in Pawlet, is facing two charges of simple assault. A Vermont State Police investigation concluded that Hulett assaulted a farm worker and the farm worker's 15-year-old nephew in an altercation last month.

Photo: Pawlet Migrant-Justice-ralley-2000x1500.jpg.psd

Caption: Farm workers and Migrant Justice staff and supporters gathered on Deer Flats Farm, July 18.



Submitted

Patrick Max 81

Remembering

Patrick Max, 81

Born on St. Patrick's Day in 1943 to an Irish mother and German American father, Patrick Max was the only one among his six siblings to receive a full dose of the Irish chromosome. Pat spent a lifetime recreating the best parts of Irish culture wherever he lived—immersing himself in Irish writers and poets from Beckett and Behan to Wilde and Yeats

Full Quechee Road rehab estimated at \$6 million, options considered

At a Monday, Aug. 19 Select Board meeting, Scott Williams of Pathways Consulting in Lebanon reviewed a current eight-page engineering report regarding a detailed study of the 6-mile road that was financed with American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds. The tests and engineering were performed by M&W Soils Engineering of Charlestown, and the report authored by Randal Rhodes.

Vermont's new motel room limits are primed to push out hundreds of households this fall

When Mary Mojica's Waterbury apartment flooded last summer, all she could grab were a couple of boxes, some clothes, and her dog, Bella. Since then, Mojica, 59, has taken up residence at the Days Inn in Colchester, with the aid of a voucher from Vermont's emergency housing program. Her efforts to find a rental she can afford on her disability income have stalled. And her days at the Days Inn will soon run out.

Green Mountain Care Board approves double-digit increase in health insurance premiums for third year in row

For the third year in a row, the Green Mountain Care Board has approved double-digit increases in the cost of annual premiums for individual Vermonters and small organizations who purchase their health insurance plans on Vermont Health Connect.

Passholders purchase Killington and Pico Resort, community? What does independent ownership mean for Killington and Pico Resort, community?

Thursday, Aug. 22, Killington Resort announced that Powdr will be selling Killington Resort and Pico Mountains to a passionate group of local passholders.

Phill Gross and Michael Ferri are the lead investors of the group and will be joined by a yet-to-be-determined additional number of minority investors. The group of investors is officially called Killington Independence Group, LLC.

Rutland named one of 'Best Small Towns to Live in the U.S.' by Travel + Leisure

Travel + Leisure magazine named Rutland No. 7 of its Top 12 best small towns to live in the U.S.

"These small towns are some of the country's most sought-after communities to call home, according to real estate experts," the article stated.

The magazine classifies "small towns" as those with less than 25,000 residents. Rutland has a population of about 15,000.

The article stated: "In 2020, almost half of Americans said they preferred to live in a small or rural town, a significant increase since 2018, according to a Gallup Poll.



Rutland, Vt

Courtesy CEDRR

SEPTEMBER

Vermont health insurance costs are among the highest in the nation – and rising quickly

Health insurance prices in Vermont are high — and getting higher. Average premium prices for individual marketplace plans in Vermont are among the highest in the country, according to data from the Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, costing more than double the national average.

State: Vermont needs 24,000-36,000 new homes within five years

Housing stock, affordability remain leading factors in impacting needs, study finds The Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) announced Aug. 29 the publication of the Vermont 2025-2029 Statewide Housing Needs Assessment, a five-year document the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) requires from government entities that receive federal funding.

After 20 years, Saradarian, director of Rutland County Humane Society, resigns

Beth Saradarian, executive director of the Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS), has submitted her resignation to the board of directors. Saradarian stated she made the difficult decision to resign to pursue new opportunities after 20 years and much consideration.

Spartan Race returns to The Beast

About 7,000 expected to attend Saturday-Sunday, Sept. 14-15—KILLINGTON—If you think you’re among the baddest of the East, come play in what is known as “Joe’s backyard” after founder Joe DeSena. This is where Spartan Race was born; and that means anything goes. Expect steep slopes, off-trail descents and massive climbs at this legendary venue. Spartan Race headquarters will be at the Killington Bear Mountain lodge on Bear Mountain Road.

New connections planned for Killington’s multi-use trails

The town of Killington will consider a new plan for improving connectivity among its public mountain biking trails. Pedestrians, hikers, and transit riders would also benefit from the proposed infrastructural additions, which aim to link recreational amenities on Route 100 to commercial and community hubs on Route 4.

A new world record is set

On Saturday, Sept. 14, Killington’s Dream Maker Bakers made history setting a new world record at the Whoopie Pie Festival with a 1,187-pounder. It was 120 pounds over the previous record of 1,067 pounds set in 2011 by Wicked Whoopies of South Portland, Maine. The festival in downtown Rutland drew over 7,500 people throughout the day.



Courtesy Dream Maker Bakers

Base Camp at Bear Mountain to begin build-out

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

Suspect arrested in Pawlet triple homicide

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.

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.



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.

Remembering

Patricia Taylor, 78
Patricia “Pat” Taylor Melton, 78, passed away Saturday, Aug. 31, at the hospital in Rutland with family at her bedside. Pat was born on Oct. 15, 1945, in New Albany, Mississippi to the late George Ocie Taylor and Annie Elzine Gadd Taylor.



Submitted
Patricia “Pat” Taylor

OCTOBER

Killington's new owners group to invest \$30m in on-mountain capital improvements

Sale to local owners closed without debt Friday, Sept. 27

Killington Resort finalized its sale from Powdr to local, independent ownership on Friday, Sept. 27. The new ownership group, led by Phill Gross and Michael Ferri, is committed to reinvesting all profits into capital improvements "for the foreseeable future" and announced \$30 million in on-mountain investment as the first of many phases of capital improvements.

Mission Farm unveils The Kitchen: A collaborative community space for culinary innovation and social impact in Killington

Mission Farm in Killington has opened The Kitchen at Mission Farm, a state-of-the-art collaborative community kitchen designed to support local artisan food makers and benefit the larger community. The Kitchen embodies Mission Farm's core values of connection, conservation, and justice, according to a recent new release.

Longtime Vermont Adaptive supporter Rob Mather honored with the VRPA Unsung Hero Award

Rob Mather, a longtime supporter and volunteer for Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports and a key figure in Vermont's recreational and emergency services community, received the Vermont Recreation and Parks Association (VRPA) Unsung Hero Award at the 81st annual Vermont Conference on Recreation & Trails Symposium. The award was presented during an awards luncheon on Sept. 26 at the Killington Grand Hotel.

Woodstock high school alumnus receives Nobel Prize in Medicine

The 2024 Nobel Prize in Medicine — science's most prestigious — was awarded Monday, Oct. 7 to Dr. Victor Ambros, a Woodstock High School alumni, and fellow research collaborator Dr. Gary Ruvkun.

Killington Pico Area Association debuts new Halloween signature event

Thursday, Oct. 17, 5-8 p.m., and Friday-Saturday, Oct. 18-19, 6-10 p.m.—KILLINGTON—The Killington/Pico Area Association (KPAA) is back with its annual Haunted House event, taking place over three nights at the Killington Welcome Center. This year's haunted house promises chills and thrills for all ages.

Sal Salmeri honored as KPAA Business Member of the Year

The Killington Community Update last Wednesday, Oct. 9, also doubled as the Killington Pico Area Association's (KPAA) annual meeting. KPAA president Beth Sarandrea presented key financials of the year as well as the Business Member of the Year award to Robert "Sal" Salmeri of Moguls Sports Bar.

Killington announces details of Superstar lift replacement

Killington Resort announced details on the the forthcoming replacement of the Superstar Express chairlift during the summer of 2025, in a news release Tuesday, Oct. 22. The current high-speed quad will be replaced with a Doppelmayer UNI-G six-person chairlift. The new chair will be the first for the resort from that manufacturer.



Courtesy Killington Resort

Killington investors Phill Gross (left) and Michael Ferri (right) stand with resort President/CEO Mike Solimano (center) in front of the K-1 Gondola after the investors officially closed the deal with Powdr to purchase the resort, Friday, Sept. 27.

Vt Republicans control the narrative on property taxes

Will that flip legislative seats?

On the campaign trail, state legislative candidates say affordability dominates conversations with constituents. Property taxes — and with them, the cost of education — are fueling some of the most fiery rhetoric.

Killington Resort plans mountain bike expansion

Killington Resort wrapped up the 2024 mountain bike season on Sunday, Oct. 27 after more than 80 days of lift-accessed downhill action. Then two days later, on Tuesday, Oct. 29, the resort announced plans for a trail expansion in summer 2025 as part of the \$30 million investments from its new independent ownership. The permitting process is currently underway with the state for the new trail, which will be serviced by the Ramshead Express Quad. This portion of the expansion will cost \$300,000. Killington's bike park currently offers 30 miles of mountain biking trails.



Remembering

Agnes 'Nessie' Bale, 82

Agnes "Nessie" Bale, a longtime resident of Ossining, New York, passed away on Thursday, Aug. 22 at her home surrounded by her loving family.

Nessie was born in Glasgow, Scotland on July 7, 1942, and was the daughter of the late Thomas and Mary (Lee) McLean.

She was a former secretary for NBC and 30 Rockefeller Center. She then went on to be president of McLean Rebar in Elmsford. She was a communicant of St. Augustine's church in Ossining and Lady of the Mountain in Killington.



Matthew Eric Roberts, 44

Matthew (Matt) Eric Roberts, age 44, passed away Sunday, Sept. 22, at Rutland Regional Medical Center. He was born in Brockton, Massachusetts, on July 6, 1980. He was the son of Charles and Deborah (West) Roberts. He grew up in Brockton where he received his early education.



Submitted
Matt Roberts

Clemente Joseph Bianchi, 82

Clemente Joseph Bianchi, 82, passed away peacefully on Sept. 25, 2024, with his wife of 61 years, Lenore, and his family by his side. Clem was born in Jersey City, New Jersey on July 3, 1942.



Submitted
Clemente Joseph Bianchi

Lawrence 'Pete' DeCota, 90

Lawrence "Pete" DeCota, 90, of Sherburne, died peacefully Thursday, Oct. 3, 2024, at Rutland Regional Medical Center, surrounded by family members. He was born in Randolph, Mass., on Jan. 17, 1934, the son of the late Louis and Eva (Savard) DeCota.



Submitted
Pete DeCota

NOVEMBER

Woodstock voters approve acquisition of water company

Woodstock residents voted overwhelmingly in favor of acquiring the Woodstock Aqueduct Company on Tuesday, Oct. 30. The private utility, which dates back to the 1800s, will become a public utility for the first time.

Hospitals report runs into furor over 'major restructuring' recommendations

Analysis plunged state's healthcare system into anxiety, uncertainty. Last month, a consultant released a sweeping report recommending significant changes for Vermont's healthcare system, including "major restructuring" at four community hospitals. The 144-page state-commissioned document details a series of steps that Vermont's hospitals should take to stay afloat, including repurposing inpatient units and downgrading emergency departments at some facilities.



James Kent
Rutland Beer Works owner
Ian Harbage smiled with a beer.

Rutland Beer Works brings the taproom experience to Rutland

Something exciting's brewin' in the RU; take a brief jaunt west a couple of blocks from downtown Rutland to 136 Granger St., and you'll find a cozy brewery nestled into this mixed-use neighborhood of residences and businesses.



By Lisa Lynn
Mike Solimano holds the award outside the Woodstock Inn, Tuesday, Nov. 12.

Killington Resort's Mike Solimano honored with the Sen. Leahy Trailblazer Award

The Vermont Outdoor Business Alliance (VOBA) announced Tuesday, Nov. 12, that the fourth annual U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy Trailblazer Award has been awarded to Mike Solimano, president and CEO of Killington Resort & Pico Mountain.

Nurse union plans day of action in Rutland, Nov. 14

A day of action is planned to support nurses at Rutland Regional Medical Center (RRMC). The Office and Professional Employees International Union (OPEIU) Local 6, which represents the nurses, has stated that it's in contract negotiations with the hospital nurses ahead of their ongoing negotiations with RRMC.

Design changes delay but don't deter ski village plans

Developers of a proposed 450-acre retail and residential village at the base of the Killington Resort — the biggest ski area in eastern North America — say design changes will postpone the project for at least a year. Vermont receives \$5.3 million in federal grants to expand internet access across the state. Vermont has been awarded \$5.3 million from the federal government to implement its Digital Equity Plan — which outlines how the state will provide the tools and skills necessary to benefit from meaningful access to affordable, reliable, high-speed internet service.

Skiers and riders flock to Killington, Nov. 14

"The day you've been waiting for is here!" Killington Resort posted on Facebook, Wednesday afternoon, Nov. 13, announcing opening day the next morning.



By Brooke Geery

Killington Resort

Mountain Top Resort's cross-country ski routes caught up in legal dispute

The Chittenden resort and its neighbors are at odds over the reconfiguration of two ski trails that cut through private property. Generations of cross-country skiers have flocked to Chittenden's Mountain Top Resort to spend wintry days gliding along bucolic, snow-capped paths nestled in the shadow of Killington. As the popular cross-country skiing destination celebrates its 60th year in business, Mountain Top finds itself locked in a legal battle with its neighbors, John and Debra Gerlach, over the fate of two of its trails.

Shiffrin tees up potential for 100th win at Killington

Mikaela Shiffrin, 29, the two-time Olympic gold medalist, six-time Stifel Killington Cup slalom winner and the winningest Alpine skier in history is set to crack another milestone: a historic 100th World Cup win, and it could happen this weekend at Killington Resort.



Photo: Shiffrin courtesy US ski & snowboard, via k resort DS2_0667-3.jpg
Caption: Courtesy U.S. Ski & Snowboard

Sen. Alison Clarkson ousted as Senate majority leader

After losing their supermajority, Democratic senators-elect vowed to refocus on rising property taxes. A week and a half after Vermont voters eviscerated their supermajority, Senate Democrats convened Saturday, Nov. 16, to reflect on their election losses and chart a new course ahead of the 2025 legislative session. They voted to retain one top leader — but jettisoned another.

Remembering

Brenda Hathaway, age 61. Brenda Hathaway, formerly of Rutland, died Saturday, Oct. 19, 2024, in Mesa, Arizona. She was born June 22, 1963, to Robert Milne Hathaway and Suzanne (Dexter) Hathaway, in Rutland.



Submitted
Brenda Hathaway

DECEMBER

The anticipated 'Dec. 1 letter' from the Vermont tax dept. projects 5.9% property tax increase

Vermonters can expect a 5.9% average increase in education property taxes next year absent major changes, according to the annual forecast from Craig Bolio, Vermont's tax commissioner.

Shiffrin's crash hushed Killington's record-breaking crowd

For the eighth time the women's Audi FIS Ski World Cup came to Killington Resort over Thanksgiving weekend. The first day of racing, a Giant Slalom on Saturday, was marked by a combination of jubilation and heartbreak as U.S. Ski team members Nina O'Brien and Paula Moltzan posted their best World Cup Giant Slalom finishes while Mikaela Shiffrin, on track for her record-extending 100th World Cup victory, suffered a dramatic crash near the finish that took her out of contention for the rest of the weekend's events.

KPAA's Vermont holiday festival celebrates 20 years of holiday magic

The Vermont holiday festival returns to the Killington Grand Hotel from Dec. 5 to 7, bringing holiday cheer, community spirit, and family fun to Killington. Now in its 20th year, the festival offers an expanded schedule of activities, including live music, themed tree decorating, vendor shopping, and festive fun for all ages.

Dream Maker Bakers will close Dec. 22

Megan Wagner, owner of Dream Maker Bakers, announced Saturday Dec. 7, that she will be closing her bakery in Killington.

Community rallies to save art programs at MVSU amid steep budget cuts, board faces tough decisions

District board has proposed 17 staff cuts and program reductions for a \$2.5 million savings. Over 100 district residents attended the last Mountain Views Supervisory Union (MVSU) board meeting Monday, Dec. 2, to object to the proposed elimination of 17 teaching and staff positions, including both full- and part-time roles, five of which are in unified arts programs — visual and performing arts, music and world languages — which also sees cuts to resources for those programs.

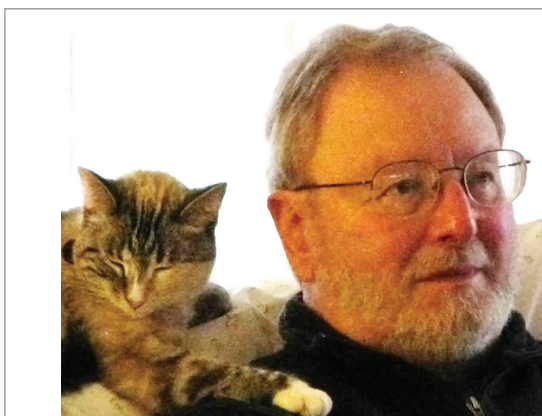
House leadership prepares to tackle property tax

On Tuesday, Dec. 3, Speaker Jill Krowinski and the Chairs of House Education and Ways and Means outlined the groundwork for the upcoming legislative session to address the rising property taxes and the future of public education in Vermont. Governor Scott issued the administration's "December 1 Letter" which projected a property tax increase next year of 5.9%. The FY24 increase was 13.9%.

Remembering

Howard Barbash, age 80

Howard Barbash passed peacefully on Dec. 6 at the Jack Byrne Center for Palliative and Hospice Care at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center following a long but hard-fought battle with End Stage Renal Disease (ESRD). His wife, Connie, was with him during this time as she had always been during their 41 years of "blissful" marriage.



Howard Barbash

Submitted



Holiday spirit shines at Mac Steel

Mac Steel's Tyrannosaurus Rex, T-Rextroyer, donned a festive holiday look as he watched over Route 4 in Rutland on Friday, Dec. 13, accompanied by others.

Image: MacSteelAltTrexshot cutout.psd

Caption: By James Kent (this was just a headline and caption on front page but great image to showcase)

MVSU board narrowly votes to keep arts, languages in tact

A motion to save all unified arts (UA) programs and positions in Mountain Views School District passed in a tiebreaker vote Monday night, Dec. 16. Ryan Townsend from Bridgewater made the motion, with seven district board representatives voting for and seven voting against. The chair of the board, Keri Bristow of Woodstock, cast the tiebreaking vote in favor of saving all UA from budget cut considerations.

Vermont loosened Act 250 rules for housing, how are developers responding?

Developers use new exemptions in at least a dozen locations to increase housing stock

When 10 apartments at the new Armory House building just outside of downtown Vergennes opened in June, they all had tenants within two weeks. To Peter Kahn, the building's developer, watching the new apartments fill up so quickly — most deemed as "workforce housing," and several as affordable to people with lower incomes — underscored the severity of Vermont's housing deficit.

House Republicans mull a plan to repeal the environmental Clean Heat Standard

Armed with new confidence and voted in by residents hoping they'll help make Vermont more affordable, Vermont House Republicans set their sights on controversial Act 18, the Clean Heat Standard, which most have said they seek to repeal in 2025.

Education funding: The three cliffs problem

Low- and moderate-income Vermonters can see big tax jumps even if equal spending. Education spending saw its biggest jump in years in fiscal 2025, and school taxpayers are noticing the change in their bills. The increase this year was due to a lot of factors outside both schools' and taxpayers' control—inflation, healthcare costs, and the loss of pandemic-era federal support chief among them. All of that led to an increase in total homestead taxes of 12.9%, although the rate varied from town to town, according to the Public Assets Institute.

Bernie Sanders tells Politico that next U.S. Senate term will 'probably' be his last

Vermont's senior U.S. senator shared new insight this week into how long he may be willing to represent the Green Mountain State in the nation's capital.

In an interview published by Politico Tuesday night, Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., said he was likely to call it quits after his fourth six-year term in the chamber.

TOPS IN ENTERTAINMENT 2024

Top 10 Films at the box office in 2024

- Inside Out 2. \$652,980,194.
- Deadpool & Wolverine. \$636,742,741.
- Wicked. \$384,568,300.
- Despicable Me 4. \$361,004,205.
- Moana 2. \$359,172,577.
- Beetlejuice Beetlejuice \$294,100,435.
- Dune: Part Two. \$282,144,358.
- Twisters. \$267,762,265.

10 of the top-selling albums of 2024

- “The Tortured Poets Department” by Taylor Swift
- “Cowboy Carter” by Beyoncé
- “Eternal Sunshine” by Ariana Grande
- “Radical Optimism” by Dua Lipa
- “Minisode 3: Tomorrow” by Tomorrow X Together
- “The Death of Slim Shady (Coup de Grâce)” by Eminem
- “BRAT” by Charli XCX
- “Short n’ Sweet” by Sabrina Carpenter
- “Stick Season” by Noah Kahan
- “Guts” by Olivia Rodrigo

10 of the most significant and popular shows streaming in 2024

“Shogun”
Platform: Hulu
The Emmy-award-winning show was a smash hit for Hulu.

“Prison Break”
Platform: Netflix
The early 2000s series experienced a resurgence in popularity after being added to Netflix, attracting both new viewers and nostalgic fans.

“The Bear”
Platform: FX on Hulu
The third season of the hit FX series continued to wow critics and add fans.

“Fallout”

Platform: Amazon Prime Video
An adaptation of the popular video game series, this post-apocalyptic drama has garnered significant attention and high viewership.

“Slow Horses”

Platform: Apple TV+
The spy thriller series has captivated audiences with its intricate plot and compelling characters.

“Yellowstone”

Platform: Paramount Network
This modern Western drama continues to draw substantial viewership with its portrayal of family dynamics and land disputes.

“True Detective”

Platform: HBO
The anthology crime series returned with a new season, intriguing audiences with its complex narrative.

“From”

Platform: Epix

This horror series has gained a dedicated following for its mysterious and suspenseful storyline.



“The Sympathizer”

Platform: Max

A spy comedy miniseries set near the end of the Vietnam War praised for its unique narrative approach.

“Interior Chinatown”

Platform: Hulu

This series delves into the Asian-American experience, blending elements of drama and satire.





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A new retail cannabis store, is seeking enthusiastic and knowledgeable Budtenders to join our team!

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- Ability to work flexible hours, including weekends.
- Applicants must be at least 21 years old and eligible to work in the U.S.

WHAT WE OFFER:

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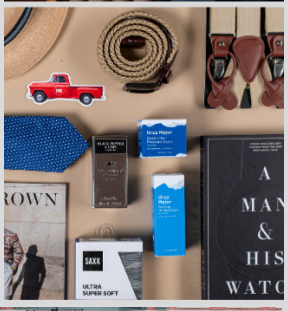
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2024 Christmas Tree

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→ Business spotlight:



Courtesy Wild Kind Toys

Owners Andy Paluch and Logan Seely welcomed U.S. Sen. Peter Welch to their shop downtown at 31 Center Street.

Wild Kind Toys

STAY WILD. STAY KIND.

Wild Kind Toys, located at 31 Center Street in downtown Rutland, Vermont, is a specialty toy store dedicated to offering sustainably made toys that inspire creative play for children aged 0-8. Founded by Logan Seely, a former kindergarten teacher with a passion for educational playthings,

the store emphasizes products crafted from natural materials and supports mission-driven shopping.

Since its opening in December 2021, Wild Kind Toys has become a cherished part of the community, providing thoughtfully curated items that encourage imagination and

learning.

Their curated selection of open-ended toys encourages children to explore without limits, ensuring playtime remains fun and adaptable as kids grow. Emphasizing durability, these toys are designed to be cherished for years.



Holiday window display

The Downtown Rutland holiday window display is back! Stroll through Downtown Rutland and enjoy beautiful holiday decor displayed by downtown merchants this year!



Festive displays

Each storefront is beautifully decorated with seasonal themes, twinkling lights, and eye-catching displays that capture the magic of the holiday season.



Inviting atmosphere

Whether shopping for gifts or enjoying the festive vibe, these windows create a warm, inviting atmosphere that makes Downtown Rutland the perfect place to celebrate the season.



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Horned larks enliven sleeping fields

Halloween is long past, but you may notice devilish figures hanging out in scrubby fields and open areas this winter: horned larks. These birds are North America's only true lark species. They reside year-round in parts of the Northeast, such as Vermont's Champlain Valley, but disperse across the region more widely in winter, when the stark landscape makes them easier to spy.

Horned larks (*Eremophila alpestris*) are so named for tufts of delicate black feathers along the sides of the male bird's head. Males can raise these diminutive "horns" at will, likely as part of

courtship. But even when perked, these adornments are small enough that they may be difficult to distinguish from afar.

Though their horns, when visible, are a telltale identification method, spotting horned larks can still be a challenge. In the winter, they flock with other species, including dark-eyed juncos, snow buntings, and Lapland longspurs, meaning birdwatchers often must discern them from the rest of the crowd. With their tawny plumage of brown and beige, horned larks often blend in with the fields where they forage for seeds and waste grain. These small birds are more likely to catch your eye when they alight on snowpack, their black eye masks and

horns bold against a forehead and throat of warm yellow.

Horned larks' habitat preferences span natural and human-disturbed envi-

ronments. They need open, sparsely vegetated areas to forage in winter and nest in summer. Though they can live in areas of wildly varying altitude, from deserts and Arctic tundra far below sea level to alpine zones, they tend to "avoid places where grasses grow more than a couple of inches high," according to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology's profile of the species. In winter in northern New England,

these birds are often in fields or in large flat areas, such as airstrips.

Undeterred by cold and snow, horned larks begin breeding as early as February. Males perform a swooping flight display to demarcate and defend their territories, embellishing their acrobatics with a tinkling song. A female constructs a nest by digging a depression in bare ground or

utilizing a preexisting one, adding a stoop made of dirt clods, stones, and husks. The first brood is generally out of the nest by May, and the parents may raise two additional broods through the remainder of the breeding season.

Though the horned lark is a prodigious breeder and remains a common species,

The Outside Story → 54



The Outside Story

By Colby Galliher

The avian conservation group Partners in Flight lists horned larks as a "Common Bird in Steep Decline," while the North American Breeding Bird Survey has found a population decrease of almost 65 percent in the past half-century or so

Rooms available in old Rutland

Plans are in the making for a new downtown hotel in Rutland. Reading about it prompted me to think about the lodging options available to people in the 1950s when I was growing up. My friend Mary Jane and I took a fun trip down memory lane, recalling the places we could remember. But to get the "full picture," I looked at the Rutland directory for 1955.

There were three downtown hotels: the Berwick on Center Street, the Bardwell Hotel on Merchants Row, and the Hotel Hamilton on the corner of West Street and Evelyn Street.

Since both the Berwick and Bardwell could accommodate about 200 guests, they had amenities, such as a restaurant and lounge, that the smaller hotels in Rutland couldn't offer.

But not everyone wanted a room in a large hotel, and for those who didn't, there were a surprising number of choices. The 1955 Rutland directory listed over 20 places where rooms were available.

In addition to hotels, large homes served as guest houses for visitors. The majority of them were on the city's main routes.

On North Main Street, there was Wheeler-Williams, which offered rooms and a wonderful restaurant. By 1964, Ernie and Willa Royal opened Royal's Hearthside Restaurant in this location and remained in business until 1994. The Main Street Motel was next door to Wheeler-Williams, which was convenient as their guests could walk next door for meals.

Across the street at 44 North Main was the Colonial Guest House, owned by Perley Eaton. Aldous Funeral Home is now at this address.

Just a few doors up at 48 North Main was Reynolds Guest House, with Mrs. Elizabeth Reynolds as proprietor. The directory noted she was Ralph's widow. I noticed a trend during the 1950s for women to be listed as the owners of "guest houses" in Rutland. I'm not sure that a female would feel comfortable today advertising herself a widow opening her house to just anyone. Today's world is not like it was back in 1955!

You had to travel up to 138 North Main to find the next source of lodging. The Green-Mont Motel advertised 24 rooms with private baths and electric radiant heat with controls in each room.

At 166 North Main, you would find the Candlestick Inn. Mr. and Mrs. William Sargent were the proprietors. The inn offered both rooms and cabins. The "ski lodge" rooms were open all year, but the cabins were available only from May to November.

The North Main Street lodging options ended at 197 North Main with The Viking, which was advertised as a place for "tourists."

South Main Street also had its share of rooms to offer. The first place was Burke Haven at 26 South Main. It was a house owned by Mrs. Eda Burke located just a couple of houses down from Mansfield Place. A short distance from Burke Haven was Parkview Tourist

Home at 48 South Main, on the corner of Spellman Terrace. Like the Burke house, it was large enough to serve as a destination for tourists.

Continuing the trend of large homes offering rooms was Hill's Restover Nite, next door to Parkview at 52 South Main. The Shadow Lawn, across from Christ the King School at 61 South Main, offered lodging.

Just a short distance down the street was the Clifford Tourist Home at 73 South Main. It was a large white house like Shadow Lawn.

Across the street at 76 South Main was Hotel Brock. It was smaller than the Bardwell or Berwick but was a fairly large hotel compared to the private houses on South Main St that offered rooms. The proprietor was Thomas Eddy. The last hotel on South Main back in 1955 was The New Sunset Motel at 238 South Main. The adjective "new"

is a mystery as the directory has no evidence of that hotel existing prior to 1955. So, it appears to be "new" in that respect!

Heading east on another of Rutland's busy streets, you could find four motels on Woodstock Avenue. Their locations appealed to skiers as they were en route to Pico and Killington, and their rates were probably considerably lower than lodging on the mountain.

The first motel you came to was the Royal Motel at 115 Woodstock Avenue. It was a 2-story L-shaped motel with 28 rooms. Appropriate to the 50s was their sign out front saying that TV was offered and phones were in each room.

Just up the street was the Rutland Motel at 125 Woodstock Avenue. This was also a 2-story motel. Apparently, people who were not guests could eat there because there was a sign out front that said: "Breakfast now being served."

On the other side of Woodstock Avenue and up a little way was Blue Star Motel at 152 Woodstock Avenue. This was the smallest of the hotels on Woodstock Avenue. They offered a kitchenette and picnic area.

The last motel on Rte 4 East extended just past Woodstock Avenue and was called the Bellevue Motel. It was located in Rutland Town, near Post Road.

There were also rooms available in places off the "beaten path" instead of on Routes 4 and Route 7.

Upper Center Street had two lodging options: Quigley's Guest House at 88 Center Street, with Mary Quigley as the proprietor, and Little's Lodge, two houses away. The directory showed Telma and Orren Little as proprietors. They mentioned a gift shop on the premises and stated they had rooms for tourists and "businessmen!"

Cottage Street, which abuts the downtown area of West Street, also offered rooms. 22 Cottage and 38 Cottage were both houses with rooms for rent. Minnie Holmes, widow of Judson Holmes, was the proprietor of 22 Cottage, and Maude Handley, widow of Frank Hanley, owned 38 Cottage.



Looking Back
By Mary Ellen Shaw



Picture this

Ninety-nine percent of the time, while I run, I listen to either podcasts or audiobooks. My runs generally last one hour, so for those 60 minutes, I am a captive audience. I can thoroughly engross myself in listening and develop a deeper understanding of what's being discussed.

However, when Dec. 1 arrives, things change. On that date, I uploaded a holiday playlist to my Apple Watch and listened to seasonal fare while out for my runs.

I'm a sucker for a good Christmas song, so my playlist has an abundance of hits spanning generations. I've got the prerequisite oldies with Bing Crosby, Nat King Cole, and Dean Martin. I've got the classic 70's fare with Paul McCartney, Stevie Wonder, and the Eagles. And I've got more modern selections like those from Katy Perry, Kelly Clarkson, and Meghan Trainor.

I've found that once everyone has their Christmas lights up, the combination of the visuals and the music allows for spirited exercise, making the activity slightly more bearable.

About halfway through one of these holiday excursions this past Saturday, I noticed a slightly dilapidated envelope in the middle of a crosswalk. Usually, I don't pay attention to garbage while running, but this piece caught my eye.

As I passed over the top of it, I glanced down and noticed that it appeared to be one of those photograph envelopes you get when you order online prints. It was also thicker than your average empty envelope, which triggered me to think that it was quite possibly full of photos.

I kept running, but my mind started to wander: What if those were photos of children that someone planned to send out in a Christmas card to a grandmother? Or they were pictures of a new car that a husband planned to give to his wife. Or perhaps they were shots of a holiday party that an employee was going to post in the office break room?

I didn't think much more about it once my run ended, but the following day, as I repeated the same route, I noticed the envelope still lying on the road. This time, however, I didn't pass by. I looked more precisely as I approached the envelope and confirmed that it appeared thick, suggesting it was indeed full of something.

I bent over and picked it up, further confirming that it was definitely a photo package (from Walmart's online digital print lab). However, the envelope was quite distressed. It looked like it had been run over 100 times, which wouldn't be surprising given its loca-

tion in the middle of the road.

Because of the envelope's condition, the seal on the end had broken open. My curiosity got the better of me, so I flipped back the fold and looked inside. Sure enough, there was an inner envelope containing several prints.



The Movie Diary
By Dom Cioffi

I took a deep breath, scanned the area around me as if I might be under surveillance, and then began to rifle through the prints.

While a part of me may have been disappointed that it wasn't a local housewife perched in an "interesting" position with a Santa hat on, my heart was warmed when the contents revealed someone's adorable baby girl laughing with glee. The baby had a red bow in her hair and was wearing a velvet maroon dress adorned with white frills.

To say the images were heart-warming would be an understatement.

After reviewing the prints, I looked back at the front of the envelope and was just able to make out the address, which didn't appear familiar to me. Once I got home, I plugged the details into my phone and zeroed in on the location, which wasn't too far from where I

found the envelope on the ground.

Later that day, I drove over to the location and tucked the envelope into the corresponding mailbox with a note stating, "Found this in the road while running. Happy holidays." I then drove away, hoping my gesture brought a little light into someone's holiday.

This week's feature, "Wicked," starring Ariana Grande and Cynthia Erivo, has brought a lot of light into the holiday box office. The book and Broadway musical turned cinematic

phenomenon is inching toward \$600 million in global sales, putting it only behind "Mama Mia" as the most successful film musical in history.

I went into this one unfamiliar with the original book and show. While I found the production values to be an absolute spectacle to behold, I was slow to warm up to the music. Admittedly, Grande and Erivo were fantastic leads, which added to the allure of the story. My biggest criticisms, however, were reserved for the indiscretions made toward the original "Wizard of Oz" film (which holds a special place in my heart).

If you're in the mood for something big, bold, and breathtaking, definitely give this film a try. Fans of the previous incarnations won't be disappointed, nor will the uninitiated. An enchanting "B" for "Wicked" is now in theaters everywhere.

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



Skiing pink snow

Stepping out of the gondola a little after 4:10 p.m., we can barely see anything with our goggles on. The sun is scheduled to set in about seven minutes, and you can feel the darkness. The lamps are on along all the wooden railings heading toward the peak lodge, and you can see the patrol shack lit up in the distance. But with the clouds weighing in, this final ride down the mountain is definitely going to be in the darkness.

That's what skiing near the winter solstice can get you: an extremely dark round down, where one of the ambassadors even had their headlamp on red the other day. We got a good chuckle about that, and honestly, it wasn't a bad idea at all. We only get about 10 hours of daylight this time of year, and the resort is open to 8-9 of them. It's pretty spectacular.

When it's that dark, we tend to take the long, slow, green way down, enjoying every little moment that we can and squeezing every bit of daylight out of that day. It's glorious. We're not ready for the daylight to end, but the ambassadors usually are as they poke and prod us along the way. Honestly, we don't want to be up there in the dark without our headlamps either, so away we go.

But sometimes the clouds don't block the view, and what we get instead are the absolute most stunning sunsets of the year—the vibrancy of the colors, the layers upon layers of that beautiful pink alpenglow. When you get off the gondola on those days when the sky has been blue and cold all day, those are the sunsets we live for.

You'll know it's a sunset of your dreams because the peak is crowded. Everyone is standing at the top, looking at the world through their cell phones as they try every angle to take the most perfect photo of this stunning moment. It is something that, no matter how many times I witness a solstice sunset, I cannot seem to believe the beauty of it. It blows my mind. When I was designing my FemaleSkiBum ski for Parlor a few years ago, I agonized over every little detail of the construction and geometry, wanting it to be perfect. But when they asked what color scheme I had in mind for the top sheet, I didn't even flinch. I told the artists I wanted it to feel like skiing down under the alpenglow.

When the sky is pink, sometimes there is just too much pink, and it starts to reflect off of the snow. Have you ever skied pink snow? I have! And there is a good chance that sometime this week, with the predicted dry, cold temps, we will all get to experience it again. If we're lucky, the cold winter sunsets will stick around through the first half of January. The colder and drier the air, the more stunning the sunset. It's science.

Seriously. Moisture in the air scatters the

light, so cold, dry days lead to more vibrant colors. The sun's lower angle in the sky allows the light to travel through the earth's atmosphere, reducing the blues and instead letting the stunning pinks and purples come screaming out. And, because the sun is lower, the sunsets even last longer.

Finally, winter air comes from the north and is crisper and cleaner. Clean air = better, longer colors. So, if you were thinking about whether or not clean air is something to fight for, maybe watching a sunset over the next few weeks could finally convince you.

Yet another reason why winter is just so much better than summer. I mean, skiers and snowboarders have been saying this for years, often to the point of bullying our friends into trying the sports. It's beautiful, we say, but they never believe us. We're just crazy, our non-ski friends say. But here we have scientific proof that winter is the best season of all the seasons! We have the best sunsets - and sunrises (but that's a different column for a different week).

So take a moment or a few to spend some time looking at the sky around 4-4:20 p.m. over the next few weeks, especially if you're at elevation in the mountains. If you're a skier or snowboarder, I cannot recommend the last chair and last Gondi enough. Sure, you might not be able to see too well on the way down, but you just might see a miracle of nature that will blow your mind. Everyone should ski pink snow once in their lifetime.

Merisa Sherman is a long-time Killington resident, global real estate advisor, and coach PomPom. She can be reached at Merisa.Sherman@SothebysRealty.com.



Living the Dream
By Merisa Sherman



Courtesy Merisa J. Sherman

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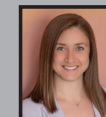
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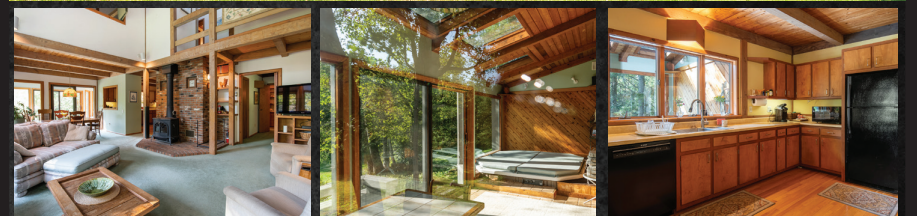
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← **The Outside Story:**
from page 48

surveys indicate a rapid population decline in recent decades. The avian conservation group Partners in Flight lists horned larks as a “Common Bird in Steep Decline,” while the North American Breeding Bird Survey has found a population decrease of almost 65 percent in the past half-century or so. The reasons for this decline are multifaceted, mirroring challenges other grassland birds face. A major culprit is habitat conversion. The large-scale deforestation that accompanied European settlement centuries ago allowed the horned lark and other grassland birds to spread east from their traditional range in the American prairie into newly created croplands and pastures in the Northeast.

As agriculture shifted west during the mid-19th century, and many of the Northeast’s farms were abandoned, untended fields began reverting to forest. While this trend has benefitted forest-loving bird and wildlife species, it has reduced the amount of habitat available to the horned lark and other grassland birds. Today, these remaining open spaces are prime targets for development.

Other land-use changes have also

harmed horned lark populations. Earlier mowing of fields destroys nests and can kill chicks as well as adult birds, while heavy pesticide applications can diminish populations by eliminating their insect prey or killing birds via direct exposure.

The bright side is that species-specific conservation projects aimed at preserving the Northeast’s remaining grass-

The reasons for this decline are multifaceted, mirroring challenges other grassland birds face. A major culprit is habitat conversion.

lands, such as the Bobolink Project, will likely benefit the horned lark by preserving both the breeding and non-breeding habitat the species needs.

When you’re out on snowshoes or cross-country skis this winter and longing for spring migration, study bare patches in the sleeping fields you pass.

You may spot a horned lark shuffling along, adding a bit of color and personality to winter’s short, drab days.

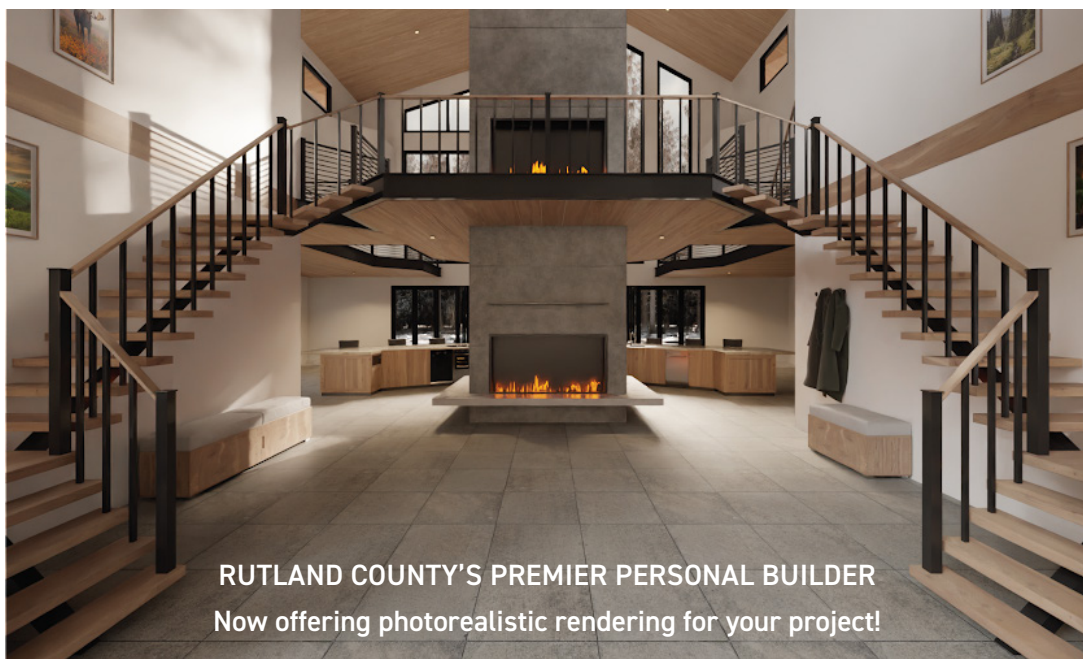
Colby Galliher is a writer who calls the woods, meadows, and rivers of New England home. To learn more about his work, visit colbygalliher.com. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of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

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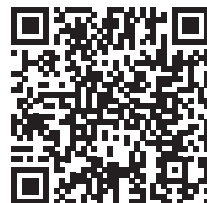
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