



CALLING ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS...
To the slopes of Killington; it's College Week! A host of activities, live music and discounts are in effect all week for those with a valid (college) I.D.

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FOX U.S. OPEN OF MTB RETURNS

After the Fox U.S. Open of MTB's successful return to Killington last year, the event is coming back in September 2023. The event attracts some of the world's best professional mountain bike athletes in downhill, enduro and dual slalom.

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ARTIST PAINTS IN THE MOUNTAINS

Local artist Carrie Pill is teaming up with Ski Vermont to visit all 20 of Vermont's alpine ski areas to ski and paint. She'll ski, do *plein air* painting on location, meet with locals, photograph and write about each area.

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Killington tops state for undervalued Grand List

Recent CLA assessment to push education tax rate up for most

By Polly Mikula

Of the 254 municipalities in the state listed on the annual Equalization Study, Killington topped the list for its actual property value being undervalued by its Grand List. According to newly released CLA determinations, Killington's Grand List accounted for just 61.60% of a properties true market value.

Stowe had the second highest discrepancy in the state with its Grand List at 66.59% of market value, followed by Winooski at 68.93% of the fair market value.

CLA stands for Common Level of

Appraisal and it was devised by the state to ensure that each town pays its fair share of education property tax to the state's Education Fund. In order to ensure fairness across townships, the accuracy of Grand Lists must be evaluated.

Since towns don't reappraise every year, and real estate markets are constantly changing, a correction factor, or "Common Level of Appraisal," equalizes what is paid in education property taxes across towns, the Dept. explains on its website.

The annual Equalization

Study, performed by the Dept. of Taxes, does this by comparing the ratio of the Grand List listed value to the sale prices in the town over the prior three-year period. The study considers sales price as the best measurement of fair market value.

"If Grand List values are generally less than sale prices for the recent sales, the town will end up with a CLA less than 100%. If Grand List values are generally more than sale prices for the recent sales, the town will end up with a CLA of more than 100%," the Dept. explains.

In other words, when current property values increase in a town, it decreases the town's CLA, which causes the town's education tax rate to increase.

Once the CLA is determined, it is used to adjust the homestead and non-homestead education tax rates, which are what will appear on the property tax bills issued by each town to its residents.

Effect of CLA on tax rates

So what does this mean for state education tax rates? They're going up
CLA → 5

Killington Resort gives \$300,000

Killington Resort gave \$300,000 in cash and in-kind charitable donations through its Play Forever corporate responsibility commitment in 2022.

Beneficiaries of Killington Resort's donations included a wide variety of causes ranging from global interests such as the American Red Cross's Ukrainian war relief efforts to hyper local efforts such as installing a new ice rink at the Killington Recreation Center.

"The generous donation from Killington/Pico Ski Resort covered more than half the cost of the ice rink," said Griffin Van Niel, the program coordinator for Killington Department of Parks and Recreation, referring to the gift from the resort. "Because of this donation, Killington Parks and Recreation can offer more programs in the winter and provide the community another way to enjoy the winter season for years to come."

Rutland Area Robotics, a high school group teaching technology skills to local students, was another one of the local groups who received a donation from the Play Forever fund this year.

"We truly appreciate the money given to us," said Rutland Robotics Mentor Scott McCalla. "It takes a lot to make this program happen, we are competing with teams sponsored by NASA."

In one of the largest single donations of the year, Killington Resort pledged \$40,000 to become the presenting sponsor of Come Alive Outside's mobile passport app.

"The Play Forever Fund and Come Alive Outside have much synergy around ensuring that children and adults have the access and opportunity to experience the feel-good benefits of nature now and in the future," said Arwen Turner, executive director of Come Alive Outside.

Additional 2022 beneficiaries include: Vermont Adaptive, Killington Mountain School, Pico Ski Club, Vermont Ski & Ride Museum, Town of Killington Rec Dept, Change the World Kids, Mount Holly Parent Teacher Student Association, Vermont Youth Conservation Corps, Teen Challenge, Rutland Mental Health Services, Chaffee Art Center, Girls on the Run of Vermont, Inc.

"At Killington Resort, we're proud to pledge a percentage of our profits each year towards organizations doing great things for our community," said Killington President and General Manager Mike Solimano. "The Killington area is such a wonderful place largely because of the efforts of these groups, and it just feels right to be involved in making sure they can achieve their goals."

Unseasonably warm weather to give way to ice, snow, then sun

Staff report

A new year, a new weather pattern.

By the end of this week the weather should return to more seasonable conditions with some snow on Friday followed by sunny skies and temperatures in the 20s — perfect conditions for skiing and riding! But the transition will not be clean. A winter weather advisory is in effect Wednesday and Thursday with mixed precipitation and ice accumulations up to two tenths of an inch forecast throughout central Vermont.

Local and state officials urge caution on the roadways, as conditions can change quickly.



By Griffin Van Niel, Killington Rec Dept.

Killington Rec recently debuted its new ice rink build over the tennis courts on River Road.

There's a new ice rink in town

Killington has a new winter attraction: An ice skating rink at the Johnson Recreation Center tennis courts opened just before the new year. This addition to the town's recreation department will bring new programs to the community and provide another way to enjoy the winter season.

The idea started back in October. It began as a

Powerpoint presentation constructed by Killington resident Arra Derderian, which led to an informational meeting where residents came together and voiced their opinions and personal experiences running smaller ice rinks in their backyards.

The town's new 50-by-90-foot drop-in ice rink was purchased from Iron Sleek Incorporated and was put

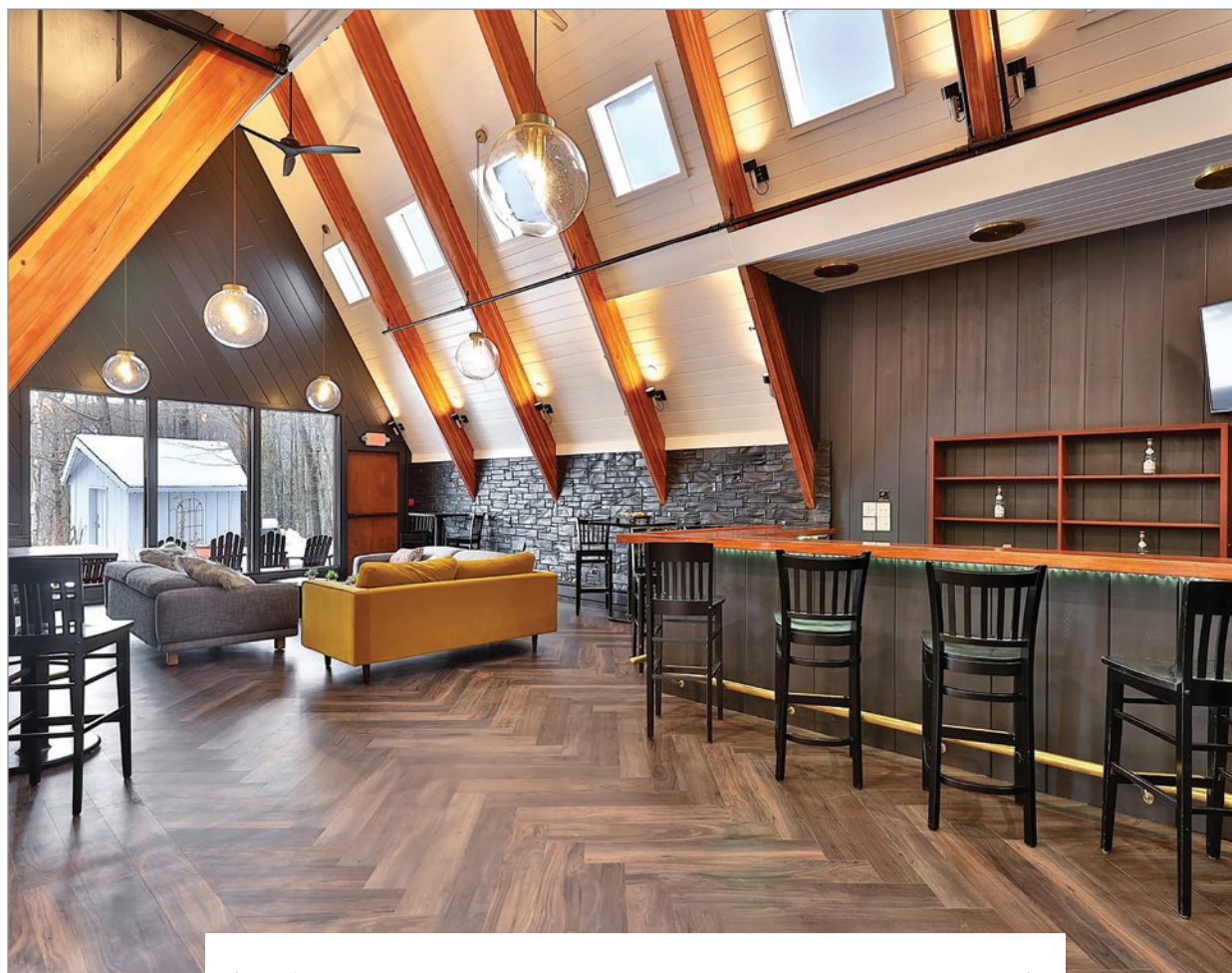
together by volunteers. Once temperatures began to drop, the Killington Fire Department, led by Gary Roth, filled it twice using an estimated 20,000 gallons of water.

To maintain the ice rink, 26 volunteers from the Killington area signed up to assist in resurfacing and shoveling the surrounding area of the rink, while the town highway department will plow.



The Birch Ridge Inn reopens as a retreat and vacation rental just before the new year. The 11-room double A-frame building can sleep up to 28 people. It went through extensive renovations and includes two hot tubs, a commercial kitchen, a dining space and many other areas. There are no plans to reopen the popular restaurant at this time.

Submitted



"We spent a lot of time renovating and getting things ready," McComb said. "It's nice to have phase 1 done ... It's been a labor of love."

Birch Ridge Inn reopens as event retreat, rental

By Katy Savage

After extensive renovations, the Birch Ridge Inn reopened over Christmas week as a vacation rental and corporate retreat.

The inn closed over the summer, after Jacob McGrath and Dave McComb bought the property for \$1.35 million on June 30, 2022.

"We spent a lot of time renovating and getting things ready," McComb said, explaining that most of the renovations were done in just two months.

The unique double A-frame building is 7,000-square-feet and sits on 2.7 acres. There are new floors and carpets throughout the building and the beams were sanded down to bring out the natural wood.

They also made technological upgrades, including new smart TVs and EV chargers. The 11-room building can sleep up to 28 people. The A-frame great room features a full bar area, a shuffleboard table, a coffee station, microwave, water cooler, gas fireplace, a television, tables, sofas and barstools. The dining room (in the second A-frame structure) features seating for 20, plus a pool table and sofa. There are two hot tubs outside along with a gas barbecue grill. A previous owner's lounge has been converted to a two-floor loft suite with queen bed, sofa bed and kitchenette. There is also a commercial kitchen available to guests with prior approval.

The previous owners, Bill Vines and his wife, Mary Furlong, retired after 25 years to spend more time outdoors. The Birch Ridge was known for its popular restaurant and dining space on the site.

To the disappointment of some, McComb said there are no plans to reopen the restaurant at this time.

"We'll continue on in a different path," McComb said. "I know some people are upset the restaurant's not reopening. We're not restaurateurs at this time."

McComb said the renovations are not done yet. There are plans to make exterior improvements in the spring, with new decks, a new pool and more space for weddings.

"It's nice to have phase 1 done," McComb said.

McComb operates Killington Vacation Rentals and manages about 100 properties in the Killington area.

The rental rates of Birch Ridge vary with the season. It starts at \$2,400 a night.

"It's been a labor of love," McComb said.



By LeeAnn Cenate
People sing and speak in front of a crowd in Rutland at the 23rd annual candlelight vigil for the homeless in Rutland.

Candlelight vigil held for homeless in Rutland

The Homeless Prevention Center held its 23rd annual candlelight vigil on Dec. 21 in Rutland.

The vigil is held each year on the winter solstice, along with hundreds of other communities across the country. HPC's vision is to eliminate hopelessness and homelessness within the community. In the past three years, HPC has helped re-house over 400 homeless Vermonters. Over 50 people gathered in Depot Park to remember friends and neighbors in the community who have struggled, or are currently struggling, to find the sense of home many of us take for granted. The Candlelight Vigil included singing, stories from people who have been homeless, and a moment of silence to honor those who are still struggling or who have lost their lives while homeless.

Brandon residents Emily Nelson and Bill Moore sang for the crowd. The various speakers were from Brandon, Rutland and Castleton.

Women dies from blunt force trauma

Staff report

The Castleton Police Department has identified a woman who died in front of her home by a falling tree in a high wind storm on Dec. 23.

Castleton Police Chief Peter Mantello said Joyce Ricard, 51, died of blunt force trauma from a 60-foot-tall maple tree that fell when she was outside her home on East Creek Drive and attempting to get back inside.

"The tree broke off about

a third of the way up," Mantello said.

Mantello said Ricard was on the phone with her husband, who was at work, when the tree fell. Her husband realized what had happened and called 911.

Mantello said she was trapped under the tree when first responders arrived around 7:30 a.m. The police, fire and rescue departments worked to relieve the weight of the tree.

"She sustained some serious blunt trauma, but she was conscious enough to say a few words," Mantello said. "Then she was kind of in and out."

The tree was about 10 feet wide and located about 70 feet away from her home.

"It was unfortunate, two days before Christmas. It's one of those things," Mantello said.

She was transported via ambulance to Rutland Re-

gional Medical Center, where she later died around 10 a.m.

Ricard was born in Glens Falls, New York, according to her obituary. She graduated from Fair Haven Union High School in 1989. She had operated a daycare at her home for many years.

Mantello said the area was heavily damaged with many trees down.

About 94,000 Green Mountain Power customers lost power.



By C. Vanderyajt

Dakotah Norton races to the top of the podium at the 2022 Fox U.S. Open in Killington. The event will return this September.

Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking to return to Killington in 2023

The Fox U.S. Open of Mountain Biking race festival is returning to Killington Resort again this year. The 2023 race will take place Sept. 21-24, following the event's successful return to the east coast in 2022.

Professional and amateur athletes from around the world are anticipated to compete in the open class downhill for one of the largest cash purses in racing, and as always, the open also offers amateur racing classes in downhill, enduro and dual slalom.

"We're looking forward to hosting the 20th anniversary of the U.S. Open at Killington in 2023. The venue proved once again to be a great home for the USO and we are excited to continue to build on the momentum generated this year" stated Clay Harper, the co-founder and event director. "Maintaining our goal to cultivate a strong youth DH racing experience and keep it fun for pro athletes is at the core of everything we do."

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

"The atmosphere in the U.S. Open is great. The dual slalom and the best whip were sick," said Vermette. "The DH track was insane, from chunky with roots to manicured jumps - every lap I did was so fun! Getting on the podium was crazy with all the fast guys there. I was stoked to get third and I am hyped to go back for 2023."

The U.S. Open downhill race will remain true to its heritage as an open

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

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

Beyond the competition, the Fox U.S. Open attracts race fans, freeriders and families with Killington Bike Park remaining open to the public throughout the entire event week. Warm days and cool nights make September a great time to visit Vermont and ride your bike.

More event information and athlete registration details coming soon.

Remembering High Pond and Birdseye ski areas in Rutland County

By Karen D. Lorentz

Editor's note: This is part three in a three-part series on former ski areas in Vermont.

"Not the Biggest, But One of The Best" was the slogan the late Bill Jenkins came up with for the High Pond Ski Area, which opened to the public in winter 1951.

High Pond was built as a personal ski area for W. Douglas Burden, a wealthy entrepreneur who had made his fortune in mining and other businesses, on a 500-acre farm he owned. His friends had wanted to ski there, too, so he hired Jenkins and Stan Whitney to operate it on weekends and holidays. Jenkins was teaching skiing at Green Mountain College during the week.

Jenkins described the hill as having "a 300-foot vertical—similar to Pico's Triple Slope area—an ideal hill." There were five slopes (later eight) that served all ability levels and a short, slow beginner rope tow below the base lodge that kids loved, he told me in a 2012 interview.

On the main hill, there was a second rope tow and a Bridger Manufacturing Platterpull lift, which was later replaced by a Doppelmayr T-bar.

Jenkins installed one of the first Larchmont snowmakers there for the 1952 season, recalling it was an "experimental system and not very successful; we took it out after one season."

Jenkins also taught skiing while Whitney ran the High Pond Inn with his wife Joan and Bill's wife Nancy. [Nancy Jenkins was also the manager of the Pico Ski Shop for many years.] They catered to guests from all over, including ski clubs that arrived by bus.

Located in Hubbardton, High Pond became known as a family area. Jenkins left High Pond in 1958 when his schedule of ski teaching and coaching racers went to seven days a week at Green Mountain College. High Pond was operated by Larry Wheeler and then the Livak family for 18 years through the winter of 1975. It also had a sliding/tobogganing hill and hosted some Otter Valley Winter Carnivals. High Pond operated on and off into the early/mid 1980s with John and Sherry Armitage operating it in 1983 and 1984. The area is now privately owned.

John Tower, who learned to ski there (1963-1967), recalled that a school bus would pick kids up in Brandon and another in Pittsford and drop them off at the area for Saturday recreational skiing. "We could ski and buy lunch for \$5," he said. He recalled it was a very popular area, noting, "there were lots of kids and it could get pretty crowded."

Birdseye Ski Area

Jenkins started planning the Birdseye Ski Area on the Castleton/Ira town line in 1958 with a group of local

investors. His original idea was to have "a self-sustaining operation, so I proposed building a summer theme park to help finance winter operations. But I was known as a skier so they pushed for the ski area," he said.

"We built a Stabil Disc lift that Stan Whitney and I had designed. It was like a Pomalift but the retraction device worked by gravity so there wasn't a snap when you let go of the flexible tube [pole]."

The mountain debuted in 1962 with a 750-foot Stabil lift on the west side, a rope tow, open slope, and trails. "Two years later we installed a 500-foot disc lift on the north face and three more trails. A 1,300-foot Doppelmayr T-bar was installed above that lift [1965] for 500 feet of vertical. There were plans to go to the top with chairlifts to offer a 1,300-foot vertical.

"We installed 10 Larchmont snowguns which worked very well. This was the third Larchmont system in Vermont. I wanted snowmaking for each lift area because the area wasn't in a snowbelt and we had unlimited water from the Castleton River. But the board of directors installed the T-bar without snowmaking, so I resigned. That turned out to be a low snow year, and the area only operated two more years," Jenkins said.

The area closed in 1968 but had had "a very successful night skiing" opera-

tion and later was used for a campground for a time.

While competition from larger ski areas hurt the smaller areas that were still operating after the 1950s ski boom, it was really the lack of snowmaking and the cost of liability insurance that finally "killed off many of them" in the 1970s and early 1980s, Jenkins said. But not before launching many a youngster and adult into a fun-filled winter sport that was "just great for families," he noted.

Vermont saw a significant decrease from a high of 81 areas in 1966 (including chairlift and surface lift /rope-tow areas) to 49 in 1978 and 39 in 1988. The state's rope tows decreased from 65 in 1961 to 19 in 1988. By the 1988-89 season there were just 20 public ski areas operating with chairlifts. Today, there are 17 areas with chairlifts and just eight surface lift and/or rope-tow areas operating in Vermont. There are also a few private tows serving kids and families.

As one of the most influential ski instructors you never heard of, Bill Jenkins' legacy was to be a significant part of early ski history and passing on a love for the sport over several generations that have made skiing an economic driver in Vermont. He also taught at other areas, including Pico and Okemo and continued to teach adaptive students at Pico into his 80s. He died on May 25, 2015 at age 90.



The late Bill Jenkins demonstrated the Stabil Lift he built with friend Stan Whitney in his yard in Rutland. Such inventions allowed for local areas to succeed.

By Karen D. Lorentz

OBITUARY

Alice Sciore, 93

Alice Sciore, a well known Killington artist passed away peacefully on Jan. 1, 2023, in Cranston, Rhode Island, where she has resided with her family for the past four years.

Born in Hoboken, New Jersey July 13, 1929 she was the devoted daughter of the late John Sciore and Helen Mazzocca Sciore.

Alice Sciore lived her life the way another famous Hoboken resident, Frank Sinatra, did: "Her Way."

A talented artist she worked for JC Penney on 5th Avenue, Manhattan as a graphic designer in the '50s and '60s where she used her passion for style to create amazing advertising before falling in love with Killington and relocating there in the late '60s. Her unique flare and creativity along with her love of nature, the mountains and all its splendor led her to become a prominent member of the art community serving proudly on various boards including the Chaffee Art Center and involved in numerous creative projects.

Alice Sciore is sur-



Alice Sciore

vived by numerous family members and friends. Her three loves were family, friends and food. She spoke proudly of her family every day of her life as she was surrounded by artists, musicians, cooks and other creative people. She often said: "Darling, it is much cheaper to clothe me than feed me."

Many feel it was her wish to pass on New Year's Day so that those of us that love her will remember and toast her every year. One of her famous toasts was: "Eat, drink and be merry just don't get caught."

A celebration of Sciore's life will be held at a later date.

Catherine M. Martin, 77

Catherine Martin, 77, of Killington, fought a brave battle, sadly succumbing to esophageal cancer, on Dec. 29.

She was born in Queens, New York on June 22, 1945 the daughter of John and Catherine Martin.

Martin was educated and was the secretary to the vice president of Reynolds Aluminum in New York City before moving to Vermont after her father died.

She was employed as secretary to the president of Vermont Yankee Nuclear Power, secretary to the president of Vermont Electric Power Company, secretary to the president of Killington LTD and for the past 40 years was office manager for Moore Construction.

Martin was a devout parishioner of Christ the King and active participant in weekly gatherings through Father Bernie's leadership. She also served as director for the Rutland Humane Society.

She enjoyed skiing, sailing, working in her gardens and



Catherine (Cathy) Martin

her dogs and cats. She would often be found hiking the trails of Killington and Pico mountains or the golf course with her dog.

Surviving is her former husband Richard Moore, and numerous relatives and cousins in New York. During her battle she continually remained grateful and blessed to have caring, compassionate and giving, dear friends at her side. She always reflected on how generous and willing to give of their time as well as

Martin → 10

Shiffrin, Moltzan make history in slalom

Staff report

Two skiers with Vermont ties made history, Thursday, Dec. 29 in Semmering, Austria.

Mikaela Shiffrin secured her 80th World Cup win and 50th slalom victory on Thursday while Paula Moltzan came in second place, earning her first podium in the discipline. It was the first time Americans finished first and second in a women's World Cup slalom since 1971.

Shiffrin attended Burke Mountain Academy, while Moltzan attended the University of Vermont.

It was the first time Americans finished first and second in a women's World Cup slalom since 1971.

"I obviously couldn't be more proud of myself and the whole team, and even better to do it in front of my parents," Moltzan told the Associated Press.

Shiffrin finished 0.29 seconds ahead of Moltzan and became the first skier with 50 World Cup wins in a single discipline.

"I honestly have no idea — I have no idea what to say about that," Shiffrin told the Associated Press. "But one thing that is easy to say: U.S. 1-2 in slalom, that is amazing. That is unbelievable."

Shiffrin is on track to beat Lindsey Vonn's record of 82 World Cup wins — the most by a female.

Gwen Allard elected to U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame

By Karen D. Lorentz

A highly revered pioneer in the world of ski education and adaptive skiing, Mendon resident Gwen Allard has been elected to the U.S. Ski and Snowboard Hall of Fame Class of 2022, which will be inducted in March at Big Sky, Montana.

Allard's career spans five decades of teaching skiing and terms as executive director of Professional Ski Instructors of America Eastern Division (PSIA-E) and director of the PSIA-E Education Foundation among other positions.

As a pioneering snow-sports educator, she was one of the first to embrace adaptive snow-sports education and went on to become a well-respected leader within the PSIA — now PSIA/AASI which includes snowboard instructors — for her innovative teaching methodology and her ability to effectively communicate it to students. She is also acknowledged for her perseverance in rallying the entire ski industry around adaptive sports.

In his nomination of Allard in the "snow sport builder" category, Bill Irwin, a longtime PSIA-E examiner and ski industry consultant, wrote: "Gwen Allard is a visionary who dreams big and then brings people together to make things happen. She has forged a lifetime career in snow sports, holding numerous leadership positions at the regional and national level."

Irwin added that "recognizing Adaptive as a major discipline and taking over all training and certification operations, examiner training, development of standards and written materials, and creation of an annual national educational event . . . she has touched the lives of thousands of trainers, instructors and students."

Allard founded the Gore Mt. Adaptive Program and the Adaptive Sports Foundation at Ski Windham (New York) where a new slopeside adaptive center was named The Gwen Allard Adaptive Sports Center in 2006. She also was a guiding light in the development of an adaptive ski and snowboard program at the Double H Ranch (New York) for seriously ill children.

All those accomplishments are just the tip of the iceberg that caused Irwin to nominate her, he said. She also "has had an impact on Alpine, Nordic, adaptive snowboarding, and seniors," he wrote.

With an extensive resume of her long career, Irwin made clear Allard epitomizes the role of a sports builder.

Gwen Allard → 28

← CLA: Killington's grand list accounted for just 61.6% of a property's true market value, topping the state from page 1

for most across the state; and the further your town's Grand List is from its assessed 100% of current market value (the lower your CLA) the higher the rate will be to compensate.

To calculate, take the homestead education property tax rate in your town before the CLA is applied (to find yours visit: tax.vermont.gov/property/education-property-tax-rates) and divide it by the CLA.

By way of example, for Killington, it's \$1.5115/.616, which equals \$2.4537 (per \$100 of property value) — So for a house valued at \$500,000 that's \$12,268.67 in state education taxes. Last year, Killington's CLA was 75.70%, which put the education tax rate at \$1.9966 (or about \$9,983.48 for that same \$500,000 house). Thus, the CLA valuation for Killington, leads to a 19% increase in education property taxes over last year.

Local rates, upcoming reappraisals

The CLA is also used as one measure to determine whether a town must conduct a full reappraisal of its properties. Municipalities must reappraise if the CLA is below 85% or above 115%. Of the 254 municipalities in the Dec. 2022 report, 165 are listed as "Subject to Statutory Order to Reappraise."

In Rutland County, after Killington, Tinmouth had the next greatest discrepancy with a CLA of 77.43%, followed by Pittsford at 77.89%. All but two of the 28 towns in the county had undervalued Grand Lists, only Mendon (100.77%) and Pittsfield (103.68%) were listed as overvalued in relation to their Grand List (both have recently undergone reappraisals in 2021 and 2022, respectively). In Rutland County, 16 towns are "Subject to Statutory Order to Reappraise;" 12 are not.

In Windsor County, Norwich led the list at 74.48%, followed by Woodstock at 75.37%, then Stockbridge at 75.98%. All 24 towns in the county had undervalued Grand Lists,

and 19 are "Subject to Statutory Order to Reappraise," according to the recent CLA valuations.

The average actual 2023-2024 (FY24) education property tax rate (what taxpayers see on their bills, which reflect both the voted school budget and the adjustment factor for the town level of appraisal) is \$1.57, according to a letter Craig Bolio, commissioner of the Dept. of Taxes wrote to the Legislature Dec. 1 regarding forecasted education taxes.

Factors that contribute to increasing evaluations, rates

"Because of the increases in value in real estate in Vermont over the last couple of years, the CLA has been reduced significantly in many communities across the state, and the actual tax bills taxpayers see in those communities may be higher than what is indicated by the average equalized rate," Bolio explained in his letter to the Legislature.

"Property value appreciation, on top of higher-than normal school spending growth, are the main reasons the average property tax bill is projected to increase."

The Education Fund surplus from last fiscal year, however, will likely be used to "buy down" the forecasted property tax rate later this spring. Bolio projects a surplus of over \$63 million, "which buys down equalized rates approximately six cents," he wrote. "While this projected surplus is significantly lower than the never-before-seen surplus of over \$95 million from last fiscal year, it is still extraordinary considering surpluses were generally in the \$10-15 million range prior to FY22."

But even after applying the surplus, the average tax bill is likely to still rise by 3.7% he said. Bolio projected an 8.5% overall growth rate in school spending, which is double last year's projected growth rate, and higher than any growth rate in at least the last decade, he said.

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2822 KILLINGTON RD BEHIND DOMENIC'S PIZZERIA

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MOUNTAIN TIMES

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Heating with wood: What you need to know

By Julia Purdy

The day after Christmas, in Vermont's Washington County a woodstove ignited the wall behind it as the family was watching television, reported WPTZ.

The previous week, WCAX reported a pre-dawn, total house fire in Bethel that killed an elderly couple. The attached woodshed was "full of wood, so that was all fully engulfed," said Bethel Fire Chief David Aldrighetti.

And the weekend before those two incidents, another pre-dawn fire at a home in the remote mountain town of Readsboro claimed the life of a lone occupant.

The 2021 Report of the State Fire Marshall states, "In 2021, Vermont experienced eight residential fire deaths, reported by the U.S. Fire Administration, next to the lowest rate of all the Northeast, where people typically burn wood for heating fuel. Most of those deaths occurred in Vermont in January, followed by September and November."

Many winter house fires result from deferred maintenance, unsafe installation or careless operation of woodburning stoves and fireplaces. The report states, "A lead contributing factor to home heating fires is failure to clean creosote from solid-fueled heating equipment chimneys."

Most long-time residents are keenly aware of the risks of living in brittle, century-old – or older – houses. The Daily Dispatch, on Dec. 22 this year, reported on a Wardsboro homeowner whose outside communication was blocked by a private plow truck that crashed into a utility pole. She had four fire extinguishers at the ready, and told the Dispatch, "My house is an 1840s carriage barn, and it would burn like kindling with any spark. A fire here would also take out a few other homes and barns close nearby."

Maybe you found a cozy winter or holiday rental that features a woodburning stove as a centerpiece, or you have decided to scavenge a pre-owned model for your home because the prices on new models are out of reach. Maybe you know someone who knows someone who has an older woodburner in the barn they want to get rid of for a few bucks, or you see a deal on craigslist.

Either way, you will be using and depending on a secondhand woodstove that may or may not have received meticulous care. Don't rely on a snapshot. You will want to see it in person; unlike buying a house sight-unseen, you will be depending on this equipment for warmth and also safety. Worn-out, poorly installed woodstoves are the proverbial tinderbox and can also leak smoke and odorless carbon monoxide into the room.

There is much sound advice online by folks who have long experience heating with wood. Here are some of their observations.

Even though Maryland is not exactly the frozen North, the University of Maryland Extension Service's advice is consistent with recommendations from regions where burning wood is a winter-long practice. The service does urge buyers to look for the EPA certification tag. EPA-certified stoves "emit less smoke, are more efficient, produce more heat, and are safer. They also produce less creosote so your chimney will stay cleaner," advises the extension service.

According to Hearth.com, prior to 1980, UL approval was not required. After 1990, the Environmental Protection Agency required certification for all new stoves, to reduce air pollution and raise efficiency. Certification is not a requirement in all states, and in any case you might not fall in love with a stove that predates the 1980s.

The new regs mean that stoves over 30 years old are better utilized as outdoor grills or nests for mice in the barn. Hearth.com notes that "cast iron box stoves that are not UL listed cannot be installed in habitable living spaces. Some have deceiving claims tested to UL standards but do not carry the UL label. ... This information becomes critical to avoid purchasing a used wood stove that cannot be legally installed." Installation requires a permit and the stove must show a UL rating; many homeowners insurance carriers require it.

But some folks fall in love with the rustic appeal of a still-functional vintage woodstove, so here are some questions several sites recommend asking a seller: What year is this stove? Does it have a UL or EPA label? How often, when and where was it used? Have you ever had a problem with it? When was the last maintenance done, and what was done? Do you have the manual? (This is useful for the tolerances required when installing it.)

As for the stove, here is a checklist of what to look for in a secondhand airtight, cast iron or sheet steel woodstove.

Trust your first impression. Inspect the outer jacket of the stove carefully. Flaking rust or a white discoloration somewhere indicate "over-firing" – the metal has been literally burned, either too hot or for too long, causing metal fatigue. You may see warping or buckling sides or top. Over-firing can also open seams. Shine a flashlight into the stove. If light leaks out anywhere, this stove is no longer airtight and you should pass it by.

If the jacket looks unharmed, check for a good seal around the loading doors. This is a necessary feature of the airtight stove. The gaskets should be intact all the way around and not frayed. They are made of fiberglass rope, impregnated with graphite. Hearth.com has an easy hack: shut the doors on a dollar bill; if you can pull it out easily, the gaskets need replacing. Parts are available from the manufacturer and should be inspected regularly.

While you are checking the loading doors, examine the firebrick lining of the fire chamber inside. Ask the seller to clean out any remaining layer of ash that conceals the floor. Is the firebrick broken, crumbling or reduced to powder? A few small hair line cracks are normal, says Hearth.com, but extensive damage is once again the result of over-firing. Does the grate

Wood heat → 10

Vermonters urged to take steps to prevent spread of avian influenza

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is reminding the public to take precautions around wild birds, as virulent avian influenza (HPAI) continues to circulate in the state.

Backyard flocks of domestic birds in Caledonia and Lamoille Counties have had to be destroyed after exposure to the virus, commonly known as avian flu.

"Highly pathogenic avian influenza has been detected in more than 70 wild birds since March, with cases reported most months and in every region of the state," said Wildlife Program Manager David Sausville. "Many exposures come from migrating birds, so we expect case numbers to drop as winter tem-

peratures set in. However, Vermonters still need to be mindful that this disease is present in our birds."

HPAI poses a low risk to human health. However, the virus causes severe illness and high mortality in poultry. Transmission from wild birds is a primary cause of infection in domestic flocks, and human exposure can contribute to spread of the virus.

"Avoiding contact with any birds that seem sick, and not handling wild birds in general, are the most important steps the public can take to prevent the spread of HPAI," said Sausville.

Sausville also asked Vermonters to report sightings of multiple dead birds in the same area to wildlife of-

ficials. Reports can be made by email to fwinformation@vermont.gov, or by calling 802-828-1000.

People can find information to help distinguish between natural expected bird mortality versus something that may be more serious by visiting the Fish and Wildlife Department's HPAI web page. Sick birds should not be taken into homes or rehabilitation facilities, and bird feeders should be washed frequently and placed far away from areas that might bring wild birds into contact with domestic fowl.

Up-to-date guidance for minimizing the spread of HPAI from wild birds can be found in the department's online HPAI bulletin via vtfishandwildlife.com.



Courtesy CDC

Neurologic wood duck with highly pathogenic avian influenza, a deadly disease for birds.

Legal Services Vermont wins technology grant to help Vermonters file key forms

The Legal Services Corporation in Burlington has received technology initiative grants for 29 legal services providers across the country. Legal Services Vermont is one of the organizations selected for a grant-funded project that leverages technology in delivering legal help to low-income residents.

Legal Services Vermont will create online guided interviews that walk Vermonters through filling out important court forms such as relief from abuse, divorce and small claims.

The guided interviews will provide an easy and accessible way to complete court forms. They will provide simplified questions and help to guide users and ensure more complete and legally accurate filings. Self-represented litigants will be able to "fill and file" the court documents. Or, they can save their progress and print or send links to their documents to themselves or an advocate.

"This project addresses a part of the legal process that can be very challenging for self-represented Vermonters: starting or responding to a court action," said Sam Abel-Palmer, executive director of Legal Services Vermont. "It's just one of the many ways we are working to provide access to justice to Vermonters who cannot afford an attorney."

In a recent LSC-funded project, Legal Services Vermont created video-supported, online legal roadmaps to help solve some common legal issues. An earlier tech grant helped make the VTLawHelp.org website more accessible to all online users.

Based in Burlington, Legal Services Vermont serves residents around Vermont at no charge. LSV offers a wide range of civil (not criminal) legal services — from quick legal advice to full-scope representation — and community legal education for eligible, low-income Vermonters.

Districts struggle with statewide ed software

By Curt Peterson

In an effort to streamline gathering of financial and human resources data from more than 300 school districts, former Agency of Education Secretary Rebecca Holcombe signed a \$5.2 million contract in 2018 for eFinance.

The state had been wrestling with data provided via multiple software systems from districts.

The contract term started in 2018 and goes until 2025. The hope was standardizing financial software would bring more accuracy and less wrestling. The eFinance parent, California-based PowerSchool, would provide installation and tech support as districts adopted the system.

Jim Fenn, Windsor Central Supervisory Union director of finance and operations, told the Mountain Times the district took eFinance live Jan. 1, and, so far, he said it's "going well."

Implementation by all districts hasn't been easy. Legislators have extended the deadline from 2020 for all school districts to implement the software three times, recently to December 2024, and asked the Agency of Education for a status report and recommendations regarding eFinance installation.

The report revealed only one third of districts in Vermont have adopted eFinance, one fourth of those installations are complete, and just 15% of all districts have completed implementation and are fully satisfied with its performance.

"There are certain things that we would like to see changed," Fenn, who was a member of the committee that produced the AoE report, said. "The three weaknesses we have experienced to date are, inadequate 'canned' reports — we are learning how to write our own in COGNOS to address this issue, bank reconciliations for multiple bank accounts — we understand this has been addressed in the April 2023 release, and interfund accounting which (eFinance is) working on."

The report's bottom line: The AoE should eliminate the implementation deadline entirely, and make sure the districts that have fully or partially installed the system are well-supported.

"So far we are pleased," Fenn said. "We are moving from a 20-plus-year-old software to eFinance, so the functionality of a Windows based software versus our old Cobol based software is a big improvement."

He added his own recommendation — that the state set up its systems to access data directly from districts' files as needed.

RNESU OKs 3-year driver/staff contract

By Angelo Lynn, Addison Independent

The boards of Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union and Otter Valley Unified Union District ratified a three-year contract with the educational support staff and bus drivers, according to RNESU Superintendent Kristin Hubert, at a meeting on Dec. 7. The boards continue to hone the school district's proposed 2023-24 fiscal year budget.

The contract is the first multi-year contract ratified in many years by the board and the association representing the workers. Having a multi-year contract brings stability and consistency for the districts, Hubert said, adding that it "provides the districts with the ability to better budget for expenditures."

In the first year of the contract (FY2023) there is a wage increase of 8.20%, she said, "along with a one-time payment adjustment to correct the bus drivers' salary schedule recognizing years of service and experience and providing a consistent salary scale."

In the remaining two years of the agreement, the parties have agreed to 4% per year pay increases, she said.

The board is expected to finalize various aspects of the upcoming school year's budget at its next meeting. Earlier reports had put the proposed spending increase at about 10.7%, though that could be trimmed as state aid and other budgeting factors come into view in January. District residents will vote on the budget on Town Meeting Day this coming March.

What will Vermont lawmakers do about religious schools?

By Peter D'Auria/VTDigger

In June, the U.S. Supreme Court issued a ruling in a case called Carson v.

Makin, finding the state of Maine could not withhold public money from private religious schools simply because those schools might use the money for religious purposes.

In Vermont, which operates a tuition program that is similar to Maine's, officials have been paying close attention. As the upcoming legislative session approaches, lawmakers and advocates are gearing up for a pitched debate over how best to respond to that ruling.

The question of religious schools is "one issue that

religion that is "contrary to the dictates of conscience."

"I believe the majority of Vermonters do not want public dollars going to religious schools," said Sen. Brian Campion, D-Bennington, the chair of the Senate Committee on Education.

But it's unclear what lawmakers will — or can — do to prevent that from happening.

One likely uncontroversial move would be to simply bar all independent schools, including religious ones, from discriminating against students and staff.

State rules already prohibit discrimination in both public and private schools.

In a series of rulings over the past few years, the U.S. Supreme Court has allowed state money to be used to fund religious schools in towns that have no public school.

continues to rise to the top, that people are talking about," said Rep. Peter Conlon, D-Cornwall, the ranking member of the Vermont House Committee on Education.

In rural Vermont and Maine, students that live in towns without public schools can use state money to attend private schools elsewhere. For years, however, both states said that money could not be used at religious schools.

But in a series of rulings over the past few years, the U.S. Supreme Court has eradicated those prohibitions.

For many in Vermont, the prospect of public dollars going to religious schools is an uncomfortable one. For one thing, it raises concerns that private religious schools may discriminate against LGBTQ+ students or staff.

Vermont's constitution also complicates the picture. The document contains a "compelled support clause" — language that protects Vermonters from being forced to support a

Earlier this year, lawmakers advanced, but did not pass, legislation that would have strengthened those protections, and some expect another attempt in the upcoming session.

Such legislation may not resolve the question of the Vermont constitution's compelled support clause, however.

Another solution that has been discussed could be to require school districts to designate several private schools for their students to attend. Under that model, only the designated schools — which might have to follow certain rules — could receive public tuition dollars from the district.

But it's unclear that such a model would be able to exclude all religious schools. And it would likely generate strong pushback.

Another even more controversial proposal would be to eliminate all public tuition to independent schools, or to limit it to only a handful of schools.

"To me, the big problem that the Legislature is going to face is Religious schools → 10

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GUEST EDITORIAL

In New Year's resolutions, when it comes to conscience, less is more

By Robert S. Emmons

Editor's note: Robert S. Emmons has maintained a private psychiatric practice in Vermont for 33 years. He is a member of the volunteer clinical faculty at UVM Larner College of Medicine, where he has taught in the fields of professionalism, ethics and psychoanalytic psychotherapy.

It's hard to wrestle old habits to the ground. We all know that New Year's resolutions too often falter and provide only fodder for self-criticism.

A look at the connections between conscience, moral life and social hierarchy shows us another path to more satisfying lives.

The unconscious mind can be envisioned as housing a library of algorithms, shortcuts that enable one to make decisions, large and small, without expending undue energy on the problems that have already been solved.

Conscience consists of the section of the library that pertains to life with others, along with a hardwired system of reward and punishment that enables one to learn new rules

New Year's resolutions are typically framed as moral imperatives: "I promise to myself ..." But adding yet another rule is unlikely to cure the problem of too many rules.

and follow the old. We like to imagine that we reason through dilemmas of right and wrong according to the moral codes we profess, but in mental life, automatic shortcuts tend to win out over conscious problem-solving.

Conscience enables us to survive and thrive in social hierarchy. Family is the first of the many social organizations we will participate in throughout our lifespans. Social life requires some form of hierarchy and regulation to keep things organized, and a family is no exception.

Moral rules are instilled in children through combinations of reward and punishment administered by parents. The external incentives of childhood give way in adult life to internal incentives: Moral satisfaction can serve as a springboard to success, and the fear of self-criticism can be a good way to get unpleasant things done.

Once we leave our families, we encounter new social hierarchies that vie to harness our hard-wired systems of reward and punishment, and our wishes for group affiliation, in order to install algorithms that serve their ends into our unconscious libraries. As social hierarchies multiply, and existing ones get more complex, more and more rules are loaded into our libraries, even though total mental bandwidth is limited.

It's not natural to work against one's own interests, so it takes extra mental effort to follow Other People's Algorithms. Our minds turn into mush as we struggle to comply with externally imposed, other-serving rules, rather than joyfully and playfully working out our own algorithms for the problems that are meaningful in our lives.

Habits can be understood as the unsatisfying compromises that result when conflicts arise between self-directed and other-serving algorithms.

As a way to deal with habits, New Year's resolutions are typically framed as moral imperatives: "I promise to myself ..." If we accept the premise that an unhelpful moral algorithm lurks beneath the surface of every habit, then we can see that adding yet another rule is unlikely to cure the problem of too many rules.

A year-end review might be used more productively to evaluate the library of algorithms, in order to delete the ones that do not serve personal wellbeing. Let's call this method

Less is more → 10



Happy 2023 by Bruce Plante, PoliticalCartoons.com

LETTERS

Vermont Public name is confusing

Dear Editor,

Since the merger between Vermont PBS and VPR and the subsequent name change, I have been referring to the organization as "Vermont Public Whatever."

My suggestion, made to a long time VPR reporter as well as various concerned members of the public I have spoken to on the subject, was that the merged media organization ought

I have been referring to the organization as "Vermont Public Whatever."

to seriously consider changing its name by adding the name to something along the lines of Broadcasting (i.e., Vermont Public Broadcasting"); however, in a recent letter to the editor published by Vtdigger, the writer suggested adding the word Media instead and

Vt Public → 10

Substance abuse disorder doesn't work like that

Dear Editor,

"I don't give them money, because they're just going to buy drugs with it. I don't want to feed their addiction."

Let's unpack that statement that was just repeated to me for what felt like the gazillionth time today. Maybe they are, maybe they're not.

But let's say for argument's sake they are actively dependent on illicit substances, struggling and panhandling to feed a substance abuse disorder. Do you think that not giving them money will starve the disorder and that will be what forces them to stop?

Based on my years of embedded observations and experience, it won't. Substance abuse disorder doesn't work like that. If it were that simple, the so-called "war on drugs" would have worked. Instead, we have one of the highest rates of substance abuse disorder in the world.

Addiction of any sort is tenacious, but substance abuse disorder is downright Herculean in the strong hold it has over those who struggle with it. One way or another, it will get what it needs. And it relies on us

focusing on the outcomes — and not the root causes — to continue thriving and growing in our communities.

So what happens when someone who is struggling with substance abuse disorder can't meet the demands of addiction, and panhandling doesn't work?

What I've witnessed is that, depending on the substance one is addicted to, some get incredibly sick and desperate. It truly is a disease.

Some (not all, not even most) get so sick and desperate that they go to incredible lengths, but in the sickness they are not steady, their decision-making abilities are compromised, their inhibitions reduced, and ability to care for self, others, anything but what it will take to make that pain stop, goes out the window.

This can look like selling whatever they have, including themselves, to whoever will pay, no matter how awful they are. It can mean allowing dealers to set up in their home and take over, turning it into a trap house — a place where they are literally entrapped, being fed

Substance abuse → 10

Hartland store is sold after 40-plus years

Dear Editor,

As you may have heard in passing, our little store has been sold.

That being said, our

It was always BG's (Bob's) goal to have a business that focused on the people, the community and the local flavor.

whole family (past and present) would like to thank all of our customers and patrons for their support over the last 40 plus years.

It was always the senior BG's (Bob's) goal to have a business that focused on the people, the community and the local flavor of the small hamlet of Hartland. We've tried to continue with his simple business model to this day. I think we nailed it. Bless you all.

*The Gaucher family,
Hartland*

CAPITAL QUOTES

On the new year...

"In 2022, people around the world helped change their communities for the better. Let's keep it up in 2023. We've still got a lot of work to do, but I'll be right there with you. Here's to a happy, healthy, and peaceful new year,"

said **Barack Obama**.

"Each of us has that right, that possibility, to invent ourselves daily. If a person does not invent herself, she will be invented. So, to be bodacious enough to invent ourselves is wise,"

said **Maya Angelou**.

"May 2023 be the year we find peace, the year we reconnect with our shared humanity, and the year we recommit ourselves to a brighter future,"

said Apple CEO **Tim Cook**.

"One thing's for sure, it won't be boring,"

said **Elon Musk**.

"Across the country you'll see us building new bridges, cleaning lead pipes, and getting folks online. You'll see tons of good-paying manufacturing and construction jobs open up. We're just getting started. Here's to 2023, and the work we're going to do together,"

said President **Joe Biden**.

COMMENTARY

The common man? We prefer to encourage the uncommon

By Lawrence W. Reed and David Flemming

Editor's note: Lawrence W. Reed is president emeritus of the Foundation for Economic Education. David Flemming, a policy analyst at the Ethan Allen Institute.

All of us have heard, perhaps many times, complimentary references to the so-called "common man." He (or she) is widely regarded as praiseworthy simply because of his sameness, as if being virtually indistinguishable from millions of others is a good thing. We don't buy it. We prefer to encourage uncommonness.

Imagine a world without the uncommon. No Thomas Edison, no Joan of Arc, no Michelangelo, no Steve Jobs, no Frederick Douglass, no Benjamin Franklin, no Andrea Bocelli, no Rosa Parks. No positive examples to look up to, only a boring mass of humanity with no champions, heroes, models, or prize winners. No thanks.

Imagine attending a concert of "common" performers. Who would go see a film if it was advertised, "This movie is no better than the average?"

Imagine a parent telling a child, "Johnny, if you work really hard, someday you can be common!" Setting a promising child's sights no higher than average strikes us as a form of abuse that can stunt personal growth and achievement.

Have you ever seen the animated 1998 DreamWorks film "Antz?" The setting is an ant colony in which all ants are expected to behave as an obedient blob. This is very convenient for the tyrant ants in charge. The debilitating collectivist mindset is shaken by a single ant who marches to a different drummer — namely, his own self — and ultimately saves the colony through his individual initiative. If it wasn't for that very uncommon ant, the whole lot of them would have gone down with the ship.

Sometimes the uncommon person is offensive, intrusive, or even violent. But on most occasions, that person is simply a little rebellious or peculiar and, at the same time, a positive good for society. That person is just different. How boring this world would be if everything and everybody were common and conventional!

We should be grateful for the uncommonly good, the uncommonly productive, the uncommonly generous, the uncommonly inventive, and the uncommonly courageous. They are the individuals who leave the world not just as they found it, but as a better or freer place because of their specialness.

It is the uncommon who dare to speak truth to power, who break established barriers, who raise our standards, who perform with unparalleled excellence, and who, to borrow a line from the old Star Trek television series, go where no man has gone before.

Vermont has a long history of fostering uncommon individuals. In the 1850s, Elisha Otis of Halifax invented and dramatically demonstrated the first fail-safe for the elevator, ushering in the age of skyscrapers within a few decades. And who can forget Jake Burton, whose ski-career-ending car accident prompted him to launch Burton Snowboards in southern Vermont, jump-starting a global industry?

For centuries, uncommon Vermont inventors have made the world more prosperous and enjoyable for all.

We don't know about you, but we have no interest in homogenizing people in a socialist or egalitarian blender. Commonism is just one letter away from communism, a deadly poison. Don't commonize people. You will never produce heroes that way.

It pays to listen to one's inner self

By Sas Carey

Editor's note: Sas Carey's new book, "Marrying Mongolia," is being published by the International Polar Institute and will be released in February 2023. Her healing practice in Middlebury can found at lifeenergyheal.com. The documentaries and Mongolian work can be found at nomadicare.org.

When you follow your inner guidance or calling, amazing things can happen. For instance, I went to Mongolia, a place I never dreamed of going. A place described by my mother as the farthest and most unusual place on earth, as in "he would go to Outer Mongolia to find her."

As a nurse and healer, I first went to Mongolia in 1994 on a tour with the American Holistic Nurses Association. I fell in love with the steppe smells, the colorful *deel*, or traditional clothing, and the whispery

The purpose in Mongolian medicine is to balance the patients' energy.

language. My goal was to learn about traditional Asian medicine. When I met Dr. Boldsaikhan, a doctor who used a combination of traditional Mongolian and Western medicine, the words, "Would you take an American disciple?" fell out of my mouth. They came from some deep place.

"Yes," he said.

In 1995, I returned with Kathleen Scacciaferro of Bristol to study traditional Mongolian with him for three months. Dr. Boldsaikhan called my method of energy healing "psychic massage" since I do not touch the patient. The purpose in Mongolian medicine, whether changing diet, lifestyle behavior, herbs, or manual treatment herbs near certain energy points), or acupuncture is to balance the patients' energy. Just like energy healing.

Inner self → 10

← **Less is more:** Advice on successful resolutions from page 8

“pruning the conscience.”

To illustrate, imagine a hypothetical person who feels frustrated that others regularly railroad them, overlooking their needs. Conscience pruning in this case starts with a search for the unconscious moral rule that gets in the way. Upon reflection, our person recognizes that they grew up in a family where accommodating others was considered a virtue, and following one’s own interests was labeled selfish.

Now, in adult life, the imperative to please others throws sand into the gears of solving even a simple problem like planning daily exercise, so personal fitness falls by the wayside. It’s time for this person to dial back the childhood rule. An optimal motivational slogan makes the link between behavior and results: “When I look out for myself, I’ll like myself and others better.”

The moral algorithms worth keeping show us how to meet each other on equal footing and treat each other with consideration. Regular pruning of the conscience frees up mental bandwidth so we can live more happily and effectively with our families, friends and neighbors. That moves us toward a world with a lot fewer rules, less blame and punishment, and a lot more flexibility, tolerance and compassion.

← **Vt Public:** from page 8

their recommendation is quite good and potentially even better than mine.

One would think that, given how Vermont Public is currently the name of the media organization, it would be more receptive to the stated concerns as well as suggestions coming from that very public supposedly being represented and act, not merely react in what seems to be a somewhat lame fashion.

Sadly, apparently, it appears that it doesn’t and it hasn’t, not thus far. Hence, the disconnect is quite obvious.

Change the name. Please.

Morgan W. Brown, Montpelier

← **Substance abuse:** There are many reasons some abuse from page 8

a small supply to keep them compliant, and often being subjected to violence when they are not. Or it can mean taking whatever they can find to sell, and sometimes that looks like breaking and taking from you, me, our community.

And after all of that, when the disease is momentarily satiated, they know what they’ve done to get there and so often hate themselves more for it, so they medicate more, deepening the cycle and making it harder to get out.

That’s why I give money without question.

Panhandling is a desperate enough act for my compassion and I don’t want anyone to be pushed

to further desperation. I give because I hope that, if they are using, it will hurt less to use in a supported way than whatever they would otherwise do to have fed and over that the most successful outcomes are almost always rooted in harm reduction approaches and not from casting judgments or withholding aid.

Panhandling is a desperate enough act for my compassion and I don’t want anyone to be pushed to further desperation.

that need.

Because they are suffering, they deserve connection and support. I care that they stay alive and hope that they may find a way to live without the torment of substance abuse disorder someday.

The data indicates over

Please consider this before you decide that you’re not going to give support to someone who is sick. Until we as a society can do better, we as individuals must act with more thought and compassion.

Laura Chapman, Putney

← **Inner self:** How listening to one’s inner self can lead to better life experiences and creativity from page 11

During our studies, Dr. Boldsaikhan took us to the countryside to introduce us to Mongolian medicine plants. He stopped at the *ger*, or yurt, of a nomadic herder to ask directions. There were no roads and certainly no road signs. For the second time with my teacher, I had an inner experience. This time words did not come but I felt I was watching a movie set when the low *ger* door opened and a woman in a bright blue silk *deel* with a man in navy ducked out. Dr. Boldsaikhan spoke to them and soon we were on our way.

Nearly a decade later, I got an inner message to make a documentary of that lifestyle. In between, I had worked as a short-term health educator for the United Nations. I learned that women of the Gobi Desert used only five liters of water a day. They found a way to make it meet their needs. When I got the message to make a movie on the Gobi women’s lives, I was meditating in a rocking chair at home in Middlebury. Five liters? Doesn’t the rest of the world need to know how this is possible? We in Vermont used about that

much with one flush.

This started the next phase of my work in Mongolia: making documentaries about Mongolian traditional nomadic lifestyle. I was never trained as a filmmaker, but made a feature documentary called “Gobi Women’s Song” followed by three more features films about nomadic life.

What I have learned is you never know what you will be asked to do. Yet, when you listen and say, “yes” to a message from your deepest self, a way opens for you to do it.

← **Wood heat:** Woodstoves can be dangerous from page 6

show signs of over-firing? Is the ash pan missing or rusted through?

Do the hinges and latches work smoothly? Are they missing or loose when closed? If the stove has a front window, is the glass intact? Some discoloration is normal. Does the damper open and close easily, and stay that way?

Check the operation of the stove, if it is still connected to a flue. Light a small fire in it. If you don’t know how, ask the seller to show you. If the damper and the air intakes are working properly, a small amount of tinder should set fire quickly to a couple of sticks of kindling, and no smoke should leak into the room.

The seller should also be able to explain the features of the stove, such as baffles that recirculate the initial smoke to be reignited, thus achieving greater efficiency.

The condition of a secondhand woodstove is only one part of the picture. What kind of firewood do you have access to?

Hardwoods, kiln-dried or stored outdoors under cover for at least six months, are the ideal fuel. In the Northeast, maple, oak, and ash are the species of choice: dense woods, they burn steadily and evenly, produce very little creosote, and “more fuel is packed into each chunk of wood,” Rutland City Fire Chief Bill Lovett told the Mountain Times. The softwoods such as pine, birch and tamarack burn faster and less efficiently and coat the stove and flue with residual pitch, which is the culprit in most chimney fires.

Some say that burning a hot fire will keep the flue cleaner, but it’s a good way to start a chimney fire, he added.

“Green” (unseasoned) contains moisture and tends to smolder, requiring constant stoking and an open draft to keep it burning, while producing more residue than warmth. In addition, some woods such as tamarack throw showers of sparks. No smoke should be entering the living area.

Before heating season begins, has the woodstove been inspected? Has the chimney been swept professionally? Bird nests, bats, rodents, storm debris must be cleared out also.

Frequency of chimney cleaning is dictated by type of flue, type of stove, type of firewood, Chief Lovett explained.

Woodstoves must be serviced and checked over, esp. the older styles. A professional chimney sweep company is thorough, will also inspect the condition of the stove, and is a source of sound advice.

Preparing o heat with wood “is not the place to save a few dollars,” Lovett said. “Life hangs in the balance.”

← **Martin:** Age from page 4

efforts, these friends were. Thank you.

Funeral Services will be held at Christ the King Church, Rutland, on Jan. 21 at 1 p.m. followed by a reception at the Rutland Country Club.

In lieu of flowers, prayers and donations in Cathy’s memory may be made to Christ the King Church, 66 S. Main St., Rutland 05701 and Rutland County Humane Society, 765 Stevens Road, Pittsford 05763.

A friend of Cathy Martin reflected that “she was always a kind and welcoming face with a warm presence, an infectious giggle and a secret dog treat in her pocket. She had a glow about her and a sparkle in her eyes. Kind and sweet is how I will remember her.”

Burial will be at a later date in the Riverside Cemetery in Killington. Arrangements are under the direction of Clifford Funeral Home in Rutland.

← **Religious schools:** Public money could be available for tuition from page 7

ing to face involves political and practical constraints,” said Peter Teachout, a constitutional law professor at the Vermont Law and Graduate School. “And one of them is that the state has become accustomed to providing parents from school districts without public schools of their own a wide range of choice, as to which private schools they can send their kids to and get tuition reimbursement for.”

Conlon, who is expected to be appointed the chair of the House Education Committee, said that Vermont’s tuition system “works well for the vast majority of students and taxpayers.”

“However, I think that the issue of transparency and oversight for those schools that are private and receiving taxpayer dollars will be a major topic,” he said. “Whether that results in a huge change for the vast majority of students or schools that receive taxpayer dollars, I’d say, remains to be seen.”

What’s clear is that some organizations are already gearing up for the session. A group calling itself the Education Equity Alliance — which includes representatives from the state associations of principals, superintendents, school boards, and teachers union — has hired the Necrason Group, a prominent Montpelier lobbying firm.

In a “values statement” released earlier this month, the alliance warned of “unanticipated, radical changes to our taxpayer-backed Education Fund” and called on lawmakers to draft legislation based on the values of equal opportunity and transparency.

“Vermont communities, taxpayers, K-12 students, and schools are now at a defining crossroads.”

Mill Moore, the executive director of the Vermont Independent Schools Association, said he expects a heated battle.

“Because now — instead of it appearing likely that religious schools were going to get money, and a few were actually getting it — now it’s been given the Supreme Court’s seal of approval,” Moore said with a new confidence.

WORDPLAY

'Conquer Clutter' word search: Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards

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

CABINET
CATEGORY
CLEANING
CLOSET
CLUTTER
COLLECT

COORDINATE
DISARRAY
DISTRIBUTE
DONATION
GARBAGE
GROUP

HOARD
LABEL
LEAD
LISTS
MESS
MOBILIZE

ORDER
ORGANIZE
PLANNING
SCHEDULE
SHELVING
SORT

SUDOKU

Solutions → 41

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.

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

Level: Intermediate

Eat, Drink, **Shop Locally**

MOUNTAIN TIMES

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Solutions → 27

CLUES ACROSS

1. Basics
4. Swiss river
7. Constrictor snake
8. Building occupied by monks
10. Discount
12. Deal a blow to
13. Relating to the ear
14. Thyrotropin
16. Loud, unpleasant noise
17. Large intestines
19. Move with a curving trajectory
20. Witnesses
21. You need both to live
25. Dash
26. Network
27. Dig
29. C. European river
30. Supplement with difficulty
31. Corporate executive
32. Carroll O'Connor's onscreen wife
39. No variation
41. Airborne (abbr.)
42. "Heidi" author
43. Affirmative
44. Pie ___ mode

45. W. Asian country
46. Grotesque or bizarre
48. Delicacy (archaic)
49. Textile
50. Denial
51. Electronic data processing
52. Attempt

CLUES DOWN

1. Engulf
2. Waterside hotel
3. Printed cotton fabric
4. Defensive nuclear weapon
5. One who follows the rules
6. Lace up once more
8. Fire byproduct
9. Hankerings
11. Outer
14. One-time aerospace firm
15. Seafood
18. Commercial
19. Epoxy hardener (abbr.)
20. Samoan monetary unit
22. Type of gland
23. Arrest

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

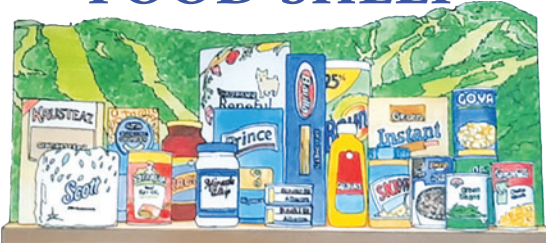
24. Check
27. Past participle of be
28. Alias
29. A major division of geological time
31. Kids program-
ming channel (abbr.)
32. Joked
33. Helps little firms
34. Roman numeral 50
35. Impressive in size or scope
36. Domineering leader
37. A person who delivers a speech
38. One after 89
39. Young hawk
40. The scene of any
event or action
44. A team's best pitcher
47. Integrated data processing

Guess Who?

I am a singer born in Boston on January 1, 1995. I became a star through my Twitter and YouTube social media channels. I post vlogs and music videos, and have been doing so since 2011. My real name is Moriah.

Answer: Poppy

KILLINGTON FOOD SHELF



We are stocked with nonperishable food, paper goods & cleaning supplies. Any person in need, please call to arrange a pickup. Donations accepted. Please call Nan Salamon, 422-9244 or Ron Willis, 422-3843.

Sherburne UCC "Little White Church," Killington, VT

WEDNESDAY, JAN. 4

Shred with Red: Red's Backyard Rail JamAll Day.

Killington Resort. Free.Killington Resort is beyond stoked to welcome back Olympic Gold Medalist Red Gerard on Wednesday, Jan. 4. Red will be riding around the resort all day and signing autographs in the afternoon before the main event: a park jam under the lights at his signature Red's Backyard, located next to the base of Ramshead Lodge. No comp, no rules, just throwing down and having fun. This event is free to the public but all participants are required to out an Express Assumption of Risk form before the event. For more info and to fill out the form visit killington.com.

Storytime!

10:30 - 11 a.m. Kimball Library in Randolph. Free.Join Kimball Library for songs, books, and crafts during storytime. Recommended for ages 2-6 but all are welcome. The event will be held outside, weather permitting. For more info visit kimballlibrary.org.

Winter Story Time

10:30 - 11:30 a.m. Fletcher Memorial Library in Ludlow. Free.Story Time is the perfect opportunity for children and caregivers to make new friends, practice early literacy and language skills and have fun! Each week features stories, songs and hands on art or STEM activities.

Movers and Shakers

11 a.m. Godnick Center, 1 Deer Street in Rutland. Free.This free program of low-impact exercise is designed for people with Parkinson's, or anyone else who wishes to maintain or improve flexibility, strength, and balance in a supportive and relaxing environment. Start your week off right and work out with us. Call 802-773-1853 to reserve your spot.

THURSDAY, JAN. 5

Reawaken Yoga Class for All Levels

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Jasper Forest, 110 Main St. in Ludlow. \$20/class. Register online at jasperforest.com.

Bone Builders Mendon Seniors

10 a.m. Roadside Chapel, 1680 Townline Rd in Mendon. Free.Join Mendon Seniors for their bone building session every Tuesday and Thursday. For more info call Pat 802-422-3368.

Circle of Parents

10 a.m. Virtual. Free.Virtual. Circle of Parents is a professionally facilitated, peer led self-help support group for parents and other caregivers. Participants meet weekly for 60-90 minutes online in virtual meetings. For more info and to join a group contact Amber at amenard@pcavt.org or 802-498-0603.

Killington Bone Builders

10 a.m. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free.In the meeting room at Sherburne Memorial Library. Weights provided.

Drive-up pick-up meals

12 p.m. Godnick Center, 1 Deer Street, Rutland. \$3.50 Donation ages 65+, \$6 fee under age 65. Reservations required.

Pick-up Meals

Godnick Center, in partnership with Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging and Meals on Wheels, is providing drive-up pick-up meals on Mondays and Thursdays at noon at the Godnick Center. For more info. visit namivt.org/support/peer-support-groups/.

Circle of Parents in Recovery

3 p.m. Virtual. Free.Support group meets weekly online on Thursdays from 3-4:30 p.m.

NAMI Connection peer support group

3 p.m. Virtual. Free.Struggling with managing your mental health? NAMI Connection Peer Support Group can help. This is a free, 90-minute recovery support group for people living with a mental health condition.

Circle of Parents for Grandparents

4 p.m. Virtual. Free.Meets weekly online. Run by Prevent Child Abuse VT.

Yoga with Kellie

4 - 5 p.m. Rutland Free Library in Rutland. Free.Join Kellie for yoga weekly in the Fox Room.

Book Art

6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Kimball Library in Randolph. Free.Create art with discarded books. Supplies available at the Library. Bring your ideas. For more info visit kimballlibrary.org.

Open gym: basketball

7 - 9 p.m. Killington Elementary School Gymnasium. \$5 at the door or 10-visit punch card for \$20.Open gym will run until March. Thursdays will be basketball. The cost of entry is either \$5 at the door or you can purchase a 10-visit punch card for \$20. Cash payments or checks will be accepted, no credit cards. You may not purchase punch cards in advance.

FRIDAY, JAN. 6

Art Adventure for Ages 2-5

9:30 - 10:30 a.m. Chaffee Art Center in Rutland. 4 Classes for \$60 or \$20 per class. Let's have an adventure with the arts. During each class, students will create an art project based on adventure into the land of Book Nook Discovery. One free book will be given every 2 weeks thanks to our partners at the Rutland Free Library. Adults may accompany children under the age of 4. For more info visit chaffeeartcenter.org.

Lego Play

2 - 5 p.m. Kimball Library in Randolph. Free.Come to the Kimball library on Friday afternoons for free play and creative building.

VINS: A Forest of Lights

5 - 7 p.m. VINS in Hartford. \$10/Adults. \$5/Youth (4-17).The VINS Forest Canopy Walk and surrounding woodland will take on a festive look and feel this winter. Covered in thousands of lights, the Forest Canopy Walk will glow with magic and enchantment. Visitors are invited to stroll through the immersive forest of lights and experience the peace and wonder of the Forest Canopy Walk at night. To purchase tickets visit vinsweb.org.

Holiday Music Program in Hubbardton.

6 p.m. First Congregational Church of Hubbardton. Free.All are welcome at a rescheduled holiday music service Friday, Jan. 6 at 6 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Hubbardton. Musicians scheduled to take part include Mary Sherowski, church pianist and music director; Matthew von Behrens, harp; Marina Smakhtina, cello; and Andrea Tester, vocalist and flutist. The service will last about an hour. For more info call Mary Sherowski at 802-775-2747 or email bodygears112@gmail.com.

Wobbly Barn: The Benjamins

Nightclub opens at 6 p.m. Wobbly Barn in Killington. Cover charge may be required for entry. The Benjamins were established in 1999 and are a trusted high-end live music act in entertainment performing 300 events a year. A unique combination of classic, modern, elegance and edge, The Benjamins are constantly evolving their live show while maintaining their roots and style that has made them a popular mainstay in multiple venues and casinos across the country. The Wobbly Barn Steakhouse opens at 4 p.m., while the Wobbly Barn Nightclub opens at 6 p.m. This featured act will take the stage as the late night performance. Cover charge may be required for entry.

Auditions for Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre's "Going Up the Country"

6 - 9 p.m. West Rutland Town Hall, 35 Marble Street. Free.Auditions for Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre's production of Going Up the Country will be held Friday, Jan. 6 from 6-9 p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 7 from 10 a.m. -1 p.m. at the West Rutland Town Hall located at 35 Marble Street in West Rutland. Please bring your proof of vaccination and come prepared to sing. Sides will be provided. Performance dates are April 28-30 and May 5-7. For more info email actorsrepvt.org@gmail.com.

SATURDAY, JAN. 7

Mini Shred Madness at Killington

9 a.m. - 12 p.m. Lil' Stash at Killington Resort. \$20 entry fee for all divisions. Join Killington Resort in the Lil' Stash on Saturday, Jan. 7 and compete for prizes in a friendly and fun environment. Grom skiers and riders 13 years and under will get a feel for park riding and experience the rules and navigation of the park with the help of the Woodward Mountain Parks crew. Mini Shred Madness is all about having fun in a competition setting. Not to mention, there will be all sorts of free giveaways being handed out at the event to competitors. For more info and to register visit killington.com.

Cozy Stews and Breads

10 - 11:30 a.m. Billings Farm and Museum in Woodstock \$15/person. \$10/member.There's nothing better than a warm, homemade stew with freshly baked bread in the winter. In this Billings Backyard Workshop hosted at Billings Farm, Chef Emery will demonstrate delicious ways to use preserved vegetables and herbs in a creative and cozy meal, including stew and a no-knead loaf of bread. To register visit tinyurl.com/StewsAndBreads.



MINI SHRED MADNESS AT KILLINGTON

SAT, JAN. 7

Auditions for Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre's "Going Up the Country"

10 a.m. - 1 p.m. West Rutland Town Hall, 35 Marble Street. Free.Auditions for Vermont Actors' Repertory Theatre's production of Going Up the Country will be held Friday, Jan. 6 from 6-9 p.m. and Saturday, Jan. 7 from 10 a.m. -1 p.m. at the West Rutland Town Hall located at 35 Marble Street in West Rutland. Please bring your proof of vaccination and come prepared to sing. Sides will be provided. Performance dates are April 28-30 and May 5-7. For more info email actorsrepvt.org@gmail.com.

Winter Farmers Market

10 a.m. - 2 p.m. Franklin Conference Center, 1 Scale Avenue, Suite 92 in Rutland. The Vermont Farmers Market is one of the largest and most diverse farmers markets in Vermont, and the first to operate 52 weeks out of the year. The farmers market bring together as many as 60 vendors from Vermont and Washington County, NY. With a seasonal variety of produce, local grass-fed meat, eggs, artisan cheeses, freshly baked breads, jellie's & jams, maple products, honey, CBD Products, delicious hot foods, wine & spirits, artisan crafts and more, the Winter Market is a great place to shop, eat and visit.

Rutland Railroad Museum & model club

11 a.m. - 3 p.m. 79 Depot Lane (off Route 4) Center Rutland. Free.Children of all ages will delight in the HO scale model railroad operating display (HO is a rail transport modeling scale using a 1:87 scale). The depot is now a museum that displays hundreds of rare or antique model trains, photographs, signs and diverse memorabilia saved from an earlier time, including the former Rutland Railroad caboose #45.

Film Screening of "The Reverend"

2 p.m. Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill in Putney. \$10/person.Next Stage Arts presents a screening of The Reverend, a documentary feature film, followed by a Q&A with director Nick Canfield on Saturday, Jan. 7 at 2 p.m. at Next Stage at 15 Kimball Hill in downtown Putney. The subjects of the film will perform later in the evening at 7:30 p.m. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. For more info call 802-387-0102 or visit nextstagearts.org.

Woodstock VT Film Series: Ruth Stone's Vast

Library of the Female Mind

3 - 5 p.m. Billings Farm and Museum in Woodstock. \$12 - \$15. Directed by Nora Jacobson. 76 minutes. Not rated. screening includes a discussion with the filmmaker, Nora Jacobson. For more info visit billingsfarm.org/filmseries/.

VINS: A Forest of Lights

5 - 7 p.m. VINS in Hartford. \$10/Adults. \$5/Youth (4-17).The VINS Forest Canopy Walk and surrounding woodland will take on a festive look and feel this winter. Covered in thousands of lights, the Forest Canopy Walk will glow with magic and enchantment. Visitors are invited to stroll through the immersive forest of lights and experience the peace and wonder of the Forest Canopy Walk at night. To purchase tickets visit vinsweb.org.

Calendar: Email events@mountaintimes.info from page 12

Wobbly Barn: The Benjamins

Nightclub opens at 6 p.m. Wobbly Barn in Killington. Cover charge may be required for entry. The Benjamins were established in 1999 and are a trusted high-end live music act in entertainment performing 300 events a year. A unique combination of classic, modern, elegance and edge, The Benjamins are constantly evolving their live show while maintaining their roots and style that has made them a popular mainstay in multiple venues and casinos across the country. The Wobbly Barn Steakhouse opens at 4 p.m., while the Wobbly Barn Nightclub opens at 6 p.m. This featured act will take the stage as the late night performance. Cover charge may be required for entry.

Reverend Vince Anderson & His Love Choir concert.

7:30 p.m. Next Stage, 15 Kimball Hill in Putney. \$20 advance, \$24 at the door. Next Stage Arts presents a screening of The Reverend followed by a performance by the subjects of the film, Reverend Vince Anderson & His Love Choir at 7:30 p.m. Next Stage will provide beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. For more info call 802-387-0102 or visit nextstagearts.org.

SUNDAY,
JAN. 8

Open gym: intermediate/advanced pickle-ball

2 - 4 p.m. Killington Elementary School Gymnasium. \$5 at the door or 10-visit punch card for \$20. Open gym will run until March. Sundays will be pickle-ball (for intermediate/ advanced level players). The cost of entry is either \$5 at the door or you can purchase a 10-visit punch card for \$20. Cash payments or checks will be accepted, no credit cards. You may not purchase punch cards in advance.

MONDAY,
JAN. 9

Babies and Toddlers Rock

10-10:30 a.m. Fox Room, Rutland Free Library in Rutland. Free. A music and pre-literacy program for children 0-24 months with Linda McFarlane. Free and open to all.

A Community of Parents

10 a.m. Wonderfeet Kids' Museum, Rutland. Free. The community meets from 10-11:30 a.m. at Wonderfeet Kids' Museum. Snacks provided, siblings welcome. Find connection, education, and a community to share with. They're here to support you during the transition of adding a new baby or child to your family - or whenever you need a community of parents to listen! All parents including expecting parents and caregivers welcome. For more info visit bit.ly/frontlineworkerssupport.

RUTLAND RAILROAD MUSEUM AND MODEL CLUB

SAT, JAN. 7



Killington Bone Builders

10 a.m. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. In the meeting room at Sherburne Memorial Library. Weights provided. For more info visit kimballlibrary.org.

Innkeepers ski and snowboard weekly race

10 a.m. - 12 p.m. Wardance Trail at Okemo Resort. Free. For over 20 years, Okemo has staged a weekly locals ski and snowboard race called Innkeepers. Traditionally held on Tuesdays, it has been switched to Mondays this year. Both individuals and teams of up to 7 sponsored by local restaurants, ski shops and businesses compete in this weekly race series. Both skier and snowboarder courses are set on the Wardance trail. Competitor categories: skiers / snowboarders, male / female, and the appropriate age category ranging from 18 - 70-plus. There is a wide range of abilities from the very competitive to the intermediate skier or rider just out to have some fun. End of the year trophies and of course bragging rights are awarded to the fastest team for the season as well as the team with the highest point total across the various age brackets. This season there will be eight weekly races on Mondays, starting Jan. 2, from 10 a.m. - noon. Following the race, the tradition is to be hosted by a local bar for an après-ski get-together from 5-7 p.m. For more information contact okemoracing@gmail.com.

Drive-up pick-up meals

12 p.m. Godnick Center, 1 Deer Street in Rutland. \$3.50 Donation ages 65+, \$6 fee under age 65. Reservations required. Godnick Center, in partnership with Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging and Meals on Wheels, is providing drive-up pick-up meals on Mondays and Thursdays at noon at the Godnick Center. Call (802)773-1853 for information or to make a reservation for pick-up.

Bingo

1:15 p.m. Godnick Center
1 Deer Street in Rutland. Program Fee Varies. Come play bingo at the Gonick Center in Rutland on Mondays at 1:15 p.m. This is a drop-in activity.

Open Discussion and Support Group for Frontline Workers

3:30 p.m. Virtual. Free. Join this facilitated discussion to share and learn from your peers in front-line positions about how best to manage during this time. COVID Support VT staff will provide a structured environment for discussion and tips for coping and wellness.

Knit Night

6 p.m. Kimball Library in Randolph. Free. Bring your knitting - or other handicraft - and enjoy an evening of crafting and socializing. For all ages and experience levels.

Open gym: indoor soccer

7 - 9 p.m. Killington Elementary School Gymnasium. \$5 at the door or 10-visit punch card for \$20. Open gym will run until March. Mondays will be indoor soccer. The cost of entry is either \$5 at the door or you can purchase a 10-visit punch card for \$20. Cash payments or checks will be accepted, no credit cards. You may not purchase punch cards in advance.

NAMI Connection peer support group

7 p.m. Virtual. Free. Struggling with managing your mental health? NAMI Connection Peer Support Group can help. This is a free, 90-minute recovery support group for people living with a mental health condition.

TUESDAY,
JAN. 10

Bone Builders Mendon Seniors

10 a.m. Roadside Chapel, 1680 Townline Rd in Mendon. Free. Join Mendon Seniors for their bone building session every Tuesday and Thursday.

Chess Club

4 p.m. Godnick Center, 1 Deer Street, Rutland. Free. To register call 802-855-4533.

Circle of Fathers

4 p.m. Virtual
Free. Fathers Support Group. Run by Prevent Child Abuse VT.

Alzheimer's Support Group

4 p.m. Community Health Allen Pnd, 71 Allen Street, in Rutland. Free. Claudia Courcelle and her team of care managers will hold their first Alzheimer's support group meeting Tuesday at 4 p.m. at Community Health Allen Pond, 71 Allen Street, Rutland, Suite 403. Future meetings will be held on the second Tuesday of each month.

CEDRR Mixer

5 - 7 p.m. Castleton University Bank Art Gallery, 104 Merchants Row, in Rutland. Free. This CEDRR Mixer is hosted by Castleton University Bank Art Gallery. Join for food, drinks, raffle prizes and door prizes. Check out the University's interactive exhibit honoring LGBTQ History of Vermont.

Circle of Parents in Recovery

5:30 p.m. Virtual. Free. Virtual support group. Run by Prevent Child Abuse VT.

Open gym: beginner pickle-ball

7 - 9 p.m. Killington Elementary School Gymnasium. Open gym will run until March. Tuesdays will be pickle-ball for beginner level players. The cost of entry is either \$5 at the door or you can purchase a 10-visit punch card for \$20. Cash payments or checks will be accepted, no credit cards. You may not purchase punch cards in advance.



Woodstock Vermont Film Series

RUTH STONE'S VAST LIBRARY



of the FEMALE MIND

JAN 7 & 8
Showings at 3:00 PM



FILMMAKER Q & A

Billings Farm & Museum
billingsfarm.org/filmseries
802-457-5303



Killington hosts College Week, Jan. 2-6

Monday-Friday, Jan. 2-6—KILLINGTON—Killington Resort along with select restaurants and retail shops in town are offering discounts and special activities for those with a valid college I.D. all week.

Some highlights of the week include:

Scenic gondola rides: You don't need to ski or ride to float to the top of Killington Peak! The K-1 gondola will take you up. The actual peak is just a short walk from the gondola (when conditions permit) or visit the Peak Lodge for a dining experience that puts other ski lodges to shame — full length windows allow you to enjoy the views without dealing with the weather. The Peak Lodge is one of our most popular dining locations, so you may find a line when you arrive, but it's well worth the wait.

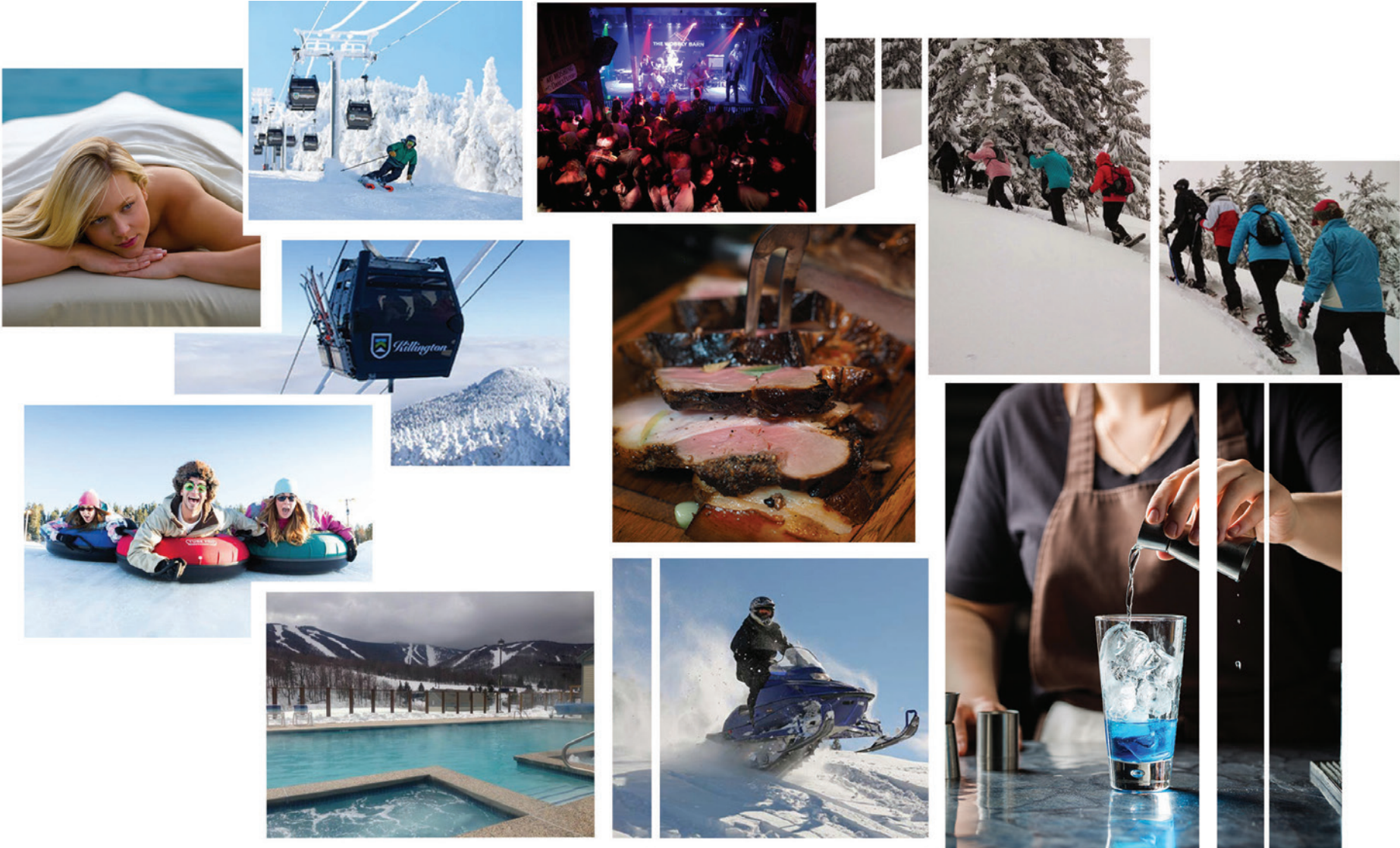
Snowshoe tours: Base Camp Bike & Ski Shop is offering snowshoe rentals and tours. Dress in layers, with waterproof pants and good winter boots. Snowshoes and poles will be provided and are included in the tour price.

Snowmobile tours: Snowmobile Vermont is the state's oldest, largest, and most experienced snowmobile tour company, offering a wide range of riding from the beginner to the most advanced rider. New riders will receive all the instruction needed before heading out.

Tubing park: Killington's Tubing Park presented by Bubly is located near the Killington Golf Clubhouse across from the Killington Grand Hotel. It is fun for kids and kids at heart. Cruise down the corduroy at our multi-lane tubing facility. Race your friends or try and best your own time, then do it again and again. The best part: there's no walking required because the Bubly Tubing Park is lift serviced!

Killington grand spa: Soak in Vermont's beauty while our certified therapists help tension melt away with local maple syrup, rose hips, herbs, flowers, and honey. By appointment only. Located at the Killington Grand Hotel.

Additionally, there is live music all week! See music listing on page 15. For more information visit: killington.com/events.



College week at in Killington will be full of activities and discounts at area shops for the winter lover. Students can enjoy scencic gondola rides, snowshoe tours and snowmobile tours mid-week.

Olympic Gold Medalist Red Gerard back to Killington on Jan. 4

Wednesday, Jan. 4 — KILLINGTON — Killington Resort is beyond stoked to welcome back Olympic Gold Medalist Red Gerard on Wednesday, Jan. 4. Red will be riding around the resort all day and signing autographs in the afternoon before the main event: a park jam under the lights at his signature Red's Backyard, located next to the base of Ramshead Lodge. No comp, no rules, just throwing down and having fun.

In addition to grabbing park laps with Red, Killington will have fire pits with s'mores, hot cocoa, music, and swag

giveaways, as well as Red's Backyard and Woodward items available for purchase at discounted rates. Killington Resort hopes to see you there.

This event is free to the public, but all participants are required to fill out an Express Assumption of Risk form before the event. Additionally, all participants under 18 years old must have a parent/guardian fill out the form on their behalf, either ahead of time or in-person.

EVENT	TIME	LOCATION
Red shreds around the resort	9 a.m.-12 p.m.	Mouse Run, Red's Backyard
Autograph session	3 p.m.-4 p.m.	K-1 Lodge Retail Shop
Park Jam under the lights	5 p.m.-7 p.m.	Red's Backyard

Red Gerard's visit to Killington includes a park jam and autograph session.

[MUSIC Scene]

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

WED.
1/4

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K-1 Base Lodge – Andy Prior
5 p.m. The Foundry – James Joel
6 p.m. Rivershed – April Cushman
8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – King Arthur Jr

LUDLOW

8 p.m. Off The Rails – Chris Pallutto

POULTNEY

7 p.m. Taps Tavern – Open Mic hosted by Danny Lang

RANDOLPH

7 p.m. Kuyas at One Main – Open Mic with host Silas McPrior

RUTLAND

5:30 p.m. Strangefellows – Duane Carleton
9:30 p.m. Center Street Alley – Open Mic hosted by Rick Urbani

WOODSTOCK

5 p.m. Sante – Jim Yeager

THURS.
1/5

BRANDON

6 p.m. Ripton Mountain Distillery – Open Jam

CASTLETON

6 p.m. Third Place Pizzeria – Josh Jakab

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K-1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto
2 p.m. Snowshed Lodge – Duane Carleton
5 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Duane Carleton
5 p.m. The Foundry – Ryan Fuller
6 p.m. Liquid Art – Open Mic hosted by Grateful Gary
6 p.m. Rivershed – Chris Pallutto
6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Red Daisy Revival
8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Jenny Porter & Friends
8 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Sammy Adams

LUDLOW

8 p.m. Off The Rails – Krishna Guthrie

POULTNEY

7 p.m. Taps Tavern – Vinyl Night with Ken

QUECHEE

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

RUTLAND

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

SOUTH ROYALTON

6 p.m. 802 Pizza – Open Mic hosted by George Nostrand

FRI.
1/6

KILLINGTON

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Duane Carleton
2 p.m. K-1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto
2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Rhys Chalmers
2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub - Daniel Brown & Andy Prior
4 p.m. The Foundry – Just Jamie
6 p.m. Rivershed – Kevin Herchen
6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – King Arthur Jr
6 p.m. The Foundry – Liz Reedy
6 p.m. The Summit Lodge – Duane Carleton
7:30 p.m. McGrath's Irish Pub – Tom O'Carroll
8 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Liquid A

9 p.m. Wobbly Barn – The Benjamins
9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Just Jamie

9 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Acoustik Ruckus

LUDLOW

6 p.m. Calcuttas – Aaron Audet
9 p.m. Off The Rails – Sammy B

POULTNEY

7 p.m. Taps Tavern – Mean Waltons

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. The Public House – Rust & Ruin

RANDOLPH

7:30 p.m. The Underground Listening Room - Cobalt & Titien with Dave Wrong

SAT.
1/7

KILLINGTON

10 a.m. Ramshead Lil' Stash – Mini Shred Madness with music by DJ Dave
2 p.m. K-1 Base Lodge – Daniel Brown Trio
2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Chris Pallutto
2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Gully Boys
4 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Happy Hour with Jamie's Junk Show and special guest opener Jenny & Liz

5 p.m. Mary Lou's – All Request Apres Ski with DJ Dave

6 p.m. O'Dwyers Pub – Daniel Brown

6 p.m. Rivershed – Kevin Herchen

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

6 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

6 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Krishna Guthrie Band

6:30 p.m. Preston's at the Grand – Sammy B

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

8 p.m. Moguls Sports Pub – Duane Carleton

9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – King Margo

9 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Liquid A

9:30 p.m. Wobbly Barn – The Benjamins

LUDLOW

2 p.m. Jackson Gore Courtyard – Apres Afternoon with Rebecca Turnel

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

QUECHEE

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

PROCTORSVILLE

4 p.m. Outer Limits Brewing – Eric King

RANDOLPH

7 p.m. The Underground Listening Room - The Breanna Elaine Band: Album Release Tour Kickoff

SUN.
1/8

KILLINGTON

12 p.m. Rivershed – Brunch with Kevin Herchen
1 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Duane Carleton
2 p.m. K-1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto
2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Primo 'n' Prior
5 p.m. The Foundry – Summit Pond Jazz
6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tee Boneicus Jones
6 p.m. Rivershed - Trivia
8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Jenny Porter

MON.
1/9

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K-1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton
5 p.m. Mary Lou's – BAK'n
6 p.m. Rivershed – Liz Reedy
6 p.m. The Foundry – Blues Night with the Chris P Trio

LUDLOW

8 p.m. Off The Rails – Sammy B
8 p.m. The Killarney – Open Mic hosted by Silas McPrior

WOODSTOCK

5 p.m. The Village Inn – Jim Yeager and Jeff Stedman

TUES.
1/10

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. K-1 Base Lodge – Silas McPrior
5 p.m. Mary Lou's – Mountain Music with Bow
6 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Taco Tuesday with Rick Webb
6 p.m. Rivershed – Name That Tune Bingo with DJ Dave

LUDLOW

8 p.m. Off The Rails – SINGO

POULTNEY

7 p.m. Taps Tavern – Open Bluegrass Jam

QUECHEE

5 p.m. The Public House – Jim Yeager

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Mini Shred Madness takes place Saturday at Killington

Saturday, Jan. 7 at 9 a.m.—KILLINGTON—Head to the Li'l Stash on Saturday, Jan. 7 and compete for prizes in a friendly and fun environment. Grom skiers and riders 13 years and under will get a feel for park riding and experience the rules and navigation of the park with the help of our Woodward Mountain Parks crew. Mini Shred Madness is all about having fun in a competition setting. Not to mention, there will be all sorts of free giveaways being handed out at the event to competitors. Registration is now open—click below to sign up!

There will be two divisions:

- Super Grom - Ages 9 & under (first time park riders): boys & girls
- Grom - Ages 10 - 13 (have park-riding experience): boys & girls

Registration will take place from 9-10 a.m. on the third floor of the Ramshead Base Lodge, if spots are still available. Registration will max out at 100 competitors.

Entry fee is \$20 for all divisions.

Due to the nature of this event, competitors are NOT required to have a season pass/lift ticket in order to compete. All participants of Mini Shred Madness must have a parent or guardian fill out an Express Assumption of Risk form.

For more information killington.com.

Cozy Stews and Breads workshop at Billings Farm and Museum, Jan. 7

Saturday, Jan. 7 — WOODSTOCK — There's nothing better than a warm, homemade stew with fresh bread in the winter. Follow along with Chef Emery as she shares how to use preserved vegetables and herbs in a new and delicious way to make a cozy meal of stew. The perfect addition to stew is a nice crusty bread fresh from the oven, so participants will learn how to make a no knead loaf to accompany the stew.

A question and answer period may continue for up to 30 minutes past the scheduled end time.

This workshop will be held at Billings Farm & Museum.

Emery Gray, farm-to-table manager at Billings Farm & Museum and former pastry chef de partie at the Woodstock Inn and Resort, had a passion for food at a

Billings Backyard is a series of workshops designed to teach sustainable living skills.

very young age. Seeing the way that people connected through the growing, sharing and cooking of food inspired her to make a career in the kitchen. She attended Culinary Institute of America in Hyde Park, New York, earning

her Associates Degree in Baking and Pastry Arts and her Bachelor's in Business Management. Traveling the country and the world has translated into a deep appreciation for sustainability of local food systems, and all types of outdoor pursuits year-round.

Billings Backyard is a series of workshops designed to teach sustainable living skills to adult participants and is underwritten by a generous grant from the SpringRiver Private Foundation Trust. Each workshop includes hands-on demonstrations and concrete steps for incorporating these skills into everyday life.



Submitted

A stew is ready to enjoy and warm during the cold of winter at Billings Farm, Saturday.

Holiday music program set for Jan. 6 in Hubbardton

Friday, Jan. 6 — HUBBARDTON — All are welcome at a rescheduled holiday music service Friday, Jan. 6 at 6 p.m. at the First Congregational Church of Hubbardton.

Musicians scheduled to take part include Mary Sherowski, church pianist and music director; Matthew von Behrens, harp; Marina Smakhtina, cello; and Andrea Tester, vocalist and flutist. The service will last about an hour. Robert Congdon will preach.

The program was rescheduled from Christmas Eve, when the church lost power. The new date coincides with the Eastern Orthodox Christmas Eve.

The church is a traditional white wooden structure at 1985 Route 30, about 2 miles north of Route 4A, Castleton Corners. For more information, contact Mary Sherowski at 802-775-2747 or bodygears112@gmail.com.



Courtesy First Congregational Church of Hubbardton

First Congregational Church of Hubbardton will play a concert that had been rescheduled.

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Local artist Carrie Pill to take a Painted Tour

STATEWIDE — Vermont artist Carrie Pill is teaming up with Ski Vermont for a special project this ski season. The artist will visit all 20 of Vermont's Alpine ski areas to ski and paint. These visits will include outdoor *plein air* painting on location, skiing, meeting up with locals, photographing and writing about each ski area.

"This is a dream project where I get to combine my love for skiing, writing and painting all over the Green Mountain State," said Carrie.

The artist will share these adventures on Instagram (@carriepillart), Facebook ("Art by Carrie Pill") and her blog at carriepill.com. Small paintings from each ski area will be released on her website throughout the project. A comprehensive show is anticipated for 2023/2024 with larger works representing all 20 ski areas and partial proceeds going to Vermont Adaptive.

Carrie Pill is a professional oilpainter living in Rutland who draws inspiration from skiing and mountain biking around the state. The artist studied art at Green Mountain College and is an exhibiting member of the Brandon Artists Guild.

Past notable projects include installations for the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS), Rutland Regional Medical

Center and Long Trail Brewery as well as published illustrations for Northern Woodlands magazine. Her work is in private collections both nationally and internationally.

About Ski Vermont: Ski Vermont (Vermont Ski Areas Association) is a private not-for-profit trade association founded in 1969 to help create a legislative, economic and social environment in which the state's ski industry can grow and prosper, addressing issues including environmental integrity, economic and social contributions to the state's welfare, and competitive positioning of the state as a destination for winter tourism. Ski Vermont serves its 20 Alpine and 30 Cross Country member resorts in three major areas: Governmental Affairs, Marketing and Public Affairs.



Artist Carrie Pill Paints and Skis Vermont's 20 Alpine Ski Areas This Season.

Courtesy Carrie Pill

Film screening, concert features Reverend Vince Anderson & His Love Choir at Next Stage, Jan. 7

Saturday, Jan. 7 — PUTNEY — Next Stage Arts presents a screening of "The Reverend," a documentary feature film, followed by a Q&A with director Nick Canfield on Saturday, Jan. 7 at 2 p.m. at Next Stage in Putney. The subjects of the film, Reverend Vince Anderson & His Love Choir, perform at Next Stage at 7:30 p.m.

Monday nights in Brooklyn are world-famous because of Reverend Vince and His Love Choir," said Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts. "He's the musician of the musicians of New York, attracting a packed house every Monday night with a Who's Who list of attendees dancing. This has been a dream of ours to bring this documentary film of him, followed by Vince & the Love Choir.

"The Reverend" follows the spiritual and musical journey of Reverend Vince Anderson. After coming to New York in the '90s to enter seminary, Anderson dropped out to follow his second calling, music. With his band The Love Choir, he has played a now-legendary weekly show for over 20 years. Reconnecting with his faith and using his intense soulful music, he began to preach a type of spirituality that meets people where they are, is open

to all, and moves everyone that sees him play. Reverend Vince is also deeply involved in social activism, working with other progressive faith leaders at home and around the country to build inclusive communities. Filmed over several years and featuring Questlove and members of "TV On The Radio," The Reverend is a rocking concert film as well as an intimate portrait of Reverend Vince's inspiring personal and spiritual life. 86 minutes.

A Q&A with director Nick Canfield will follow the screening.

The band, which defines its style as "dirty gospel," busts out trumpets, guitars and a keyboard every week for lively performances in Williamsburg, Brooklyn. An actual ordained reverend, Anderson studied to be a Methodist minister in the '90s—but dropped out to pursue music full time.

Next Stage is located at 15 Kimball Hill in downtown Putney. Tickets are \$20 advance / \$24 at the Door. Advance tickets are available at nextstagearts.org. For information, call 802-387-0102. Next Stage will provide a beer, wine, and cocktail cash bar.



Courtesy Next Stage Arts

"The Reverend," a documentary film feature will take place at Next Stage in Putney Jan. 7 at 7:30 p.m. A Q&A with the subjects will be held before then at 2 p.m.

23 things to do in 2023 that can make a difference in student success

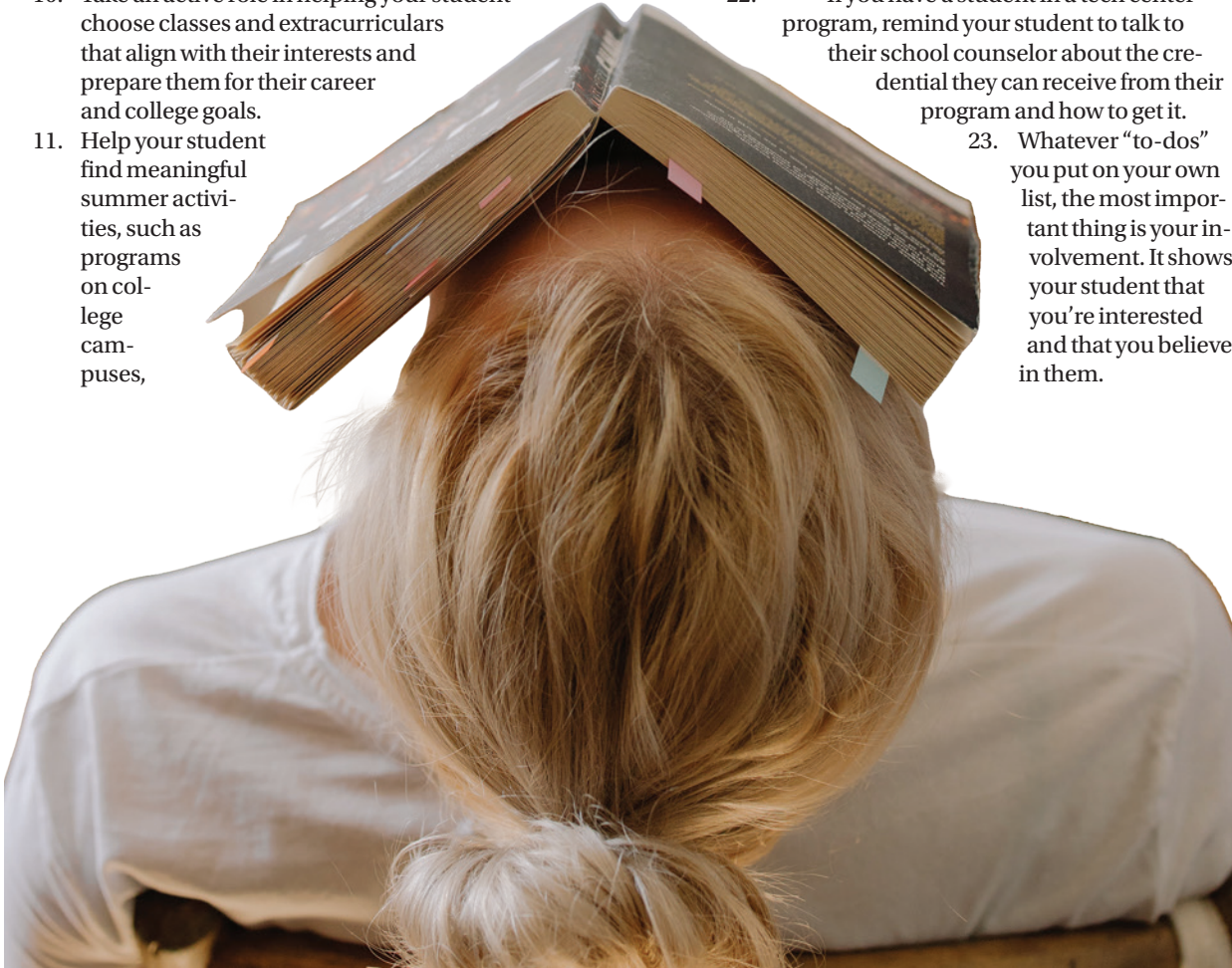
When counselors at Vermont Student Assistance Corp. (VSAC) speak with students who have successfully completed high school and achieved their first early-adulthood goals — be it college admission, starting a technical program, or starting a job — there is usually one common denominator: Adults shared their expectations, their encouragement, and their advice.

VSAC offers this list of 23 “resolutions” for parents of middle- and high-school students:

Support your student by providing proper nutrition and a good night’s sleep.

1. Attend school events, especially parent-teacher conferences. Meet your student’s teachers and school counselor.
2. Get to know the resources offered by the school counseling office.
3. Make sure your student has a good place to study and that homework gets done.
4. Help your student organize schoolwork, observe deadlines, and set priorities among their assignments.
5. Talk to your student about good study habits, such as sitting in the front of the classroom, participating in discussion, asking questions, and submitting assignments before they’re due.
6. Observe your student at home as they complete an assignment or prepare for a test, or ask them to show you their methods. You may be able to make suggestions that can improve their study skills.
7. Have conversations about your student’s personality, likes and dislikes, non-academic concerns, and joys.
8. Introduce your student to people who have careers or jobs that they’re interested in.
9. Talk to friends, family members, co-workers, and/or the school counseling office about setting up a job shadow for your student.
10. Take an active role in helping your student choose classes and extracurriculars that align with their interests and prepare them for their career and college goals.
11. Help your student find meaningful summer activities, such as programs on college campuses,

- summer camps, paid work, and volunteer opportunities.
12. Visit a college or tech-center campus, even if it’s an unofficial visit, such as for a sports event or a performance. Middle school students often do better in school when they realize that college can be a goal.
 13. Attend a college or career fair with your student, such as VSAC’s springtime College and Career Pathways event, a free conference for sophomores, juniors, and parents.
 14. For high school students, ask the school counseling office how your student should register for standardized tests, such as the SAT, ACT, TOEFL, or Accuplacer. (For these tests, registration typically takes place in the spring).
 15. For middle school students, inquire about practice standardized tests, such as the PSAT or PreACT, which typically accept registrations in the fall.
 16. Have the college cost conversation with your child early. Use net price calculators at collegesscorecard.ed.gov to estimate what college might cost.
 17. Learn about financial aid. Consider attending a “Financial Aid and Managing College Costs” presentation at your school in the spring or view online at vsac.org/financial-aid-videos.
 18. It’s never too late to open a 529 college savings account. You can start with just \$25, and funds can be used to pay back student loans. Visit vsac.org/save.
 19. Talk with your student about the application process for college or technical programs. To learn what’s involved, visit vsac.org/plan/applying-to-college.
 20. Help your student obtain college application materials.
 21. Keep copies of everything, including college applications, financial aid applications, and tax returns.
 22. If you have a student in a tech center program, remind your student to talk to their school counselor about the credential they can receive from their program and how to get it.
 23. Whatever “to-dos” you put on your own list, the most important thing is your involvement. It shows your student that you’re interested and that you believe in them.



There are a number of ways to maximize study potential for success in 2023. VSAC shares 23 tips to enact now.

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killington market

Take breakfast, lunch or dinner on the go at Killington Market, Killington's on-mountain grocery store for the last 30 years. Choose from breakfast sandwiches, hand carved dinners, pizza, daily fresh hot panini, roast chicken, salad and specialty sandwiches. Vermont products, maple syrup, fresh meat and produce along with wine and beer are also for sale. killingtonmarket.com 802-422-7736 or 802-422-7594.



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How to grow African violets; a potted plant to brighten up winter

By Deborah J. Benoit

Editor's note: Deborah J. Benoit is a UVM Extension master gardener from North Adams, Massachusetts, who is part of Vermont's Bennington County Chapter.

You've probably seen African violets (*Saintpaulia*) with their neat rosettes of fuzzy leaves and clusters of purple flowers. Native to Africa, the species were discovered in 1892 by Baron von Saint Paul-Illaire in the mountainous rainforests of Tanzania. Today, there are over 16,000 registered hybridized varieties.

African violets come in miniature (6-inch), semi-miniature (8-inch) and standard (12-inch) sizes. There are even trailing varieties. Flowers can be single or double, with colors ranging from violet and white to pinks, reds and even pale yellows.

Leaves come in solid greens or variegations of green, cream and pink. Leaf edges can be smooth, scalloped or serrated.

With the exception of trailing varieties, African violet foliage forms a circular rosette around a central crown. Secondary crowns, called "suckers," sometimes form and should be removed (except on trailing varieties). As it grows, the sucker will affect the plant's shape. When small, suckers can be easily removed with tweezers.

If not removed, a sucker can grow large enough to compete with the original crown. A large sucker can be removed intact and potted up to grow into a clone of the original plant.

If the secondary crown is near the soil, it may already have its own roots. To divide the plant, remove it from its pot. Insert a clean, sharp knife between the original crown and the secondary crown, and cut through the root ball. Return the original plant to its pot, adding soil as needed, and pot up the new plant.

An African violet's pot should be about 1/3 the diameter of the leaf rosette. Use a soil mix that is light and airy. You can

lighten a standard potting soil by adding coarse perlite in a ratio of 2 parts potting soil to 1 part perlite. Some growers mix their own using equal parts peat, perlite and vermiculite.

African violets prefer bright, filtered light and temperatures between 65 and 80 degrees F. They can do well on an east or north windowsill or on a plant stand using grow lights. Place grow lights about 12 inches above standard-sized African violets and 8 inches above miniatures or semi-miniatures.

When the soil feels dry, water from beneath the leaves, giving the soil a good drink, or fill a saucer and allow the soil to soak up the water. Remove any water that remains in the saucer after 30 minutes. Excess water can lead to root rot.

Fertilize using a flowering houseplant food or African violet food according to package directions. Unlike most plants, African violets can be propagated from a single leaf. To do so, carefully remove a healthy leaf. Make a clean cut at the bottom of the stem. Prepare a container with moistened potting mix. Make a hole in the soil, and place about one inch of the stem in it at a 45 degree angle. Gently press the soil around the stem.

Cover the pot with a plastic bag or an inverted glass jar to retain humidity. Place in indirect light.

Release excess moisture as needed by opening the cover. In three or four weeks, roots should form, and about month later, tiny leaves will emerge at the base of the stem. When they're about dime-size, the plantlets can be separated and transferred to their own pots.

African violet leaves also can be rooted by placing a leaf, with its stem submerged, in a container of room temperature water. Roots should appear in a few weeks. When they've grown more than a 1/4 inch, the leaf can be planted in potting soil as above.

For more information on African violets, check out the African Violet Society of America's website at africanvioletocietyofamerica.org.



By Deborah J. Benoit

A native plant of Africa, African violets with their rosette of thick, fuzzy leaves and beautiful blooms are a popular houseplant.

Rutland hosts curling clinic

Rutland Rocks Curling Club will hold its Winter Learn to curl sessions on Wednesday, Jan. 4 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday, Jan. 8 at 4:30 p.m. at Giorgetti Arena in Rutland. Cost is \$20 per person. Registration is available at rutlandrocks.com.

Learn to Curl is open to all adults, ages 18 and over. Upon completing their Learn to Curl session, new curlers are eligible to join Rutland Rocks Curling Club leagues and curl at bonspiels.

Rutland Rocks' Winter League still has space. Wednesday league starts Jan. 11 at 7:30 p.m. Sunday league starts Jan. 15 at 4:30 p.m. League sign ups are underway; spots are first come, first served.

Rutland Rocks Curling Club is a 501(c)(3) not for profit Vermont corporation dedicated to fostering the spirit and sport of curling in the Rutland region since 2007. Curling is a social sport that takes a day to learn and a lifetime to master. People of all ages and abilities can curl, making it a true lifetime sport.

Those who are interested in joining but cannot make the Jan. 4 or Jan. 8 sessions should email the club at rutlandrockscurlingclub@gmail.com to inquire about additional opportunities.



Submitted

Rutland Rocks Curling Club will be holding learn to curl sessions starting Jan. 4.

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Rutland County Humane Society



KELLY & LYNN

Kelly and Lynn are 5-month-old spayed lop mixes looking for an indoor home together. They are friendly girls that love their veggies and if adopted before Christmas promise to share their carrots with Rudolph. We have reduced their adoption fee to \$75 for the pair. These sweet girls deserve a loving home to grow up in. To adopt them go to our website spfldhumane.org and fill out an application or call 802-885-3997 for more information.

This pet is available for adoption at

Springfield Humane Society

401 Skitchewaug Trail, Springfield, VT • (802) 885-3997

*Open by appointment only. spfldhumane.org



THUNDERBOLT

Sylvee is 4-month-old spayed female Rex rabbit. Rex is a breed of rabbit with soft fur. Rexs also have curly whiskers and are more susceptible to obesity compared to some other breeds/types of rabbits. She was originally surrendered at 8 weeks old by a breeder who ended up having too many bunnies. She now loves being petted and playing with her toys. Sylvee is very gentle and easy to handle.

This pet is available for adoption at

Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society

4832 VT-44, Windsor, VT • (802) 484-5829

*(By appointment only at this time.) Tues. - Sat. 12-4 p.m. & Thurs. 12-7 p.m. • lucymac.org



Petey—2-year-old. Neutered male. Lab-pitbull mix. Black with white. Petey is a true puppy at heart and will need an active family with strong leadership.



Mac—2-year-old. Neutered male. Border collie mix. Black with white. Mac arrived at RCHS on May 19 from a busy shelter down south. He has since been living in foster as he was being treated for heartworm.



Radcliff—2.5-year-old. Neutered male. Arabian village dog. Tan. He thrives on consistency and strong leadership and would do best with someone who can work with him often and keep his brain engaged.



Grace—2-year-old. Spayed female. Pitbull mix. Black. Grace is a sweet girl, who needs someone to give her patience and time to settle in. She will need to work on leash manners. She is also very reactive with other dogs.



Ava—3-year-old. female. Whippet/Lab mix. Black-brown. Ava still has a lot of puppy-like behavior like jumping, so she may be too much for young kids.



Nova—3-year-old. female. Whippet/Lab mix. Brindle with white. Nova is as sweet as can be! Nova still has a lot of puppy-like behavior like jumping, so she may be too much for young kids.



JAX

7-month-old. Neutered male. Husky-terrier mix. Caramel and white. Jax is a young boy who needs an experienced handler. He has a lot of energy and is mouthy when he gets over-excited. Jax needs strong leadership and guidance, and he will be your friend for life.

All of these pets are available for adoption at

Rutland County Humane Society

765 Stevens Road, Pittsford, VT • (802) 483-6700

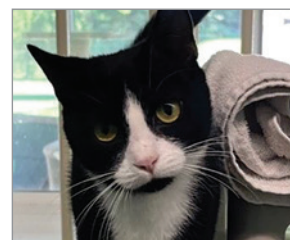
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Keep your pets safe in the cold, winter weather

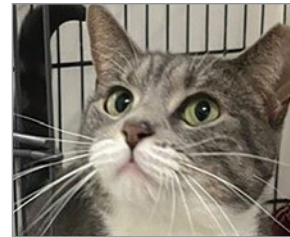
The Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS) would like to remind you that pets need special care during the cold winter months. Dogs and cats should be inside when the temperature drops. If your dog is outside, it must be protected by a dry, draft-free doghouse. Windchills can be especially difficult for animals and can threaten their lives. Make sure that pets who are outside have unfrozen water in plastic bowls, as metal ones can get very cold, and their tongues can stick and freeze to them. Wipe your animals' paws after they've been outside to remove the salt and other chemicals with which they may come in contact because those can irritate them. Be especially careful with antifreeze as it's a deadly poison but has a sweet taste which attracts animals. Watch for frostbite on their ears and other areas.



Monica—2-year-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair. Black and white. Monica has personality and spunk! She may be "particular" with some cats.



October—6-year-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair. Black. October is a sweet girl who may look a little different due to having only a nub for a tail.



Virginia—5-year-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair. Gray tiger. Virginia is a sweet lady who doesn't like being handled. Virginia would do best in a quiet home.



Jedi—5-year-old. Male. American rabbit. Tricolor. Jedi can be a little bashful at times. He is very sweet but likes to take a little time to get to know you.



Spazzy—3-year-old. Male. American rabbit. Black and white. Don't let his name fool you, Spazzy is a pretty mellow boy, with an easygoing disposition. He is even litter box trained.

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Cosmic Catalogue

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Aries

March 21 - April 20

It's been a long road for you these past few months. Things are getting better, even if you're not really feeling it just yet. Your challenge is to continue to think bigger picture and look for opportunities and solutions in unexpected places. You're in a weird mix between striking while the iron is hot and not going where angels fear to tread. May you don't need more information. Maybe you need to act on the information you already have.



Leo

July 21 - August 20

Plan to succeed then prepare to fail. Don't be too hard on yourself if you don't hit the mark with being on track with your goals and intentions for the New Year. With some confusion in your daily-grind zone, chances are, you're still tying up loose ends from 2022. The frustration you're feeling is an opportunity to learn and re-write the script for how you want 2023 to look for you. Take back your time by tweaking your habits.



Sagittarius

November 21 - December 20

It will take a little while for you to feel the boost that Jupiter, your patron planet, has to offer you. There may be a few things to iron out in a relationship before you can decide where you really want to put your energy. It might help to lighten up and if need be, do a few activities solo. Approaching old problems with a new perspective will help you find a solution, especially where issues of money and confidence are concerned.



Taurus

April 21 - May 20

Venus, your patron planet, changes signs this week and will spend the majority of January in your career zone. Thus, you may begin to think about how far you've come – or not – since late 2020. There are big changes for you this year so start aligning yourself with what you do want instead of doing what you think you have to. That way, when the right opportunity comes along, it will be easier to recognize.



Virgo

August 21 - September 20

There are times in life when a never say die attitude is necessary and there are others where choosing your battles is necessary. Right now, the sky is asking you to pull back your energy from something. You can continue to fight a seemingly unwinnable battle but you're probably better off keeping your eye on the proverbial prize. If you want to be frying bigger fish, stop chasing the little ones. Let something go so you can welcome in something you really want.



Capricorn

December 21 - January 20

Do what you do best this week – plan and strategize. In order to do this, you might need to rest and take things slow. Getting to know yourself better is a major theme when Mercury is reversing through your sign. You might be working hard but are you moving the proverbial needle that matters? Or, are you just working for the sake of working? Start shifting your strategy toward what you want and let the circumstances around you adjust accordingly.



Gemini

May 21 - June 20

Chances are, you're about ready to throw your hands in the air and give up. You've got your fair share of frustration right now. That said, logistical as well as motivational setbacks can really help you get more deeply in touch with what you would like to commit to, rather than being distracted. Commitment, responsibility and maturity is a big theme for you this year. Start figuring out what your priorities are, if you haven't already.



Libra

September 21 - October 20

Your guiding star, Venus, moves into your fun, joy and children zone where she spends the majority of the month. Thus, she'll lighten a mood in this part of life that's been a little heavier than usual these past few years. So go easy on yourself when it comes to developing discipline just because it's the New Year. The Cosmos still wants you to party a little, so relax and enjoy it for a while longer.



Aquarius

January 21 - February 20

The mood begins to lighten somewhat as planet of love and attraction moves into your sign. For the majority of January, you can expect more support, ease and flow. You might give yourself permission to let yourself off the hook a little bit and do more of what you enjoy. Massive shifts are coming your way by March. Start getting in touch with what brings you a sense of joy and pleasure to make things a little easier on you.



Cancer

June 21 - July 20

A Full Moon lights up your sign this week which will underpin the start of a New Year with a turning point of sorts or an increase of clarity. As new information comes to light you may have to change your mind or your mood about a certain situation. Feelings may be tender, especially if unforeseen changes are required. Be gentle on yourself as the year begins. You don't have to rush in and try and be a "new you" just yet.



Scorpio

October 21 - November 20

It might be 2023 now but cosmically, not much has changed from 2022 – at least not yet. So with that in mind, go easy on yourself when it comes to developing your New Year goals and intentions. If you go too hard this week, you'll just be swimming upstream. Instead, use the energy of the Full Moon to return to a sense of meaning and purpose. That will inform the direction you need to go in.



Pisces

February 21 - March 20

The Full Moon invites you to drink up the best life has to offer. This might mean more of life's simple joys such as the laughter of children, the sparkle in the eye of your lover or the way your spirit lights up from doing something you really love to do, just because you can. Things might be a little hit-or-miss socially, so use the energy of this week to indulge yourself in pure happiness.


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Cassandra has studied astrology for about 20 years. She is an international teacher of astrology who has been published all over the globe.

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Don't be naive

Only fools rush in. You might like to keep that idea in mind as the new year begins.

Stand back and observe the abundance of enthusiastic, yet naive energy around you as those around you rush to clean up their diets, get more active and generally make a whole bunch of intentions that will fall by the wayside by January's end.

By all means, cheer them on. Encourage them. But if you're reading this horoscope, chances are you probably don't think like most people anyway.

You see, the first few weeks of January are a bit like the tale of the tortoise and the hare,

and you know how that ends.

With that in mind, use this week to strategize and formulate a plan of action that will continue to reap rewards long after your motivated mood is over.

You see, discipline trumps motivation. Don't start this week what you cannot

Consistency over perfection
will prevent you from
having the same goals this
time next year.

see yourself doing consistently until this time next year. This week is all about prior preparation preventing poor performance. Get your ducks lined up. Go over the details. Implement small but meaningful changes.

Consistency over perfection will prevent you from having the same goals this time next year.



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall

Willpower

We don't have to follow the first voice

A woman passed through my line at the grocery store with a brightly colored box I knew so well.

Without hesitation, I jostled my cart and went searching for the Pop-Tart aisle.

That first voice had whispered in my ear, "oooooh, Pop-Tarts, have to have."

When did I start following that first/unhealthy voice?

Forbidden fruit

In the early 1970s, my girlfriend Lizzie bought one of the first boxes of Pop-Tarts to arrive at our neighborhood store and called me up. I hustled over to see this brand-new thing.

We hid in the pantry like thieves. This newfangled food product was not yet Mom approved and we were also snacking without permission. Both sneaky offenses.

Neither of us had eaten food from a foil packet before it felt exciting and edgy. The era of space food was upon us, so if Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin ate Tang, Spacestix or Pop-Tarts, we should too.

Toasting as directed, we spread margarine over the solid, thick frosting with embedded sprinkles as it seemed the decent thing to do. Then we scalded our tongues on the blistering smear of jam inside.

Since there were two tarts in a pouch, it seemed we were being directed to eat two. We did—and promptly got stomach aches.

And I was hooked.

I've had many Pop-Tart tummy aches in the last 50 years.

Fortunately, I do not lack self-control in everything, mostly just unhealthy snacks. There is an ungodly amount of unhealthy snacks out there.



The Funologist
By Sandra Dee Owens

Adding something in

I have observed over the years that telling myself I 'can't, should, or shouldn't' do something is gremlin-speak (what I call those invisible buggers that whisper useless and unhealthy nothings in my ear all day long).

Listening to the gremlins has never led to positive, sustainable change.

Not once, not ever.

So instead of trying to force myself to take out or remove things from my life that no longer serve me, like Pop-Tarts, I look toward adding something (better) into my life instead.

This helps me ignore the gremlins. Which makes them go dormant. They don't leave, they just get quiet.

With the 'adding in' approach, there is no void left waiting to be filled. No feelings of lack left behind when forcing myself to give something up.

I don't bother with New Year's resolutions. They are loaded with expectation that are destined to fail. And that would make me feel bad.

I don't bother with New
Year's resolutions.
They are loaded with
expectation that are
destined to fail.

Instead, I assess the things I want out of my life. It can be a food, negative emotional mindset, or any old, worn out, behavior that no longer serves me or anyone connected to me. Then I shift my focus and attention toward something I do want in my life.

When an opportunity to add something better appears, I am ready to embrace it. And just an FYI, an opportunity always appears. Though often, it does not look like

Funology → 29

Carolina wrens move north

I saw a new bird at my feeder last winter. In mid-December, a small, reddish-brown bird with an upturned tail, a white eye-brow-stripe, and a long, slender, down curved bill was on the deck below our feeder. Looking at its cocked tail, I suspected it was a type of wren — a Carolina wren, I discovered upon checking my field guide. I had heard the rich, whistled song of this wren in my neighborhood for the first time the previous summer, but this was the first time I'd seen one.

The bird hopped over to the sliding glass door I stood behind and peered up at me, seemingly just as curious about me as I was about it. It had a white throat, buffy-orange underparts, and barring on its wings and tail. What a striking little bird! But what, I wondered, was the state bird of South Carolina doing in central Vermont in winter?

Carolina wrens have gradually expanded their range northward over the past 125 years or so. Bird guides now show their core range extending from Mexico and Texas, across the Southeast and Midwest, north to Chicago, and east to Boston. Birders have also reported sightings on eBird during all months of the year around northern New England. These sightings are concentrated in warmer areas such as the Connecticut River Valley, the Champlain Valley, and the coasts of New Hampshire and southern Maine. According to Kent McFarland, conservation biologist with the Vermont Center for Ecostudies, Carolina wrens have steadily gained in abundance in Vermont and moved northward in the state over the past 30 years.

Climate warming and the proliferation of backyard bird feeders have enabled these feisty, non-migratory wrens to make their homes farther north. However, severe winters with lots of snow and ice that cover ground feeding areas can drastically reduce local populations. For example, the Vermont Breeding Bird atlas shows that the exceedingly snowy winter of 1976-77 eliminated most Carolina wrens from the state. The winter of 2014-15, with its deep snows, devastated the Massachusetts population. But this resilient species usually recovers within a few years.

Carolina wrens rely on dense shrub cover for nesting, foraging, and protection from predators, and prefer moist, forested ravines and bottomland woods with tangles of vines. These birds also do well in suburban areas where there are bird feeders and brushy vegetation. More than 90% of their year-round diet is animal matter, and natural foods include insects, spiders, seeds, nuts, berries, and occa-

sionally small lizards, frogs, and snakes.

A study in Michigan by Jacob Job and Peter Bednekoff found that Carolina wren populations are limited more by food supply than temperature, and that feeders play a crucial role for this species in northern winters when food is scarce or covered by snow. At feeders, these wrens prefer suet, peanut hearts, hulled sunflower seeds, and mealworms. One peanut can provide more than a third of a wren's daily metabolic need.

These wrens forage primarily on or near the ground, turning over leaf litter with their bills, flitting through low thickets, and hopping up tree trunks and along branches to probe for insects in bark crevices. McFarland has seen them hunting in his compost pile. In his "Life Histories of Familiar North American Birds," author and ornithologist Arthur Cleveland Bent described the Carolina wren as "the embodiment of tireless energy and activity, seldom still for a moment as he dodges in and out of the underbrush or creeps over and around a pile of logs."

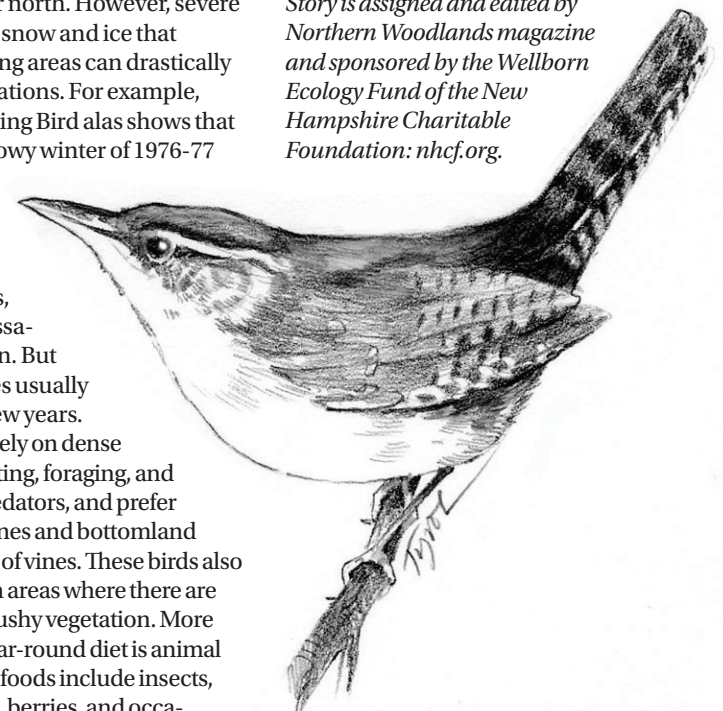
These wrens are early nesters, constructing their bulky, dome-shaped nests with a side entrance as soon as early to mid-April. The pair builds several nests before choosing one to use; dummy nests are believed to confuse predators. In woodlands, Carolina wrens nest in cavities and stumps three to six feet off the ground. Around homes, they will nest in a wide variety of places: birdhouses, mailboxes, garages, firewood piles, hanging plants, and empty flower pots. Their nests have even been found in old boots and in the pocket of an old coat. During breeding season, wrens defend their territory by constant singing and by scolding and chasing intruders.

A pair of Carolina wrens nested in a hole in my neighbors' stone wall last summer, and perhaps I will see those birds at my feeder this winter. Look for this charismatic wren at your feeder, and listen for its piercing song in early spring: "tea-kettle, tea-kettle, tea-kettle-tea."

Susan Shea is a naturalist, writer, and conservationist based in Vermont. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org.



The Outside Story
By Susan Shea



The gift that keeps on giving

I've developed a few talents in my life and one of them is gift giving.

Nothing brings me more joy than to wake up Christmas morning and watch everyone around me open the gifts that I bought them. Sure, I like opening gifts as well, but I'd much rather give than receive.

Being a good gift-giver takes time and effort and can't be successfully accomplished at the last minute. For instance, I take notes throughout the year for gifts. If you're an important person in my life, I likely have your name in my phone with a list of possible gift ideas listed underneath.

Once I've zeroed in on a particular gift for someone, I then start looking for the best purchasing options. Amazon has been a boon for anyone who wants to research gift items for legitimacy, quality, and price, so I spend a lot of time there investigating ideas.

I tend to splurge on my wife for Christmas. I love finding unique things to buy her that she's not expecting. For instance, she sometimes complains about her eyes hurting after a long day on the computer. I made a note of this and did some research and discovered this nifty little cooling gel eye mask that helps soothe tired eyes.

My wife is also a notoriously messy eater, so this year I bought her an adult bib with the phrase, "I Spill Everything" screen printed on the front.

Another gift that she was especially fond of was the plastic martini glasses I got for her tennis club, where — per the rules — the bartenders pour the martinis into plastic solo cups (no glassware allowed outside). Half the fun of a martini is drinking it out of the correct receptacle, and now she's got them.

Clothes are the only gift I avoid buying my wife. Over the years, I've learned that she has very particular tastes (which change with the seasons), so I don't even try anymore. Instead, I give her a large chunk of money and tell her to go nuts.

That's what happened this year and she took full advantage of the opportunity. Within a few days after Christmas, dozens of boxes began arriving at our front door. After trying on clothes for two days, she chose her favorites and then loosely boxed up the rest to return.

Given that my son was on winter break and had very little to do, my wife corralled him into delivering several boxes of clothes to a nearby mall where they accepted returns.

My initial reaction was to balk at the idea, but she got it in her head it would be good for him to do it. So, on a cloudy Saturday morning last week, my son loaded up his car and left for the mall.

I was rummaging around cleaning up the house while my wife was in her office getting some work accomplished, so neither one of us paid much attention to him when he drove away.

About 20 minutes later the phone rang. I could tell by my wife's exasperated voice that something was wrong. The next thing I heard was my wife stating, "What do you mean none of the boxes are in the car?"

As I came walking into her office to inquire, she ran past me and out the front door. Confused, I followed her and then saw multiple boxes in the road in front of our house

with clothes strewn up the street.

Apparently, my son had placed the open boxes on the roof of his car while he attended to something else and then got in and drove away, leaving hundreds of dollars of women's clothing to the whims of nature.

Luckily, the road was dry (which was a miracle) and nothing was ruined (another miracle). And thank-

fully, my son then made the return trip back to the mall and got her refund (the final miracle).

Christmas week also saw another return with the release of the second Avatar film, "Avatar: the Way of Water," James Cameron's follow up to the 2009 three-time Oscar winner.

It's hard to believe it's been 13 years since the original Avatar film was released. Absence apparently makes the heart grow fonder since this new incarnation is

nearing \$1.5 billion in ticket sales globally, making it one of the most successful films in history.

There's no doubt I was visually mesmerized throughout this film (especially since I saw the 3D version). The story is good enough to keep you engaged but nothing too compelling.

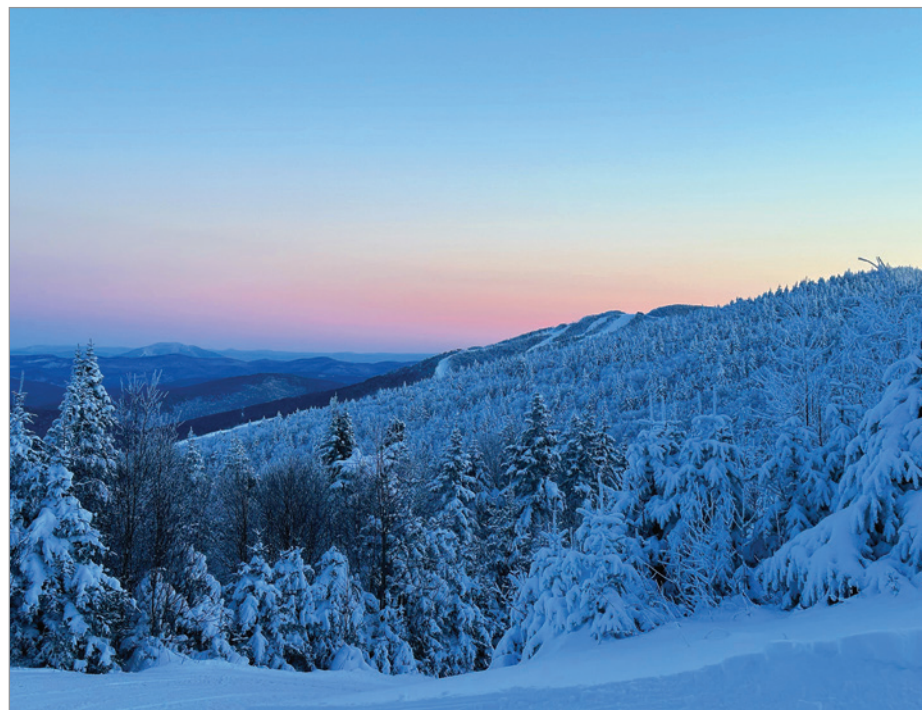
Check this one out just to be part of the conversation. Eventually, all films will look this good, but for now, it's mesmerizing to see the future of the cinema.

A visually stunning "B" for "Avatar: The Way of Water," now in theaters everywhere. Got a question or comment for Dom? You can email him at moviediary@att.net.



The Movie Diary
By Dom Cioffi

If you're an important person in my life, I likely have your name in my phone with a list of possible gift ideas listed underneath.



By Merisa Sherman

This new year, try to ski more. The mountains at sunset are always a rewarding sight.

As a skier, my resolutions are (now and throughout the season) these four

Ahhh, the New Year's Resolution. The pressure to become a better version of yourself than you were last year and usually something that you will have forgotten about within the four weeks of January. Sure, we all want to recommit ourselves to our physical and mental health, but what does this mean for skiers?

As a skier and a coach, I am constantly reminded that we must choose for ourselves whether or not we want to put in the hard work to become better.

Over the years, I have developed my Four Philosophies of Skiing and I use these as my New Year's and daily resolutions.

More days on snow than last year

If you've ever gotten a holiday card from me, then you know that my most fervent wish is that you will have more days on snow this year than the last. Any good coach will tell you that mileage, once you have awareness of a certain skill, is one of the best teachers there is. It also implies an increase in time spent outdoors (especially during the "SAD" months of winter — it's also an opportunity to work on your mental health!) If you ever feel lost, sad or in doubt about life, a few runs downhill, a tour uphill or an adventure in the backcountry won't cure your depression or solve your financial problems, but it will certainly remind you of how beautiful this world is and perhaps put all life's difficulties into perspective.

For others, who strive to be better skiers, you have to ski more. More days, more runs, more variety, more challenge. Period.

A good skier is always thinking about something

My second phrase is that a good skier is always thinking about something. No matter how good you are at skiing and how many days a year you ski, you should always be improving — unless you ski around blindly on the same groomed trails just standing on your skis without a thought in your mind. Pick something, pick anything, to work on at the top of every run and then put mental and physical effort into performing that skill. Each section of trail is an opportunity for improvement. Whether you get better or stay the same is your choice, and it might be my tendency toward perfectionism, but I simply cannot tolerate a less than stellar performance on any section of trail. Which is why I always remind myself that most of the time, you have to do it twice to get it right.

Falling is part of skiing

With everything comes risk, it's just that in most parts of life it doesn't usually happen under the chairlift where everyone can see. In the early '90s, there was an awesome t-shirt shop in town where they would custom press your t-shirt right before your eyes and I thought this was the best thing in the world. The shirt I really wanted was one that said "No Falls, No Balls, No Guts, No Glory."

As a girl skier, I knew I didn't have balls but the sentiment was there — if you didn't try, if you didn't work hard, then you would never have the glory that would come along with it. In my little mind, the glory was just being able to rip around the mountain like a big kid. If you are trying something new, you fall. If you don't pay attention to your footwork, you fall. If you don't anticipate the terrain, you fall. If you fear moving your weight down the hill, you will struggle on anything steeper than a blue trail. Anything can happen in skiing and we must embrace this opportunity for failure in its simplest form — you cannot

Living the Dream → 31



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By Merisa Sherman



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Birds like Christmas trees, too

Warm fires and cozy living rooms complete with a decorated Christmas tree are a part of many of our December lives. We look for just the right tree, not too dense to prevent ornament hanging, but just right to brighten up a late December of darkness.



Tree Talk
By Gary Salmon

It prepares us mentally for the Vermont winter to follow. Many of us have conifer trees in our yards similar in size and shape to the one decorating the living room and both can have a value after Christmas.

Amidst all the Christmas carols that get sung to celebrate the season one sticks in my mind whose beginning is on a more somber note. Gustav Holst (creator of "The Planets") wrote a song with Harold Drake and it is based on a Christina Rossetti poem published in 1872 and sung ever since. The opening phrase stands out: "In the bleak mid-winter frosty wind made moan. Earth stood hard as iron water like a stone."

This is where the birds come in. January and February bring us the occasional very cold windy evenings full of frosty winds and earth as hard as iron. During these events birds (black capped chickadees come to mind although there are others as well) look for shelter primarily out of the wind to keep them from freezing to death.

A dense conifer can fill this need and it is more likely to be found in one's yard than in the woodlot. Yard trees generally are denser than forest trees because they either came from a nursery that way or had more light available on the foliage.

Christmas trees gaily decorated for

the holiday season are similar in size and function to those outside and can serve the same purpose. So, when the yuletide season is over and the eternal question of what to do with the Christ-

Help a bird out. Take your Christmas tree outside and set it upright in a corner of the yard to mimic your yard tree.

mas tree looms large in our minds, don't burn it, don't chip it. Help a bird out. Take it outside and set it upright in a corner of the yard to mimic your yard tree.

It is just as dense if not more so and may fill a need if the weather gets severe enough. A green tree in the yard in the wintertime is just as beautiful as the one we just shared fully decorated inside for two weeks and to a bird it is a wind breaking shelter nestled amongst the branches in the bleak midwinter.



By Gary Salmon

Consider this: Your old Christmas tree could make the ideal shelter for birds.



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< PUZZLES page 9

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Gwen Allard: Inducted into the Hall of Fame from page 1

She was also inducted into the National Disabled Ski Hall of Fame in 2001 in recognition of her work with physically and mentally challenged learners among other honors.

In his letter supporting Allard's USSSHF nomination, adaptive pioneer Kirk Bauer, emeritus director for Disabled Sports-USA, noted she was one of a handful of "national pioneers and leaders in the development and universal acceptance of adaptive snow sports in the USA.... Gwen realized early on that development of standardized, professional teaching methods and training of snow-sports instructors, was key to the safe, effective and successful expansion of this specialty.... Adaptive Snowsports is now universally taught throughout the USA; and hundreds of thousands of people with disabilities can thank Gwen Allard for this opportunity," Bauer noted.

Early influences matter

Gwen Allard was born the second girl to a dad who loved the outdoors and skiing. "My father wanted a boy," she said. So growing up in the Schenectady, New York, area, she became "the son" he taught to ski at age 4 on the golf course next to their home.

Her older sister skied little and her mother not at all so it was Gwen who packed the sandwiches and the car for their ski trips, chores she willingly undertook because she shared her father's passion for the outdoors and snow.

She relishes the memory of the winter trips in 20-below-zero weather to an Adirondack cabin where "dad chopped wood and fed the fire at 2 in the morning." They got water from the lake and cross-country skied out the door. For lunch, "we ate peanut butter and fluff-a-nutter sandwiches followed by brownies for dessert," she recalled.

Another early influence was Frederica Anderson, ski school director at Maple Ridge (New York) and "a brilliant sports lady who taught skiing for 55 years," Gwen said. In 1964 Anderson invited Allard to teach skiing at a municipal golf course. That experience with "an early female champion of skiing and the adventurous group of people who said 'try it' in a positive, open, encouraging and inclusive way made all the difference," Allard noted of her own 'you-can-do-it' attitude taking root.

Asked what stands out in her long career, Allard said, "The people — they taught me so much. They had such a wonderful outlook on life... 'So you can't walk, that's okay we'll get you to slide,'" she said of the adoption of a "can-do it attitude."

Allard is in good company as other Vermont inductees with the Class of 2022 include Peter Graves of Putney and Jan Reynolds of Stowe.



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Funology: New Years is a time to reorient your life toward positive change from page 24

what I expected. In fact, I ready myself for these unexpected gifts.

Popeye smoothie

Not long ago, I was given a Nutri-bullet blender. This high powered, easy to use blender eviscerates everything to a nice smooth texture.

While I had enjoyed smoothies made by others, my old, slow, yard sale blender was closer to a woodchipper. Totally unappetizing.

But this gift was an opportunity to add something healthy in (see what I mean?), so I began experimenting with a morning breakfast drink.

Without telling myself I had to stop eating the usual sugar-centric breakfasts, I added green things I would not normally eat for breakfast. Fresh kale, spinach, oats, unsweetened coconut flakes plus a few other ingredients, spices and a frozen, ripe banana to sweeten it just enough. I called it my Popeye smoothie.

Since one of my personal mantras is to be as strong as I can, for as long as I can, this drinkable breakfast paired beautifully with my lifelong, mind-body goals.

I feel strong, healthy and wise to eat these good things. And this feels good.

It has been years since I bought Pop-

Tarts. The get-out-of-line craving has left me. That feels really great. Like I gained some snack food freedom. Not everything—just a bite.

Last summer I celebrated this healthy morning add-in by making a tiny garden around my patio. I call it my snack-ing garden where I grow fresh herbs and greens for my smoothies.

This snacking garden is too small to freeze or process anything. It's just big enough for snacking.

While I sometimes grab a Snickers bar when I gas up my truck, I struck on an effective compromise.

Line in the sand

A mindset I adopted when wanting to eat junk food, or drink less (or no) alcohol, was to imagine the doorsills of my house as a line in the sand.

A line that unhealthy foods and substances are not allowed to cross.

They stay out there.

Rather than bring them home as a grocery item, they remain in "treat" status.

Something I have to go get.

Adding something better in, and drawing a line in the sand, help me listen to the gremlins—a lot less. And I am good with that.

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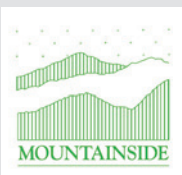
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New Census data shows Vermonters are doing better, but experts are skeptical

By Erin Petenko/VTdigger

Vermonters pocketed a median annual household income of \$72,431 from 2017 to 2021 and are less likely to live in poverty than they were a decade ago, according to the latest data from the U.S. Census Bureau. At first glance, the data — collected via surveys of thousands of people — shows Vermont's economic outlook improving in the past few years. But a closer look at statistics on housing, income inequality and the labor force paint a more complicated picture. A median annual household income of \$72,431 is a roughly 25% increase over the previous five-year period, or an 11% increase when adjusting for inflation, which in recent years reached record highs. Earnings for working Vermonters also rose 12% over that time period, accounting for inflation.

"I don't think everyone that (moved) during the pandemic would meet this criteria, but the people that have the ability to relocate to what we might call a higher-amenity destination, they're the ones that have more resources," he said. Vermonters also got a boost in 2020 and 2021 from federal Covid aid, according to data from the Public Assets Institute's annual State of Working Vermont report. Unemployment support, stimulus payments and child tax credits increased the total personal income of Vermonters in those years. The percentage of people living below the poverty level in Vermont fell in the first two years of the pandemic when Covid-related government payments were taken into

Peter Nelson, a geographer at Middlebury College, noted that the percentage of households earning more than \$100,000 rose between the 2012-16 survey and the 2017-21 survey, from 28% to 32%.

He said that could indicate that Vermont's rising wealth was concentrated more toward the top of the income ladder, although there are pockets of higher income in the lower end of the scale, too.

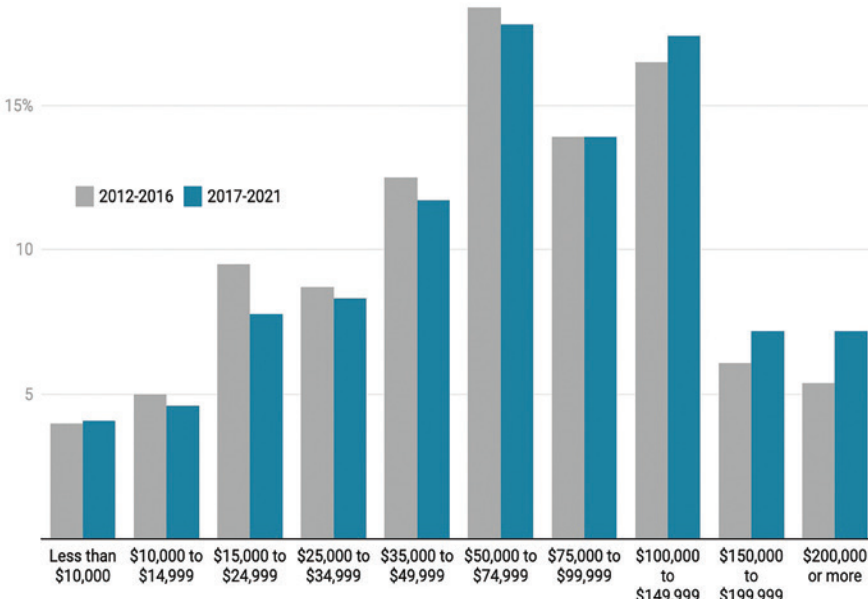
It's too early to say for sure, but Nelson said the change could be connected to Vermont's inflow of residents during the Covid-19 pandemic. The state gained 4,800 people through migration in the pandemic's first year, according to earlier Census Bureau data. There is not accurate data on those that came the next year or since — or those that returned home.

Prior to the pandemic, data from the Internal Revenue Service showed that new migrants to the state had higher incomes than people leaving. If that trend continued into the pandemic years, Nelson said, it could explain Vermont's rising household incomes.

Among full-time, year-round workers, male Vermonters earned 13% more than female Vermonters in the last five years, down from 18% in the previous five years, according to the Census.

account, according to the report. But many of those programs have since ended. Nelson said the state's rising incomes should also be measured against the rising cost of major expenses, such as housing. And Census data suggests that many Vermonters have struggled to afford their housing expenses. Federal estimates label renters as "cost-burdened" if they spend more than a third of their income on housing. From 2017 to 2021, about half of Vermonters fell into that category, roughly the same as in previous years, despite the state's rising incomes. Homeowners were less likely than renters to be cost-burdened, but many still are: About a third of homeowners with mortgage

Vt wealth → 31



Data courtesy U.S. Census

Chart shows Vermont's changing wealth as a percentage of households by income category.



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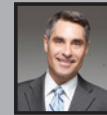
Jessica Posch
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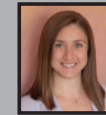
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 Associate Broker



Jane Johnson,
 ALHS, ASP(r)
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Edward Herson
 Lic. Assoc.
 R.E. Broker



Krista Neary
 REALTOR®



John Humphreys
 REALTOR®

Vt wealth: Incomes have risen over the past two decades, but so have costs from page 30

es spent more than a third of their income on housing costs, according to the Census.

"The struggle may not be... because people are earning less," Nelson said. "The struggle is that it costs more to live."

Leslie Black-Plumeau, research manager at the Vermont Housing Finance Agency, said that rental cost burden was a "significant concern" in people's financial futures.

"Your housing is unstable, and you're a lot more likely to experience housing instability, eviction, homelessness," she said.

There's "a slew of problems that come along with just living paycheck to paycheck, and not being able to have wiggle room after you pay your rent."

The latest Census data shows that, like in previous years, the state had significant income disparities by gender, race and geography.

Chittenden and Grand Isle counties in the northwest had the highest incomes in the state, and both reported a rise in median income after inflation. The Northeast Kingdom's Essex County, by comparison, had a median household income almost half of Grand Isle's.

But Chittenden County also had the highest median rent costs and the highest

percentage of cost-burdened renters, suggesting that many county residents are still struggling with affordability.

Among full-time, year-round workers, male Vermonters earned 13% more than female Vermonters in the last five years, down from 18% in the previous five years, according to the Census. Women — especially when parenting children under 18 years old — were also less likely to participate in the labor force.

White Vermont workers had higher average earnings than any other racial or ethnic group tracked by the Census, a longstanding disparity even as the state becomes more diverse overall.

Black-Plumeau pointed out that it may still be "hard to see the impact of the pandemic" because the estimates don't yet include 2022. Housing prices have continued to rise in the last few quarters, according to data from the agency.

"I'm not really sure what will happen when we get estimates that are really all pandemic and post (pandemic), like 2020 on, but we won't have those higher estimates for a while yet," she said.

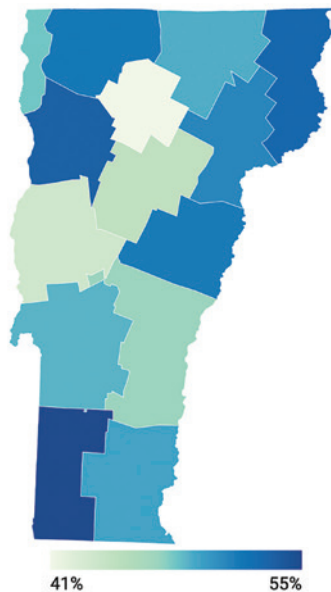


Chart shows percentage of cost-burdened renters.

Courtesy VTD

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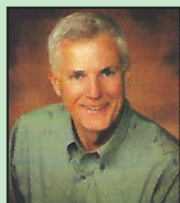
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Living the Dream: Philosophies of skiing in the New Year, and always from page 25

hide from your mistakes, they take you down like a simple snow snake.

**Anyone can ski fast;
a good skier makes turns**

The previous three fundamentals beg the question:

what is a good skier? My dad always said that the best skier is someone who can ski anything, anytime, anyplace and with any style. A good skier is present, both physically and mentally, and not afraid to take risks, however small. But a good skier is also in control of their skis, their thoughts and their movements. It takes little thought or effort to stand on a pair of skis and glide down the mountain — we watch thousands of people do it every weekend on their vacations. But

what takes a skier and makes them truly great? Turns. In fact, skiing slowly on challenging terrain might be one of the most difficult tasks in skiing.

As you head out to the slopes today, tomorrow or next weekend, give these four philosophies a thought and see if they make a difference in how you approach the sport.

Over the years, I have developed my Four Philosophies of Skiing and I use these as my New Year's and daily resolutions.

Even if all that happens is that you ski five more days than last year, you'll still be more awesome than you were the year before.

So Happy New Year everyone, and may you have more days on snow this year than the last!

Merisa is a full time Killington resident, KMS coach and local Realtor. She can be reached at femaleskibum@gmail.com.

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