



## GROUNDHOG DAY IS SUNDAY, FEB. 2

The Farmer's Almanac predicts Punxsutawney Phil will not see his shadow this year, suggesting an early spring rather than six more weeks of winter.



By Hubert Schriebl  
*LeBlond dons 1988 style.*

## SKI PHOTOGRAPHER JERRY LEBLOND REFLECTS ON DECADES

A mechanical engineer working on submarines in Maine and California decided to make Killington his home and take up ski photography. Five decades later he's still loving it.

Page 6



## YEAR OF THE WOOD SNAKE

The Chinese Lunar New Year falls on Wednesday, Jan. 29, (also the first new moon of the year.) In Chinese culture, snakes are symbols of rebirth, renewal, transformation as well as potential danger. The Wood Snake is seductive and creative, as well as absolutely ruthless.

# Two vie for two Select Board seats in Killington

Voters to decide on merits of switching to a five-member board

By Polly Mikula

A first look at the Town Meeting Day ballot was presented at the Killington Select Board meeting, Monday, Jan. 27 — and there were some surprises with two contested races, two bonds and an article to change the governing structure of the Select Board.

The first article on the ballot asks

voters to elect representatives for open seats. This year there is both a 1-year and a 3-year seat open on the Select Board and while both incumbents are running for re-election, each also has a challenger.

Incumbent Rob Hecker will face a challenge from Ricky Bowen for the 1-year seat. This seat was vacated

by Steve Finneron and Hecker was appointed by the Select Board to fill it May 13, 2024, until voters could elect a replacement on Town Meeting Day. The 1-year seat open this March will fulfill the remainder of Finneron's term after which the 3-year term schedule will resume.

Hecker worked over two decades

with ADP in New Jersey before moving to Killington in 2021. He's since started a small construction company called Peak Construction, LLC.

Ricky Bowen was the foreman for the town of Killington highways and facilities for 36 years until May 15, 2024, when he resigned.

Killington Ballot → 2

## RRPC receives statewide contract for water quality improvement program

The Rutland Regional Planning Commission (RRPC) announced Friday, Jan. 24, that the Agency of Natural Resources, Dept. of Environmental Conservation, Water Quality Division has awarded the RRPC a contract to administer water quality improvement programs in partnership with the 11 Regional Planning Commissions (RPCs) across the state of Vermont. Funded through the 604(b) Water Quality Management Planning Grant Program of the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA), this initiative aims to promote water quality planning and improvements statewide.

Regional Planning Commissions will use the funding for the following initiatives:

- River basin planning and database updates: Compile river basin planning and assessment projects for integration into the DEC's watershed projects database

RRPC → 14



By James Kent

## Fueling up

Rutland City police officers Matthew Razanouski (left) and Sean Olsen (right) stopped by the Last Cup Cafe at 87 State St. in Rutland on Sunday, Jan. 26, for morning coffee.

# 'I had to shut down': Student who endured persistent racism at Woodstock school wins settlement

The school district and supervisory union denied any wrongdoing, according to the settlement

By Auditi Guha/VTDigger

He was called the N-word. His head was compared to a chimpanzee's skull. A banana was waved at him with comments about him looking like he needed it. His arm was drawn on with a dark marker with remarks about how it could not be seen on his skin. Comments and memes about fried chicken and his ancestors picking cotton, and references to slavery, persisted for months.

These are some of the instances of racial harassment described in a complaint filed with the Vermont Human Rights Commission in August 2022. The victim was then a 13-year-old Black student who faced repeated racist harassment from his peers at Woodstock Union Middle and High School.

After a months-long investigation, the commission, in a unanimous vote early last year, found reasonable grounds to believe the school and supervisory union had discriminated against the student based on race, color, and national origin by failing to adequately intervene on the student's behalf.

The Woodstock school and the Mountain Views (formerly called Windsor Central) Supervisory Union — a consolidated seven-town district in central Vermont — denied any wrongdoing but agreed to a \$175,000 settlement. It's the largest individual settlement for a school-based discrimination claim in the commission's history, officials said.

It's not about one Black kid in a class; it's about preparing all children for a world in which the global majority is black and brown people, Schultz said.

Big Hartman, executive director and general counsel of the Human Rights Commission, called the settlement "a significant step forward in our ongoing efforts to ensure every student can learn and thrive in a safe and inclusive environment... Unfortunately," Hartman continued, "this case presents a set of facts that is all too common in Vermont with a student of color, who is one of

very few in their school or their class — if any — who endures a series of incidents that the school fails to properly and effectively stop."

Despite a state policy in place to address hazing, harassment, and bullying in Vermont, Hartman said the commission often finds that schools don't understand their duty to address

such incidents.

According to the settlement agreement, the school district and supervisory union denied any wrongdoing. Superintendent Sherry Sousa said in an email last month that she disagreed with the commission's findings and "decided to settle the dispute to avoid the time and expense of litigation."

"Although we settled the complaint, I stand behind my staff and administrators who worked tirelessly to meet this student's needs and who responded immediately and appropriately to any complaints of harassment reported to

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# Cornerstone Housing Partners formed to strengthen affordable housing efforts in Rutland, Bennington, and Addison Counties

Three leading housing organizations—NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, Shires Housing, and Housing Trust of Rutland County—have merged to form Cornerstone Housing Partners, a new entity dedicated to expanding and maintaining affordable housing and homeownership services across Rutland, Bennington, and Addison counties.

The newly combined organization will provide a comprehensive range of housing services, including affordable rental development, property rehabilitation, homebuyer education, energy efficiency programs, foreclosure counseling, and home repair and lending services. By pooling their expertise and resources, Cornerstone Housing Partners aims to increase the availability of affordable homes and enhance housing stability throughout the region.

Maintaining NeighborWorks® America charter membership, the organization adheres to national standards of excellence in community development and homeownership services. This affiliation enhances its ability to secure financial resources, training, and partnerships to support its mission.

Mary Cohen, CEO of Cornerstone Housing Partners, emphasized the significance of the merger: “By joining forces, we are better equipped to meet the growing demand for affordable housing in our region and to expand opportunities for both renters and homebuyers. Our goal is to build a stronger, more sustainable housing landscape in Rutland, Bennington, and Addison Counties for years to come.”

Cornerstone Housing Partners will continue the critical work of its founding organizations while expanding efforts to address Vermont’s affordable housing challenges through new development and rehabilitation projects.

## Grange Hall ramp goes back to drawing board

By Brett Yates

Municipal officials have long wanted to install a wheelchair-accessible ramp at the North Chittenden Grange Hall, and thanks to a recent grant from the Vermont Dept. of Buildings and General Services, they finally have the money to do it. But one last hurdle has emerged.

The state’s Municipal Energy Resilience Program intends to help town-owned buildings go green while also subsidizing compliance with the Americans with Disability Act (ADA). Having accepted the award, the Chittenden Select Board discovered that approved projects undergo scrutiny from the Vermont Division for Historic Preservation. On grounds of historical appropriateness, the latter has rejected a plan to build a ramp, alongside new steps, for the Grange Hall’s front entrance.

“Originally, we were trying to find the cheapest way to do it that would meet ADA requirements,” Selectman Andrew Quint explained. “Now the goalposts have moved.”

The town hasn’t given up. On Jan. 23, the Select Board voted to spend \$1,980 on a feasibility study that, according to Brandon-based Naylor & Breen Builders, will “explore the possibility of putting a ramp on the south-side entrance of the building, near the lift, in lieu of the front entrance, based



By James Kent

North Chittenden Grange Hall, located at 3 Middle Road in Pittsford, is seeking funding and approval to build a wheelchair-accessible ramp alongside new steps at Grange Hall’s front entrance.

on information received from Historic Preservation.”

Built as a church in 1833, the Grange Hall now operates as a community center. Funds for the feasibility study will come out of Chittenden’s grant, which totals \$431,672.

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**Sherburne UCC “Little White Church,” Killington, VT**

## Killington ballot: from page 1

Incumbent Chris Karr will face a challenge from Patrick Cushing for the 3-year seat.

Karr is the owner of the Karr Group which operates a half dozen restaurants and businesses in Killington. Karr was originally appointed to replace Chuck Claffey, Aug. 3, 2021, who resigned after moving to Mendon. Karr was re-elected unopposed to that seat seven months later in March 2022.

Cushing is a senior consultant with Deloitte Risk & Financial Advisory. He works in intelligence and investigation field supporting government clients.

Article 2 asks voters to approve paying property taxes in three installments, as has been done in the past.

Article 3 asks voters to approve total general fund expenditures of \$7,902,875

of which an estimated \$5,422,325 shall be raised by property taxes and \$2,490,550 will be raised by non property tax revenue for the physical year beginning July 1, 2025. This municipal budget is 12.5% increase over the current fiscal year budget of \$7,021,304.

Article 4 asks voters to approve a bond not to exceed \$11,200,000 for the purpose of the planning, design, acquisition, construction and installation of water system improvements. This portion of the Killington Forward water plan does not qualify for tax increment financing (TIF), but it will be partly covered by grants with only about \$5.5 million taken as a 40-year, 0% interest note. Those that hook up to the future municipal water system will pay the debt off.

“It’s just the next step of what we all

voted for,” said Select Board Chair Jim Haff. “It’s part of the Killington Forward plan to bring the water line that is needed through the town of Killington.”

Article 5 asks voters to approve another bond not to exceed \$490,000 for the purpose of completing renovations of the New Town Hall at 2046 US Route 4 in Killington (where the post office is a first floor tenant). Constructing a vault is among the more expensive items on the list at \$117,000.

Article 6, the last article on Killington’s ballot, asks voters if the town shall elect two additional Select Board members, increasing the board’s size to five instead of the current three. If the article passes on Town Meeting Day, March 4, a special meeting will be held to fill these additional seats.

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## OBITUARIES

## Robert L. Reilly, 80

Robert L. Reilly ("Riles"), 80, of Manahawkin, formerly of Long Beach Island and Belmar, died Wednesday, Jan. 1. Bob was born in South Amboy, New Jersey, and moved to Belmar as a child. He graduated from St. Rose Grammar and High Schools, both in Belmar.

He attended Mt. Hood College in Oregon, where he achieved an advanced degree in snow skiing.

Riles then became a ski instructor and moved to Killington. He was a member of the Killington Race Committee and volunteered for the Killington Ski Club, teaching underprivileged children the thrill of skiing. Realizing seasonal work did not allow him to live the life of "Reilly," Riles began bartending and eventually managed restaurants and bars while perfecting his culinary skills. He and his then-wife, Sally, owned and operated the New England Inn in Woodstock. He became well-known and received many culinary honors, including the Taste of Vermont and the Chamber of Commerce Hospitality Award. He had a cult following of "rack of lamb" fans. He then moved back to New Jersey and settled in Long Beach Island. At Kubels Bar and Grill in Barnegat Light, he was the head chef and a consultant for the business. In his early 50s, Riles returned to the family business, achieving an AA in mortuary science and

becoming a licensed funeral director in 1996. He was associated with the Reilly Funeral Home in Belmar until the business was sold in 2004.

After his retirement, he delivered Meals on Wheels in Ocean County.

Riles is predeceased by his parents, Dan and Jean, a sister, Maureen Howarth, brother-in-laws Tom and Joe, and sister-in-laws Virginia Bumback and Eileen Higgins.

He is survived by his wife of 24 years, Nancy Higgins Johnson, a brother, Dan (Maggie), and three sisters. His twin Nora Hall (Art), Mary Beth Walters (Harold), and Rosemarie, many nieces, nephews, great and great great nieces and nephews.

Riles is also survived by his stepson, Michael Johnson (Pam) and their daughter, Chloe. His brother and sister-in-law, JR and Debby Higgins, all deserve a special thank you for their care and support through the years. Also surviving are his in-laws, Elizabeth and Terry Stonebrook Riles was a "character".

He will be missed by all who love him.

At his request, there will be no public celebration of his life. The family will gather and scatter his cremated remains at a later date. In his memory please do an act of kindness for someone in need.

Arrangements were under the direction of the Ocean Grove Memorial Home.

## Judy O. Findeisen, 92

Judy O. Findeisen, a longtime Killington resident and avid skier, passed away on Jan. 22 at the age of 92.

Born Oct. 13, 1932, in Newport, Rhode Island, Judy was the oldest of Dorothy and Arnold Openshaw's three children. She grew up in Springfield, Massachusetts, swimming, horseback riding, and skiing. While attending St. Lawrence University, she met and fell in love with Walter T.C. Findeisen. They were married July 8, 1953, in Coronado, California.

In 1960, having moved from California to Long Island, Judy and Walt purchased property in Killington. In early 1962, with their two young sons and a dog, they moved to Vermont, living in a tent from early May until mid-October. By day, Judy worked in the Killington ski shop, while Walt was working on the trail crew. Nights and weekends were devoted to building a home. A year later, they welcomed their daugh-



Submitted

Judy O. Findeisen

ter, Tami, into the new house in the woods. Six short years later, they were at it again, building and then operating Timbers Lodge. Judy ran the lodge, which included breakfast and dinner for guests.

In addition to raising her family, Judy held many jobs, including retail sales, school bus driver, bank teller, vacation lodge owner/manager, chef, and housekeeping.

In 1976, Judy began her career in real estate, working alongside her husband Walt at Martin Associates Mountain Real Estate in Killington.

She retired in 2020.

Judy was very active in the small but growing Killington community. She was one of the founding members of the Sherburne Women's Club and the Sherburne Co-operative Nursery School.

She was an active member of the Killington Ski Club, helping to start what is now the annual ski sale. She was elected Justice of the Peace in 1987 and served until 2010. Later, she enjoyed traveling with Walt and her friends and became an active member of the Rutland Garden Club.

Judy is survived by her son Walter (Miriam), son Jeff (Kim), daughter Tami, grandchildren Courtney (Nate), Marc and Sarah, and great-grandson Parker. She is also survived by her sister Lass and sisters-in-law Babs, Ginny, Janice, Pam, and many nieces and nephews. She was pre-deceased by her husband Walt, her brother Jim, and brothers-in-law John and Charlie.

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# Women's First Fridays at Okemo grows in popularity

By Victoria Gaither

Okemo's Women's First Fridays series is off to a great start, connecting female skiers and riders.

The series kicked off Dec. 6 at Okemo's Jackson Gore and has since gained popularity among women searching for something different on the slopes.

Fran Madson from Ludow attended the first Dec. 6 event and said, "It was a wonderful experience. We met a couple of women, and they took us down several trails."

It's more than just a meet-up, explained Anna Tumber, event coordinator and field marketing manager at Okemo, "We pair an activity and sport together to create a space for women to spend time and connect while finding other

women that want to ski."

Fran Madson had such a great time, she invited her daughter, Courtney Matson, to attend the Jan. 3 event.

Standing beside her mom after yoga, Courtney Matson said, "It was fantastic. I enjoyed skiing with a whole bunch of other women. I have grown up skiing my whole life, so it was nice to ski with women I could connect with and talk to. I have two young daughters and am also trying to raise them to be skiers, so it's fun to build more women into the sport."

Unlike the first event, the Jan. 3 event had about 40 women skiers and one rider participate.

"To see all of these women skiing together is a beautiful

sight. The visuals of this are neat," said Felicia Stanley, who happened to walk by and see the group standing in a circle.

The Women's First Fridays at Okemo is just one of many of Vail's Women in Powder-driven initiatives to cultivate a welcoming, supportive, and empowering environment for women in the ski and snowboard community.

Karen Lam, who participated in the Jan. 3 series, said, "I find, in general, women are very good about encouraging each other, and you don't feel scared to ask like, hey, am I doing this right?"

The next Women's First Fridays are Feb. 7 and March 7. For more information, visit: [Tinyurl.com/OkemoFridays](https://Tinyurl.com/OkemoFridays).



By Corey Gambardella, Okemo

A couple dozen women gathered for Women's First Friday event at Okemo Mountain, Jan. 3, for a day on the slopes full of camaraderie and community. The next meet up is Feb. 7.

## Killington's Taylor Dobyys mounts a skiing comeback on Freeride World Tour

By Staff Report

After an injury cut her 2024 season short, Killington native Taylor Dobyys is back on the Freeride World Tour (FWT), ready to reclaim her place among the world's best freeride skiers. Dobyys, who qualified for the prestigious FWT Pro Circuit last year, received a season wildcard for 2025 and has already made a strong return with a seventh-place finish at the Baqueira Beret Pro in Spain.

"I'm thrilled to be back on the FWT after such a challenging start to my professional freeride career," said Dobyys. "I've worked hard to stay focused, recover, and come back stronger. This season, I'm ready to show everyone what I'm capable of."

### From Killington to the global stage

Dobyys' skiing career began with Alpine racing at Killington before transitioning to freeriding while attending the University of Denver. There, she played a key role in founding the school's freeride team, balancing her studies with her growing ambitions in competitive skiing. Now a public defender for the State of Montana, she draws parallels between the high-pressure environments of the courtroom and elite-level skiing.

Her bond with her sister Tory Dobyys, also a competitive skier, has played a significant role in her development. The duo has pushed each other to new heights, with Taylor proving her ability on the FWT

Challenger Series, where she took second place overall in 2023 to earn her spot on the FWT Pro Circuit.

### A comeback season to watch

The 2025 FWT season is more than redemption for Dobyys—it is also a qualifying year for the inaugural FIS Freeride World Championships in 2026. With six stops on the FWT, each event presents an opportunity to prove her skills and work toward a podium finish.

### Upcoming events include:

- Val Thorens Pro, French Alps – Jan. 27 – Feb. 1
- Kicking Horse Golden BC Pro, British Columbia – Dates TBA

As Dobyys continues her season, local fans can also look toward Stowe's IFSA events, where young skiers compete for their own shot at the Freeride World Tour. The 2025 Stowe IFSA Junior takes place on Jan. 31, followed by the 2025 Stowe IFSA Qualifier on Feb. 21. These events showcase rising talent, much like Dobyys when she first began her journey on the FWT Qualifier (FWQ) circuit.

### Bringing Vermont's spirit to Freeride's global stage

Dobyys' return highlights freeride skiing's growing recognition as a potential Olympic sport for 2030. Her comeback season will be closely watched as she represents Killington on the international stage, carrying Vermont's legacy of skiing excellence into the future.

Follow Dobyys' journey at [freerideworldtour.com](https://freerideworldtour.com).



By J. Bernard

Killington native Taylor Dobyys will try to qualify for the 2026 inaugural FIS Freeride World Championships.



By Bob Moran

Jerry LeBlond rests near the base of Tuckerman's Ravine.



By Hubert Schriebl

Jerry LeBlond skiing Stratton Mountain in style in 1988.



By Kinley Tener

Jerry LeBlond on slope at the 2021 World Cup at Killington.

## Jerry LeBlond: From engineer to skier, photographer

By Karen D. Lorentz

What started out as a fun winter sport on a school trip and a hobby — perhaps inspired by his artistic mother — led to a new vocation and lifestyle for Jerry LeBlond.

Born in 1946 and raised in Biddeford, Maine, a coastal French speaking community, until the 6th grade when his family moved to Lawrence, Massachusetts, he first skied on a high school trip to Mount Snow.

“My main method of learning to ski was by imitation, watching Warren Miller movies and watching racers. It wasn't until I moved to Killington that I decided to ‘get it right,’ he noted.

Being an image maker has allowed me to be ever curious about my environment, its people, and the landscape.

That was some years later as first he graduated from the Technological Institute (now part of the University Massachusetts in Lowell, Massachusetts) with an engineering degree. As a mechanical engineer he found work at the Portsmouth Naval Shipyard managing overhauls of the sea water cooling systems on submarines.

During this time, he continued with graduate studies in air and fluid dynamics until transferring to the Mare Island Naval Shipyard in California where he was responsible for the sea water cooling systems for a submarine's nuclear propulsion plant. A return to Portsmouth followed before he changed direction and spent six months skiing, touring, and photographing in Europe.

“I came back stateside in the spring of 1972 with plans to relocate in Sugarloaf, Maine where I owned some land. After realizing that it would be challenging to live there on a full-time basis, I came to Killington where I had been skiing since the late '60s. In 2010, after more than 35 years, I moved to Rochester where I'm currently in the midst of retirement but still photographing what my imagination conjures.”

### Q&A with Jerry LeBlond

#### **Mountain Times: When did your interest in photography start and how did it grow?**

Jerry LeBlond: It goes back to my high school days and my first Kodak Instamatic camera to photograph friends and family trips.

I upgraded to 35mm cameras while living in the Bay Area of San Francisco. That substantially improved the quality of my images. Photography was always a “hobby” until 1975 when it became a professional endeavor.

In the early 1980s, I spent time in New York City meeting with photo editors of major ski and lifestyle publications. Shortly thereafter, I had my first story assignment and soon became a regular contributor to *Ski*, *Skiing*, *Powder*, *Ski Canada*, and *Snow Country*. Regionally, I provided photography to *Vermont Life*, *Yankee*, and of course, the *Mountain Times*.

#### **MT: How did your skiing progress?**

JL: I signed up for Killington's Learn How To Be a Ski Instructor [program]. The first step was being taped on video, which was shown to the whole student group with a “kind” analysis ... I almost had to close my eyes. I really needed help. I finally learned the mechanics involved in skiing and how to teach beginners.

#### **MT: So how did you become a ski photographer?**

JL: I taught skiing at Killington for a couple of years until Pico offered me a position as an instructor and to photograph ski school groups. This change of venue was also inspired by Killington's original resort photographer, [the late] Bob Perry, when I met with him about being his assistant. Not needing one at the time, he suggested I approach Pico since they did not have a full-time photographer. At that point, my aspirations to be a ski photographer really took off.

Up until the American Ski Company purchased Killington and Pico, I created images for Pico's advertising and marketing material and managed their photography archives under Frank Heald.

#### **MT: What are the challenges and rewards of being a photographer?**

JL: The business is tough one. You're essentially a one-person band, as many entrepreneurs are. Keeping pace with imaging technology and suppressing GAS (Gear Acquisition Syndrome) due to economics, is another.

The rewards: Being an image maker has allowed me to be ever curious about my environment, its people, and the landscape. My interests have taken me on journeys to ski resorts for editorial, commercial, and World Cup Alpine event assignments from Quebec to South America and the Canadian Rockies.

#### **MT: What is the greatest change you've seen?**

JL: The most important change to producing imagery, still and motion, is the incorporation of AI into editing software that creators use. This technology has enabled boundless workflow efficiencies. However, it has also given rise to misuse allowing the creation of “fake” visuals and scenarios misleading content users.

#### **MT: And life now?**

JL: Being “retired” for more than a decade, I've enjoyed setting my own agenda in terms of image making and enjoying outdoor endeavors. I still regularly contribute to publications and complete requests from former commercial clients, some dating back to my early years at Killington. During the ski season, I produce event video for the weekly “World Cup Wednesday” ski bum races. Life Is Good.

#### **MT: Any special influences or mentors?**

JL: In 1971, I came across a book titled “The Creation” by photographer Ernst Haas. It really opened up my mind's eye as to what is possible in landscape and nature imagery, from the grand scale to the intimate. The color and content were exquisite.

Bob Perry's work, with his placing skiers within a landscape background, inspired my focus on ski photography. I was also impressed by Alois Mayer's landscape images, ski racing action by Hubert Schriebl of Stratton, and David

LeBlond → 7

# Buckle up, the road is going to be bumpy...

Secretary of Education Zoie Saunders and Tax Commissioner Craig Bolio shared an overview of the administration's proposal for reforming Vermont's education system with the Legislature. While many questions remain regarding the details, it is safe to say the plan represents the most significant change to education governance and finance in decades.



By Rep. Jim Harrison

There will undoubtedly be a wide divergence of opinions among various stakeholders on various aspects of the reforms. Belt in!

Some elements of the plan include:

- Reduce approximately 120 school districts to just five.
- One elected school board for each of the five districts, but with the addition of new local advisory councils.
- A change to a foundation formula where every district receives the

same funding per student adjusted for certain items such as non-English learners.

- A single statewide education property tax rate for homestead and non-homestead property.
- Income-eligible homesteads can file to exempt a portion of their home value from the statewide education property tax.
- Communities may choose to raise limited additional funds, and a state guarantee would equalize each district's ability to raise revenue up to a capped amount.
- Strengthen state oversight to ensure quality education and efficient use of resources.
- Define average school and class size minimums and maximums.
- Standardize graduation requirements for all districts.

There are many more questions than answers at this point. However, there appears to be a growing acknowledgment inside the State House that although changes will not  
Harrison → 9

# Fast start to the session

Vermont's 2025 legislative session is off to a very fast start. This is due in large measure to the clear message Vermonters sent all legislators through the 2024 campaign and the election in November.

Seldom have I experienced the Legislature so unified in its top priorities: tackling education financing, affordability of life in Vermont, building more housing of all varieties, health care costs, continuing to reduce climate change and building resiliency, and our homelessness crisis. There are many other issues the Legislature will address, but these top priorities have enabled us to focus quickly.



By Sen. Alison Clarkson

Another issue that has bubbled up as a growing concern is the challenges Vermont will face with the new administration in Washington, D.C. From maintaining food production to financing transportation and other infrastructure projects to the federally funded environmental clean-up and workforce development — so many aspects of the

work we rely on are funded by our federal partners. We are actively exploring ways to protect Vermont and Vermonters from losing federal funding and the intrusion of changing federal values on our agricultural workforce and other vulnerable Vermonters.

I am excited by my new appointment as chair of Senate Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs (SEDHGA) for this biennium. Having served on this committee for eight years as vice-chair, stepping into a new role is a pleasure. This committee's jurisdiction is broad and well-suited to the legislative interests of our Windsor District. It has jurisdiction over all issues relating to housing, economic development, labor, workforce development, liquor and lottery, cannabis, and consumer protection.

Given the loss of the federal ARPA money, which has funded over \$600 million in new housing projects over the last four years, and the need for Vermont to build thousands more units of housing - we'll be looking to identify an additional dedicated funding source for housing. We'll be exploring the cost drivers of building new housing and creative, cost-effective off-site construction opportunities. The key to reducing homelessness is creating as much  
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## LeBlond: from page 6

Brownell for his lifestyle imagery.

**MT: Any memorable moments?**

JL: One of my most memorable times was being immersed in a landscape totally devoid of trees at the Las Lenas ski resort in the Argentine Andes. It brought a new take on the meaning of sense of scale. As a photographer from the northern hemisphere, it took time to adjust to viewing sunrises and sunsets in opposing directions.

A more recent memorable venture was experiencing the wilderness of Olympic National Park, and visiting my daughter in Bellingham, Washington. More than one visit will be needed to grasp Olympic's enormity and diversification.

**MT: Insights on the artistic life?**

JL: It's been stated countless times: As an artist you find what stirs your soul, then explore, visualize, and capture it. This is what the niche of ski and resort photography has enabled me to do. My goal has always been to produce imagery that captured an excitement or mood, whether grand or intimate, in a chosen subject.

**MT: What's your take on the mountain lifestyle?**

JL: When I first settled in Killington, I knew I was "home." It just seemed familiar. The surrounding landscape offered so much. I could ski, hike, canoe and sailboard. And the coast of Maine (sea water is in my blood) is only a few hours away. I take advantage of that on an annual basis.

**MT: What would you tell someone who wanted to move here?**

JL: Since the Covid pandemic, Vermont has seen a rise of individuals and families moving to the state. Most, if not all, had careers and employment that would allow them to work remotely and succeed. Since then, there's been an increasing need for trade industries personnel. Those already qualified or interested in a trades profession, and already enjoy participating in outdoor activities, would find the Killington area a welcoming location.

# State economists tout strong economy but warn of uncertainty under Trump

By Shaun Robinson/VTDigger

Vermont's economy, and the country's as a whole, is in "exceptional" shape, the state's economists told a panel of top fiscal lawmakers Wednesday, Jan. 22 — but cautioned their outlook was tempered by uncertainty over the actions President Donald Trump has pledged to take, or already taken, early on in his second term.

The body of legislative committee chairs and Gov. Phil Scott, known as the state's Emergency Board, heard the economists' latest state revenue forecast Wednesday morning. It's a semiannual affair that provides the lay of the land for the state budget building process and the myriad of policy debates that feed into that process.

Overall, state revenues were slightly higher — by about 4% — over the first half of the 2025 fiscal year, which started in July 2024 and ends in June 2025, than the economists previously

predicted. Vermont's chief operating fund, its general fund, has brought in about 6% more than last year's projections anticipated, the state economists said.

But looking somewhat longer term, Tom Kavet, economist for the Legisla-

ture, and Jeff Carr, economist for the state's Agency of Administration, said they're concerned about the possibility of increased inflation as a result of several of Trump's proposals and recent executive actions, including pro-

posed tariffs on U.S. trading partners including Canada and Mexico, and major new restrictions on immigration, among others.

"Some of the proposed economic policies of the incoming administration

State of economy → 9



By Jeb Wallace-Brodeur/VTDigger  
Economists Tom Kavet and Jeff Carr update fiscal forecasts for the Emergency Board at the Statehouse in Montpelier on Wednesday, Jan. 22.

# Pieciak announces plan to eliminate \$100m in medical debt

The proposal would also remove medical debt from Vermonter's consumer credit reports

Last Tuesday, Jan. 21, Treasurer Mike Pieciak, Senator Ginny Lyons, and Representative Alyssa Black announced a proposal to provide medical debt relief to thousands of Vermonters. The proposal would eliminate up to \$100 million in medical debt for a one-time investment of \$1 million. Further, the proposal would protect Vermonters' credit scores by eliminating the reporting of medical debt to credit agencies.

As the cost of health care grows in Vermont, more and more Vermonters are at risk of accumulating medical debt. Current-

ly, an estimated 62,000 Vermonters hold medical debt, over 1 in 10 adults.

"Medical debt is impacting working families all across Vermont, and it is holding them back from achieving financial security," Treasurer Pieciak said. "This proposal is a commonsense way to eliminate tens of millions in outstanding medical debt at very low cost. In doing so, we are directly investing in Vermonters, reducing their costs, and making Vermont more affordable for them."

The chairs of the House and Senate Medical debt → 12

Currently, an estimated 62,000 Vermonters hold medical debt, over 1 in 10 adults.

Treasurer Pieciak said. "This proposal is a commonsense way to eliminate tens of millions in

# New effort to cap Vt hospital executive pay is underway

On Thursday, Jan. 23, a coalition of Vermont state legislators and healthcare workers, in partnership with the office of Senator Bernie Sanders, unveiled a bill that would task the Green Mountain Care Board with moving healthcare resources to the front lines of patient care amidst a deepening healthcare crisis.

The bill, which was introduced on Friday in the Senate, would cap hospital executive and clinical leadership compensation to no more than 10 times that of the lowest-paid patient-facing staff. It would also require that the ratio of hospital administrative to clinical expenses is in-line with national averages.

"Who is constantly asked to sacrifice amidst Vermont's healthcare crisis?" asked Senator Tanya Vyhovsky, lead sponsor of

"UVM Health Network is paying almost half a million dollar bonuses to the CEO while cutting patient services from essential healthcare services," said Nicole DiVita.

the bill in the Senate. "So far, it has been patients and Vermont healthcare workers who have faced high insurance rates and medical debt, alongside service cuts, clo-

Hospital pay → 14

# Vt legislators introduce bipartisan bill to phase out tax on Social Security benefits

Vermont legislators are calling for support on a bill that seeks to exempt Social Security benefits from state income tax, a move aimed at easing financial burdens for retirees while aligning Vermont with most other states. This proposed legislation, H.74, has over 60 co-sponsors from across all parties and from all corners of the state.

Currently, Vermont is one of only nine states that still tax Social Security benefits. With neighboring states and others across the country phasing out these taxes, this bill proposes a gradual approach to eliminating Vermont's tax on Social Security income over an eight-year period. The bill was introduced by Rep. Daniel Noyes (D-Wolcott) and Jim Harrison (R-Chittenden).

"Most states have recognized the financial challenges faced by retirees and have exempted Social Security benefits from taxation," said Rep. Noyes. "This bill is about giving older Vermont's the same relief already available in most parts of the country."

The proposed phase-out plan begins in 2026 by increasing the income exemption thresholds by \$15,000 for single filers and married couples. Additional increases of \$12,000 and \$10,000 annually will follow in subsequent years, eventually leading to the full exemption of Social Security benefits by 2034.

Under the current system, Vermont exempts Social Security income for individuals earning under \$50,000 and married couples earning under \$65,000 annually. The proposed changes would progressively expand these thresholds, reducing the tax burden for middle-income retirees.

"With so many Americans struggling to afford health care and other basic needs, the promise of hard-earned Social Security is even more important," said Colin Hilliard, advocacy director of AARP Vermont. "AARP Vermont urges the legislature to act now on Social Security tax relief that will help support Vermont's retirees so they can live their retirement years with dignity and independence."

According to AARP, nearly one in four Vermont residents receives Social Security benefits. These payments inject more than \$2.6 billion into the state's economy every year, with \$2 billion paid annually to those receiving retirement benefits and their eligible family members.

While some have expressed concerns about the potential revenue loss, proponents of the repeal believe proper budgeting and a phased implementation make this plan feasible. Lost revenue is projected to be \$5.4 million in the first year and eventually rising to \$56 million after eight years, in current dollars. States like Missouri, Kansas, and Nebraska have already eliminated their Social Security taxes, and West Virginia is set to follow by 2026. This legislation aims to ensure Vermont remains competitive in retaining and attracting retirees.

"We believe this initiative is not only fiscally responsible, but also a necessary step in honoring Vermont's retirees," said Rep. Jim Harrison. "We hope the Ways & Means Committee will prioritize providing relief to older Vermonters as it begins the process of balancing the state's revenue needs."

Nearly one in four Vermont residents receives Social Security benefits.



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By Jeb Wallace-Brodeur/VTDigger  
Economists Tom Kavet, right, and Jeff Carr update fiscal forecasts for the Emergency Board, Jan. 22 at the Statehouse.

← **State of economy:** .....  
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could slow growth starting in (the 2027 fiscal year) and beyond,” the economists wrote in a report to lawmakers, which the emergency board formally adopted on Wednesday. Kavet and Carr added, though, that it’s too early to quantify the outcome of those policies, only noting they expected there could be some negative impact.

Specifically, they wrote, “the overwhelming majority of economists and policy analysts believe” tariffs, put in place under the country’s current economic conditions, “will be at least somewhat inflationary — if they don’t result in some chaos.”

Kavet also suggested that a crackdown on immigration could exacerbate Vermont’s demographic challenges. He said for the first time since 1957, the U.S. Census Bureau has projected that Vermont’s population declined year-over-year in 2024, though he noted it’s possible that estimate could later be revised.

“The only way to move the population needle is through migration,” Kavet said, pointing specifically to people entering the U.S. from other countries.

The economists noted, overall, that “challenges to the current U.S. economic trajectory” were unlikely to completely derail Vermont’s strong economic footing, though could result in slower growth than would likely happen otherwise.

Kavet and Carr also acknowledged that even while top-line metrics pointed to a gangbuster economy, its benefits aren’t shared equally by everyone. For instance, they said the stock market brought big returns for investors in 2024, but many people own no stock and so did not benefit.

One of the state’s other major funds — the transportation fund, which pays for roads, bridges and public transit — is also above targets through the first half of the 2025 fiscal year. Transportation fund revenue is up by about 3%, the economists said, bolstered in part by “pent-up demand” for new cars and trucks that led to higher-than-expected vehicle purchase and use tax receipts.

Meanwhile, revenue coming into the third major fund — the education fund — has been about 2% under the economists’ previous target, they said, due to the “sluggish performance” of the state’s sales and use tax and “subdued performance” of the meals and rooms tax.

Wednesday’s forecast also shows the state brought in less — about \$18 million versus \$23 million — from 2024’s payroll tax to subsidize child care than officials were projecting by last December. It points to possible issues with people’s compliance with paying the tax and with estimations for the number of people who would pay it.

“Actual collections to date have been much lower than expected,” the report states, though adds that efforts are already underway to address those issues.

← **Clarkson:** .....  
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new housing with as much support as we can incentivize.

Throughout this biennium, we’ll be reviewing the appeals process, working on growing the construction workforce, aligning municipal and state permits, further investing in renovating underused and abandoned properties, building more accessory dwelling units, converting commercial properties, and updating our landlord/tenant laws.

We’ll focus on further supporting Vermont’s small businesses, encouraging our innovative entrepreneurs, and exploring how we can increase access to capital for our businesses, which need key additional invest-

A growing concern is the challenges Vermont will face with the new administration in Washington, D.C.

ments to grow. And, as we tackle the cost of living in Vermont, we’ll address both sides of that challenge — costs and revenue/wage growth.

The primary consumer protection issue we’ll be revisiting is protecting Vermonters’ data privacy, but we’ll also take on the “right to repair” and review the top concerns identified by our Consumer Assistance Pro-

gram. I am sure SEDHGA will have several labor issues to address, but I know we’ll have the constitutional amendment, Proposal 3, to review and pass again.

Proposal 3, the “right to organize,” was passed by both the House and the Senate last biennium and must go through the same passage, unchanged, this biennium before it is passed to Vermont voters in November 2026.

*Alison Clarkson is the state senator for the Windsor District. She can be reached at: aclarkson@leg.state.vt.us or by phone at the Statehouse (Tue-Fri) 802-828-2228 or at home (Sat-Mon) 802-457-4627.*

← **Harrison:** .....  
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be easy, we need to move forward with a program to lower overall costs (and resultant property taxes) and improve student outcomes.

Following the Scott administration’s education transformation proposal to the General Assembly, House Speaker Jill Krowinski and Senate President pro tem Phil Baruth issued the following statement: “We thank the governor for bringing forward a proposal to transform Vermont’s public education system, and we look forward to working together throughout the session. The Legislature and the governor are aligned in the belief that we must take on the serious task of transforming our education system so all Vermont kids have the opportunity to thrive.”

It is too early to know what the final plan will look like as the Legislature is sure to make some adjustments, but it appears there is an appetite for some bold and transformative changes this session.

There are many more questions than answers at this point.

**Other issues of interest:**

State economists increased their revenue forecast for the state, indicating their view of a continued strong economy. (See story, page 7).

Governor Scott used his weekly press conference Jan. 22 to propose easing regulations to encourage more housing development throughout the state. He indicated that Vermont needs 41,000 additional rental and owner-occupied units over the next five years.

The proposal to phase out the Vermont tax on Social Security benefits, with Rep. Noyes, D-Wolcott, and I, along with 60 bipartisan co-sponsors, was introduced Friday (H.74). If approved, Vermont would eventually join 41 states that do not tax those benefits. AARP is expressing support for the bill. (See story, page 8).

Sen. Collamore, R-Rutland, introduced S.21, a bill to exempt veteran pensions from the Vermont income tax, with 21 co-sponsors (over half of the Senate). Rep. Bill Canfield, R-Fair Haven, introduced a similar bill in the House with nearly half of the members as co-sponsors.

H.52, a bill to remove the suit provision of Vermont’s Global Warming Solutions Act, was introduced by Rep. Morris, D-Springfield, Rep. Lipsky, I-Stowe, and me. I have always believed that elected officials should be accountable to the voters on this issue and not leave GWSA enforcement to lawyers and the courts. If voters do not believe we are doing enough to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, they can un-elect us and/or the governor every two years.

The House Appropriations Committee is expected to advance the annual mid-year budget adjustment bill in the coming week. One potential sticking point could be the Human Services Committee’s proposal to extend the winter rules for the hotel voucher program, which is currently scheduled to expire on April 1.

On Tuesday, Jan. 28, at 1 p.m. the governor will address a joint session of the House and Senate to deliver his annual budget address, which will outline his plans for the state’s fiscal year, beginning on July 1.

**Other news**

Our thoughts and prayers go out to the families of Border Patrol Agent David Maland and former Vermont Governor Tom Salmon.

Attorney General Charity Clark announced that a bipartisan coalition of states and other parties have reached a \$7.4 billion settlement in principle with members of the Sackler family and their company, Purdue Pharma, Inc., for their role in creating the opioid crisis. Vermont’s share, which will be set aside for drug addiction treatment, is expected to total \$22 million.

Treasurer Mike Pieciak has proposed a plan to eliminate \$100 million of medical debt with a payment of \$1 million, which he suggests coming out of state funds previously appropriated to pay down Vermont bonds. He also recommends removing adverse information resulting from the medical debt from a consumer credit report. The proposal needs legislative approval. (See story, page 8).

Mendon Town Clerk Jesse Bridge was appointed to the Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas’s town clerk advisory committee. The group will meet monthly to discuss and address the interests of Vermont’s town clerks, who play an essential role in the functioning of Vermont’s municipalities.

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



Submitted  
The gold dome of the state capitol building shines in Montpelier.

## GUEST EDITORIAL

## Meeting the moment to build more housing

By Lindsay Kurrie

*Editor's note: Lindsay Kurrie is the secretary of the Vermont Agency of Commerce and Community Development.*

This is a pivotal moment in the history of Vermont that will determine our future. It's imperative we all realize that housing is the foundation of how we will meet this moment to create the momentum that will reverse our demographic decline. Housing will bring more working-age people here and help fill our schools with kids. More housing will improve public safety outcomes. Housing will give the most vulnerable Vermonters a chance to access and achieve stable rental or homeownership options. Turning the tide on housing will grow municipal grand lists, increase the tax base, and ease the property tax obligation we share by spreading it out over more properties. As Governor Scott repeatedly says, we need more taxpayers, not more taxes. Housing can unlock so much of what will make Vermont a vibrant place, not only for us but for our children and their children. This is the moment we find ourselves in.

And here's the thing— We can accomplish the goal of adding more housing without losing the Vermont we love.

Governor Scott recently said, "...we don't want houses to litter our mountainsides or development that replaces our farmland." What we DO want is to improve the current system to make it easier and faster to build and rehab houses, condominiums, and apartments where we want them.

Adding more housing requires all of us to be engaged advocates for growth. For too long, we have allowed the voices of opposition to dominate our local discourse on housing. We need Vermonters to loudly and publicly advocate for progress. Preserving Vermont's beauty does not mean placing our state in a time capsule, freezing potential progress with our nostalgia. We cannot create starter homes, residences designed for aging in place, and homes for our kids and grandkids unless we embrace building in our communities.

We need more places to rent and buy in every corner of Vermont at every price point. To learn more about the scale of the issue, I encourage you to look at the Statewide and Regional Housing Target report released on Jan. 14. Look up what the recommendations mean for your community. Then, see the building that has been happening in your community over the last few years via the new Housing Development Dashboard. The picture is stark, and every region can do more.

We recently unveiled our proposal and will begin working with lawmakers on our Omnibus Housing Bill in the coming days, which contains policies intended to preserve Vermont's beauty and natural resources while bringing more housing online. We can't fix this problem overnight, and we can't buy our way out of it by asking taxpayers to fund all new housing. The bill calls for, among other things, further appeals reform to expedite cases, shift the cost of permit appeals to the appellant, and raise the standard for petition appeals which are widely viewed as a mechanism for preventing the construction of new homes. We want to add tools to help small communities that don't have the capacity to manage development projects so that they can expand their grand lists and welcome new people to town. We also want to remove barriers to adding homes to areas already served by public water and wastewater.

I am optimistic despite the immense housing challenge we face. Legislative leaders are now embracing the need for more housing and the integral role housing plays in affordability. I look forward to working with them to increase housing options for all Vermonters.

I am also hopeful that Vermonters will embrace this mission. Affordability cannot be achieved for all of us until we build more homes. The stakes are high, but so is the opportunity to shape Vermont's future.



Modern Groundhog by Dave Whamond, Canada, PoliticalCartoons

## LETTERS

## Unaffordable Housing I: Rent-fixing

Dear Editor,

Back in February 2024, Vermont Sen. Peter Welch (D-Vt.) and Sen. Ron Wyden (D-Ore.) introduced a bill, "Preventing Algorithmic Facilitation of Rental Housing Cartels." What does the bill's name translate to in plain English? Rent-fixing.

In a press release dated Aug. 23, 2024, the U.S. Dept. of Justice (DOJ) announced it, along with seven attorneys general, was filing a civil antitrust complaint alleging price-fixing within the residential real estate industry to keep rents artificially high across states and regions. The announcement followed two years of investigation after a post by Pro Publica Oct. 15, 2022 alleged that software developer RealPage had developed an algorithm tool to price rents uniformly and had been selling it to rental management companies and landlords. Normally rents would vary depending on local economies.

On Jan. 7, 2025, DOJ filed an amended complaint against six major landlords, who control at least 1.3 million rental units throughout 43 states and the District of

Columbia, for sharing the algorithm, which uses competitors' data, to set rents.

Right away the bill was strenuously challenged by the real estate industry, which argued that merely purchasing a service that posts rents based on an algorithm, even if thousands of property managers purchase it, is not price-fixing in the FTC definition.

However, the algorithm is not nearly as objective at setting rental rates. Texas-based RealPage's website claimed that the company "provides property management software, data analytics, and services to efficiently manage rental properties and real estate." But when Pro Publica dug deeper, it found that RealPage in fact gathered rent data from "clients, including private information on what nearby competitors charge."

Pro Publica's inside sources said that the algorithm gets around the "temptation" to negotiate rental rates with tenants. One of the architects of the software, Jeffrey Roper, told Pro Publica, "There's way too much empathy go-

Rent-fixing → 12

## Addressing affordability: Why fossil fuels are not the answer

Dear Editor,

Nearly all Vermonters agree we want living in our state to be more affordable. When it comes to energy, continued dependence on high-cost and price-volatile fossil fuels like gasoline, fuel oil, and propane is not a path to affordability.

In 2023, \$2.2 billion was spent on fossil fuels for transportation and heating in Vermont. The average Vermont household spent between \$5,000-\$8,000 on combined transportation, heating, and electricity costs (and that's just for fuel, not including equipment or maintenance costs), with the highest amounts spent on gasoline, fuel oil, and propane.

If we want to lower Vermont's energy bill and help more Vermonters — especially lower- and middle-income Vermonters — achieve energy affordability, then we need to do more to support access to modern, efficient equipment that can provide

savings year after year by using lower-cost, more price-stable energy.

Modern electric technology — including electric vehicles, heat pumps, and heat pump water heaters — is far more energy efficient than fossil fuel equipment. Using less energy to accomplish the same tasks opens up significant opportunities to save on energy costs.

Gas and diesel engines are terribly inefficient. Gas and diesel engines are terribly inefficient. Only about 16-25% of the energy from gasoline in an internal combustion vehicle actually ends up being delivered to the wheels and moving the vehicle. The vast majority of the energy from burning gasoline is lost in the form of heat and other engine losses. This inefficiency translates to both wasted energy and wasted money.

In contrast, in an electric vehicle (or EV), about 87% - 91% of the energy used ends up being delivered to the wheels, which is about three

Affordability → 12

## CAPITOL QUOTES

On Monday, Jan. 27, President Trump issued an executive order calling for a freeze on nearly all federal assistance to go into effect by 5 p.m. Tuesday, Jan. 28. The order, which did not include Medicare or Social Security benefits, would likely impact aid to nonprofits, universities, small business loans, and state and local government grants.

**“This order is a potential five-alarm fire for nonprofit organizations and the people and communities they serve ... From pausing research on cures for childhood cancer to closing homeless shelters, halting food assistance, reducing safety from domestic violence, and shutting down suicide hotlines, the impact of even a short pause in funding could be devastating and cost lives,”**

said **Diane Yentel**, the president and CEO of the National Council of Nonprofits.

**“Congress approved these investments and they are not optional; they are the law,”**

said Senate Minority Leader **Chuck Schumer** in a response to the order.

**“Overnight, the Trump Administration shut down Alliance programs for Afghans in Vermont by blocking access to the federal Payment Management System and thereby preventing the Alliance from accessing obligated federal funds. This morning, the Alliance is left to fend for itself and the Afghan community is again abandoned despite their commitment to the State of Vermont and this country,”**

said **Molly Gray** of the Vermont Afghan Alliance in a statement released on Jan. 28.

**“Let’s be clear, nothing about disaster relief or small business loans are ‘woke’ or about ‘social engineering.’ His first weeks in office show us where his priorities lie. Straight out of the Project 2025 playbook, Trump is ripping billions of dollars from our communities, causing chaos and confusion, and leaving folks without the funds they are counting on,”**

said Vermont U.S. Representative **Becca Balint** in a statement released on Tuesday, Jan. 28.

## COMMENTARY

# Parking restrictions

The state of Vermont is in charge of transportation restrictions, with one big exception. The state has empowered local municipalities to regulate parking within their areas of jurisdiction, provided the restrictions are posted.

Brattleboro does not have overnight street parking anywhere in the city, and the streets are littered with signs declaring the restriction.

West Rutland has limited winter parking restrictions on specific streets from Dec. 1 through March 31, but only on those streets that have signs indicating the restriction.

Stowe has a citywide parking ban from Nov. 15 through April 15 and motorists can’t get through the town without seeing multiple signs alerting them to the parking restriction.

The city of Rutland has a winter parking ban that runs from Dec. 1 through March 31 and applies to all city streets. As for the requisite signs, the city is still looking for them.

The interesting thing about winter parking bans is the arbitrary nature of the dates.

Last year, the City of Rutland had eight snow plow days out of 121 restricted days—7%! Ironically, the most significant snow event of the year occurred after the parking restriction was lifted.

Is a global winter parking ban the most effective way to manage the community’s parking needs and the city’s ability to effectively plow when it snows?

Has your community discussed parking bans and their impact on the community, good or bad?

Typically, communities approach the winter season with a meeting of the public safety departments to ensure that all systems are “go” and that all departments are synchronized as the winter weather approaches.

This would be an excellent time for Public Works to verify that all appropriate signage is in place and that the city is qualified to enforce parking restrictions.

Now would also be a great time to discuss the larger issue of efficacy. Is the winter parking ban the best strategy for keeping our streets safe and clear of snow and ice? What is the best time to plow? Is it really overnight, between midnight and 6 a.m.? Is there a more effective way to coordinate the community’s parking and plowing needs?

Some cities conduct an annual review of the snow and ice control plan, attended by the mayor, the Public Works commissioner, and the chief of police. This meeting is a great time to ask tough questions such as “Is this the best plan?” and “Have all of the

requisite signs been posted?”

Complicating the simple parking ban conversation is the fact that it is not so simple.

The city of Rutland’s former planning and zoning administrator wrote to the mayor, the board of alderman chair, the building and zoning administrator, and the chair of the charter and ordinance committee:

“There has been discussion about the city’s on-street parking ban during the winter months. From a planning perspective, this winter ban serves as one obstacle in a sea of many in alleviating the issues surrounding parking and housing in the city. As discussed, a lot of parcels in the city’s denser areas have large housing footprints on small lots with very few places to put off-street parking. These buildings are some of the best stock in the city to convert into additional housing units due to the large amount of building space. The proposed zoning is likely to reduce the barrier that currently exists in creating more housing units in the entire city; however, should parking arrangements continue to be an obstacle, that creation of additional housing units will likely be stunted at best in the denser areas of the city. The elimination of the winter parking ban is a very important issue to be discussed, and is far more reaching than just the planning and zoning department; however, exploring this matter is vitally important as the city seeks ways to solve the housing and greenbelt-parking issues.”

In the immediate, I contend that municipal authorities must play by the rules. When it comes to winter parking bans, if the restrictions aren’t posted, stop writing tickets, collecting fines, and enforcing the unenforceable. In the larger picture, if we are committed to increasing the amount of safe and healthy housing in our communities, we

Should parking arrangements continue to be an obstacle, that creation of additional housing units will likely be stunted.

have to look for *all* of the obstacles and then get busy looking for ways to overcome or remove them.

If Vermont’s leadership believes that increasing the amount of safe and healthy housing is a priority, and if local leadership echoes this sentiment, why are parking bans taken for granted and not examined for their full community impact?

If you’re looking to go deeper on this topic, check out my conversation with Scott Graves on the “Are We Here Yet?” podcast on Apple Podcasts or at [smgravesassociates.com/podcast/arewehereyet](https://smgravesassociates.com/podcast/arewehereyet).

*Stephen Box is a “Houser” in Rutland County, developing, renovating, and managing residential properties. He can be reached at [VermontHouser@gmail.com](mailto:VermontHouser@gmail.com).*



**The Accidental Activist**  
By Stephen Box

## ← Rent-fixing:

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ing on here. This is one of the reasons we wanted to get the pricing off-site. ... If you have idiots undervaluing, it costs the whole system," he added.

Pro Publica also learned that, rather than agree on a rent the tenant can actually meet, RealPage encourages landlords to keep a unit unrented.

This finding led Pro Publica to the startling discovery that, counterintuitively, in the high-stakes residential rental real estate world, rental vacancies are desirable. One CEO said, "The net effect of driving revenue and pushing people out was \$10 million in income. ... I think that shows keeping the heads in the beds above all else is not always the best strategy."

Why is all this important? Because of the way artificially manipulating rental rates can influence not only open market rates but also how much the federal government will pay landlords for units that qualify for Section 8 housing. The result is what HUD calls "Fair Market Rent," which it defines as "an estimate of the amount of money that would cover gross rents (rent and utility expenses) on 40 percent of the rental housing units in an area."

This means that the tail is wagging the dog: the only true source of rent data is the rents that are actually charged by landlords, through their property managers. ... and now, analytics.

*Julia Purdy, Rutland*

## ← Affordability:

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to five times more efficient. Put another way, the same amount of energy that it takes to move a gas vehicle 100 miles can move an EV about 350-550 miles.

Electricity prices are also much more stable than fossil fuels. For example, the current average price of gasoline in Vermont is about \$3.12/gallon — but it was as high as \$5.05/gallon as recently as June of 2022. In contrast, the average price per gallon equivalent to charge an EV has held steady between \$1.60 to \$1.71 a gallon over the last two years, with far lower prices available for those drivers who sign up for EV rates that may be offered by their utility (currently \$1.20/

gallon-equivalent with GMP and \$0.94/ gallon-equivalent with BED). The lower cost of EV charging versus gasoline enables significant fuel cost savings, month in and month out.

There are also maintenance savings that come with EVs, by virtue of having fewer moving parts. This includes no oil changes, no fuel filter, spark plug, or timing belt replacements, and no engine or transmission to repair. Add it all up, and EVs are far more affordable to run and maintain than buying a new or used gas car, with average savings on fuel and maintenance from an EV totaling about \$9,500 over the life of the vehicle. Or consider water heating.

Even without any incentives, over its life, an electric heat pump water heater is estimated to cost \$3,000 less than a propane water heater. Again, the savings come from a combination of using more efficient equipment (heat pump water heaters are about four times more efficient than propane water heaters) and the lower cost of electricity compared to high-cost and price-volatile propane. Heat pump technology is able to provide heat so much more efficiently because it uses energy to transfer rather than generate heat.

These savings are something I know about, not just from data and research but from personal experience.

Years ago, I took out loans to make investments to end fossil fuel use for my home heating and vehicle in favor of more energy-efficient and cost-saving technologies, including weatherization, a wood pellet stove, a heat pump water heater, and an electric vehicle. As a result, I have saved thousands of dollars per year.

Continuing to leave Vermonters exposed to and dependent on high-cost, price-volatile fossil fuels is not an affordability strategy. What is, is helping more Vermonters transition to more efficient energy options that can deliver significant and durable cost savings year after year

*Jared Duval, Montpelier*

## ← Medical debt:

from page 8

health care committees are serving as the lead legislative sponsors for the proposal. Senator Lyons, Chair of the Senate Health and Welfare Committee, discussed the financial benefits of the proposal.

"Eliminating medical debt provides freedom from the stress and anxiety of high health care costs," she said. "The proposal will limit the impact of overwhelming medical bills, giving people opportunities to buy homes, save for the future, and support their families. I'm proud to partner with Treasurer Pieciak to make this proposal a reality."

Representative Alyssa Black, chair of the House Health Care Committee, highlighted the benefits the proposal would have on Vermonter's credit reports.

"Medical debt doesn't reflect someone's financial responsibility. It's a reflection of the gaps in our health care system," she said. "By removing it from credit reports, we're giving people a chance to rebuild their lives without medical debt holding them back."

### Overview of the proposal

Under the proposal, the Treasurer's Office would partner with a nonprofit organization to eliminate up to \$100 million of Vermonters' medical debt at a cost of just \$1 million. Vermonters would be eligible for debt relief if they (1) have debts in "terminal bad debt status" and (2) are in a household at or below 400% of the Federal Poverty Level (currently, \$60,240 for a single person and \$124,800 for a family of four) or owe medical debt equal to or exceeding 5% of household income.

The nonprofit would negotiate with health care providers across the state to purchase the medical debt of eligible individuals. They will then abolish the debt at no cost to the individual and any adverse information resulting from the medical debt is removed from a consumer credit report by the health care provider.

The program is automatic for those whose medical debt is purchased. There is no need to apply—no forms, no hassle. The nonprofit will take on the administrative work of negotiating with providers and informing eligible debtors that their debt has been forgiven. There is no need for additional state positions to implement the proposal.

There is also no need for increased spending, taxes, or fees to implement the proposal. Treasurer Pieciak is proposing to use a portion of funds previously appropriated

to his office to buy down outstanding state bonds for the proposal.

The Treasurer's proposal would also protect individuals' credit scores by preventing health care providers and hospitals from reporting medical debt to credit agencies. Improving Vermonters' credit scores will make it more affordable to buy a car, find housing, or hold consumer debt.

Unlike other consumer debt, consumers often have no idea of the cost of medical care before they receive it, and the consumer often has no choice as to whether to incur the cost.

Medical debt is a unique form of consumer debt. Unlike other consumer debt, consumers often have no idea of the cost of medical care before they receive it, and the consumer often has no choice as to whether to incur the cost. Because of this, medical debt is not a good indicator of someone's financial responsibility.

And medical debt is not just a financial issue—it's a public health issue. Medical debt is linked to stress and anxiety, which can lead to higher risks of health issues.

Moreover, too many Vermonters avoid necessary care because they fear the bills that will follow. The Vermont Dept. of Health's 2021 Vermont Household Health Insurance Survey found that a fear of medical debt impacted the health care decisions of 85,000 Vermonters. Relieving the burden of medical debt will help people focus on making the best decisions for their health.

### Reaction from stakeholders

Treasurer Pieciak was joined at the press conference by a number of important stakeholders, including Rhode Island State Treasurer James Diossa, who is implementing a similar relief program.

"Whether it be in Rhode Island, Vermont, or any other state in the union, no one chooses to go into medical debt," Treasurer Diossa said. "Building a healthier future means addressing this burden that weighs heavily on families across our states. By investing in targeted relief programs,

Treasurer Pieciak and Vermont are not only alleviating financial strain but creating a landscape where access to care doesn't lead to financial hardship."

Michael Del Trecco, president & CEO of the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, also joined the Treasurer to speak on behalf of Vermont's hospitals in support of the proposal.

"We're proud to be working with the Treasurer to bring this important relief to patients across the state," he said. "This proposal will help Vermonters get the care they need and improve the health of our communities."

Treasurer Pieciak was also joined by the Chief Health Care Advocate and the president of UVMHC Support Staff United, who both spoke in favor of the proposal.

"Relieving the burden of medical debt will help people focus on their health, not their bank accounts," said Chief Health Care Advocate Mike Fisher. "This means more people getting care at the right time, leading to better health outcomes for individuals."

"Our members wake up every day to care for Vermonters, often while carrying medical debt of their own," said Heather Bauman, president of UVMHC Support Staff United. "We know that this proposal will be life-changing for working families across the state."

Kathryn Van Haste, state director at the office of Senator Bernie Sanders, also spoke on the Senator's work to address medical debt at the federal level through his introduction of the Medical Debt Cancellation Act as Ranking Member of the Health, Education, Labor and Pensions Committee.

"Senator Sanders knows that medical debt is a symptom of a broken health care system. He introduced the Medical Debt Cancellation Act to eliminate debt at the federal level because no one should go bankrupt, be unable to buy a house or go to college, or delay seeking care because of medical costs. Senator Sanders commends Treasurer Pieciak for taking this important step to help Vermonters as he works to pass this legislation to help all Americans."

Treasurer Pieciak concluded the announcement by emphasizing the importance of reducing the cost of health care for all Vermonters. "This is a step forward, but there remains a lot of work to make health care in Vermont more affordable, so fewer people fall into the grip of medical debt to begin with," Pieciak said.

## ← Harassment:

from page 1

the school by the student or their parents,” she wrote.

Sousa did not respond to follow-up questions.

### ‘White misconceptions’

As a white woman advocating for her Black son, Jaya Holliman said she has seen how living in Vermont is hard for people of color. “I know that the blowback is always on the people trying to change the system or that have been harmed so profoundly by the system,” she said.

That is why she chose Woodstock, the town where she grew up, for her son to return to school in the fall of 2021.

Born in Rwanda and adopted as a baby, her son had been homeschooled after the pandemic disrupted his education.

They were living in a small town in Rutland County that allows school choice. “We chose to leave specifically because of school opportunities and because of what we anticipated to be a lack of racial fluency and literacy in the district where we live,” Holliman said.

The Woodstock school is overwhelmingly white — last year, it had one American Indian or Alaska Native, two Native Hawaiian or Pacific Islanders, two Asian, five Black, 11 Hispanic, and more than 400 white students enrolled, according to data from the National Center for Education Statistics. Even so, a conversation with Sousa left Holliman impressed by the school’s equity and diversity efforts, and she decided it would be a good place for her son to attend middle school. [The student is not named as he is a minor and a victim of harassment.]

Problems surfaced on his second day in 7th grade when school officials told Holliman that another student had called her son the N-word on the bus. After investigating, Principal Garon Smail concluded the comment, if made at all, hadn’t been directed at Holliman’s son.

According to the Human Rights Commission’s investigation, Holliman’s son knew nothing about the incident until he was pulled aside at lunch and told about it by a teacher checking up on him. The experience left him “shocked and confused,” he said in an interview with the investigator.

Holliman told school officials she was concerned that informing him about something he hadn’t heard firsthand had caused unnecessary harm.

According to the commission’s investigation, in an email to Holliman, Sousa wrote that she appreciated Holliman’s willingness to engage, “exposing for us our white misconceptions and asking us the hard questions that will allow us to become antiracist educators and leaders.”

That first investigation involved multiple educators meeting, a review of the district’s harassment policy with the staff and Smail discussing with Holliman’s son the harm the student experienced, according to the report.

But the relationship between Holliman and school officials would grow increasingly strained as her son became the victim of repeated acts of racism in months that followed.

### ‘Failure to respond’

In the complaint she ultimately filed with the Human Rights Commission, Holliman claimed the school and the district discriminated against her son and “failed to adequately prevent, investigate, and respond to instances of harassment and bullying.” Holliman described six incidents of racism her son faced while in school that year. Racial harassment and bullying pertaining to her son’s race, skin color, and national origin continued between December 2021 and March 2022, she wrote.

“Starting around December, students made comments to [Holliman’s son] about his race almost every day,” the report states. “Students talked about how his clothing was made of cotton. They said he must be good at basketball because he is Black. They said he liked fried chicken because of his genes.

They related his foot speed to runaway slaves. Many of the comments happened in the hallway or during lunch.”

After sending a student to lunch detention for a week, Smail sent letters notifying parents about the harassment and his investigation that December. The same student made a gun gesture at Holliman’s son and was sent out of class for 15-20 minutes, the report notes. But the student’s behavior toward him did not change, Holliman’s son reported. Instead, the student repeatedly started to say the first syllable of the N-word to him, according to the report.

On March 21 and March 22, 2022, Holliman wrote to Sousa and Smail, reporting that her son “was being harassed with ‘jokes’ about his race nearly daily in the hall” and asked for a safety plan to be put in place, according to the report.

“I was so overwhelmed with all the comments and... constant, day-to-day harassment that I didn’t know how to feel,” her son told the investigator. “I had to shut down.”

On March 30, Holliman wrote to say her son would not return to school without a safety plan. According to the investigation, on April 4, the district emailed Holliman a finalized copy of that plan, which stated that her son “will not be in classes, advisory, lunch, or clubs with students found to have engaged in harassment.”

“The three students who had made race-based comments or sent race-based memes to [Holliman’s son] participated in a restorative circle,” according to the investigation.

But Holliman’s son told the commission investigator that a week after the plan had been implemented, it was no longer enforced, and the offending students were no longer kept separate from him at lunch.

On May 3, in a science class that was discussing human evolution and race and racism, a student equated Holliman’s son’s head to a chimpanzee’s skull, according to the complaint Holliman filed.

Smail stated he and a teacher had already addressed the “ignorant and offensive comment.” While he wished things were different, he wrote, “I know that it is likely that students will make more statements of this nature during the unit.” He would be reaching out to a consultant “to discuss ways to approach these challenges safely and respectfully,” he added.

Holliman said the incident still leaves her stunned. “At the height of very concerning, escalating and ongoing harassment, while he was still sitting alone in the library receiving no educational instruction [the alternative plan to being in the science class], not one adult in the building — educator, therapist, staff — no one came to check on him,” she said.

Smail, who is currently director of curriculum at the Windham Southwest Supervisory Union, declined to comment.

### A unanimous verdict

In January 2024, the Human Rights Commission’s investigator concluded the student did face unwelcome racial harassment, that the severe and pervasive conduct “substantially and adversely” affected his access to education, and that he and his family had exhausted their administrative remedies.

By failing to follow the process laid out by the state’s Title 16, the district’s own hazing, harassment, and bullying policy, and the safety plan implemented in April, the supervisory union and the school district, the investigation concluded, “failed to take prompt and appropriate remedial action reasonably calculated to stop the unwanted conduct [the student] experienced related to race, color, and national origin.”

The report noted that while school officials “took action including warning and educating students” after verifying certain instances of harassment, “statements from Principal Smail and Superintendent Sousa support that the school knew the actions they had taken were ineffective in stopping the harassment”



By Glenn Russell/VTDigger

Jaya Holliman embraced her son at their home in Rutland County on Saturday, Jan. 18.

In a 4-0 vote, the commission found reasonable grounds to believe the school and the district had “illegally discriminated” against Holliman and her son in violation of Vermont’s Fair Housing and Public Accommodations Act.

In addition to the financial settlement, the supervisory union agreed on a series of training sessions aimed at preventing future incidents of hazing, harassment, and bullying within the school system. “And we have already seen from that initial round of training that there are too many staff members who don’t realize what their duties are,” Hartman said.

In her December email, Sousa wrote, “While we may not agree with the HRC’s findings, and in large part, reject their findings, we agree that as educational leaders, work remains to be done to combat racism in our schools and community.” The district, she continued, “is committed to continuing our anti-racism work, to do our part in addressing the harm that results from the sometimes insensitive and inappropriate remarks of children.”

For the Hollimans, the settlement is a bittersweet victory.

The experience at Woodstock Union has changed her son, Holliman said. He is withdrawn and does not trust adults outside the family. “They say your skin thickens, but not really with trauma, right? It just makes it so that it’s like an open wound. So he doesn’t have the same stamina for racial incidents that he had in Woodstock,” she said.

In an interview, the now 16-year-old said he thought the teachers who saw or heard about what had happened chose not to get involved. He spoke contemplatively about how he thought they failed in their job of protecting him. “They just willingly didn’t step up to the challenge and didn’t live up to their duties as a teacher. Honestly, I implore them to rethink their career decisions,” he said.

The student has since moved to a private high school, where he is finishing 10th grade.

### Other incidents

It’s not the only time the district has settled a case alleging it failed to stop harassment on school grounds. Last year, it also signed a \$100,000 settlement with no admission of wrongdoing in a civil lawsuit filed over claims of another student being harassed for at least four years based on sexual orientation and gender conformance.

Mia Schultz, president of the Rutland Area National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, said she sees too many cases of what she calls “racial violence” in Vermont schools. It’s not about one Black kid in a class; it’s about preparing all children for a world in which the global majority is black and brown people, Schultz said.

“When you move outside of Vermont, you’re going to experience different people of color, different religions, different cultures,” Schultz said. “And if you’re so isolated and don’t learn how to navigate and understand other people, then you become fearful, and it just leads to detriment for even white kids.”

← **RRPC:**  
from page 1

to design and implement projects that restore and protect Vermont's water bodies from nutrient and sediment pollution. Funding priorities include alignment with tactical basin planning, pollution reduction potential, and project readiness.

- **Municipal outreach:** Identify towns interested in developing water infrastructure sponsorship program projects and provide initial coordination to advance project development.
- **Regional water quality planning:** Enhance regional planning with a focus on climate change, flood resilience, and environmental justice. Assess access to water quality programs, identify obstacles for disadvantaged communities, and coordinate high-priority resilience projects. Activities may also include developing sub-watershed resilience plans, updating municipal infrastructure priorities through FEMA mapping outreach, and engaging communities to document flood damage and infrastructure concerns.

"The RRPC is proud to continue playing a key role in supporting statewide water quality planning through the 604(b) Water Quality Management Planning Grant Program," said Devon Neary, RRPC executive director. "The 604(b) Program enables

"This ongoing effort is essential to safeguarding Vermont's surface waters, which are critical for protecting natural resources, bolstering our economy, and building resilience in our communities," said Neary.

Vermont's Regional Planning Commissions to collaboratively advance tactical basin planning services. This ongoing effort is essential to safeguarding Vermont's surface waters, which are critical for protecting natural resources, bolstering our economy, and building resilience in our communities."

As part of this initiative, RRPC will solicit water quality planning work plans from partner RPCs and administer sub-awards for eligible projects. Work under this contract is expected to be completed by Nov. 30, 2025.

For more information, visit: [rutlandrpc.org](http://rutlandrpc.org).

← **Hospital pay:**  
from page 8

asures, and declining health outcomes. This bill moves our healthcare resources to the front lines of the crisis by eliminating unnecessary spending in the system."

"We cannot keep cutting from the most vulnerable or from those providing services," said Nicole DiVita, co-president of AFT Vermont and VP for Technical Professionals of Vermont Federation of Nurses & Health Professionals (VFNHP). "We heard from the 2024 Oliver Wyman report repeatedly that there is excessive administrative spending at UVM Medical Center. UVM Health Network is paying almost half a million dollar bonuses to the CEO while cutting patient services from essential healthcare services."

Representative Mari Cordes said: "As a registered nurse employed at UVM Medical Center for 24 years, and a past president of VFNHP, I have sat across the bargaining table from hospital executives and their labor attorney while they told us that while hospital executives deserved high compensation and benefits to make sure they could recruit qualified leaders, but that the same reasoning didn't apply to front line staff."

"Our healthcare system is not immune from the exponential widening of the inequality gap we are seeing nationwide," said Representative Esme Cole, lead sponsor of a forthcoming sister bill to be introduced in the House of Representatives. "We have become so complicit in these trends, in fact, that when budgets get 'tight,' the suggested remedy is not a cut at the top, but rather in the programs that affect Vermont's most vulnerable, such as our dialysis clinics, or the residential psychiatric unit. This trend will continue to go unchecked if we do not intervene."

According to the most recent publicly available data, there were 113 Vermont hospital executives and clinical leaders making over \$312,000 in total annual compensation — approximately 10 times the annual salary of a starting-wage LNA at a Vermont hospital.

"One thing that I know from my colleagues is that we cannot afford healthcare," said Heather Bauman, co-vice president of AFT Vermont and president of UVM Medical Center Support Staff United. "We cannot afford to access the services that we work so diligently and compassionately to provide every day. We are asking for more equity so that we can afford the services that we provide to the community — and we look forward to the administrators and executives joining us in this struggle in finding more equity in this system that has lots of room to grow equity."

"[UVM Health Network CEO] Sunny Eappen's half million dollar bonus is Vermont patients' money. Giving him that bonus would have paid for three advanced practice nurses to work here," said Deb Snell, president of VFNHP. "What is more important?"

"One of the ways we can change [our healthcare system] is looking at how much we are spending on patient care, and how much we are spending on administrative costs," said Kathryn Van Haste, state director for Senator Bernie Sanders. "By looking at executive pay, it is also an opportunity to get to equity for the people who work at the bedside, who work with patients. We cannot look those workers in the eye and say that their jobs matter less than the person who is moving papers on their desk. We have to acknowledge that there has to be more equity in the system between our executives and our frontline workers."



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M	H	A	N	B	H	S	H	E	K	N	E	N	B	N	K	H	H	Z	H
G	M	G	H	U	U	R	S	N	K	Z	H	A	E	M	E	I	R	H	L
N	L	O	L	G	E	U	D	O	E	O	R	D	O	T	K	P	M	C	E
C	W	B	N	P	A	O	I	A	M	B	M	L	O	A	S	K	G	Z	O
Z	D	T	H	I	U	H	O	U	E	N	H	S	B	G	Z	A	I	M	T
H	I	W	E	N	A	I	E	C	E	O	G	T	G	N	U	L	B	S	U
A	W	Z	P	M	E	R	U	R	E	M	M	I	S	I	E	N	N	T	W
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B	W	L	S	K	Z	M	N	T	T	L	R	E	E	R	O	A	B	H	A
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Z	E	W	E	R	A	P	E	R	P	R	Z	Z	E	H	C	R	S	U	K
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- |          |            |          |        |             |        |
|----------|------------|----------|--------|-------------|--------|
| BARBECUE | CARAMELIZE | MEALS    | REDUCE | SLOW        | TENDER |
| BASTE    | COOKING    | PATIENCE | ROAST  | SMOKE       | TIMING |
| BLANCH   | HOURS      | PREPARE  | SEAR   | STEW        |        |
| BRAISE   | LOW        | RECIPE   | SIMMER | TEMPERATURE |        |

**SUDOKU**

Solutions → 30

**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.

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

Level: Intermediate

**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

Solutions → 30

- CLUES ACROSS**
- Where entertainers perform
  - Miller beer variety
  - Ageless
  - River in SE Europe
  - Able to be repaired
  - Type of wrap
  - Atomic #54
  - Type of tent position
  - Opposed to
  - Protective covering
  - Bridge building degree
  - Clouding of the lens
  - Priestess of Hera loved by Zeus
  - Unacceptable
  - Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
  - American national park
  - One point south of due east
  - Assist in a crime
  - Greek mythological personification of Earth
  - A major division of geological time
  - German courtesy title

- English family dating back to Norman times
  - Discounts
  - South American nation
  - Former Milwaukee Buck Michael
  - Hostile
  - Passports and drivers licenses are two
  - Discourages from doing
- CLUES DOWN**
- Supreme god of ancient Egyptians
  - Nevada city
  - Energy, style and enthusiasm
  - Bird's beak
  - Language
  - Midway between south and southeast
  - Punjab village
  - Small biting flies
  - Sportscaster Patrick
  - A way to get around
  - Repeat
  - A way to cook with fat
  - Temporary loss of consciousness
  - Reciprocal of

			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							

- a sine
- Fir tree genus
- "Transformers" director Michael
- Criminals who steal
- Genus of leaf-footed bug
- Music product
- "Talk to you"
- Santa says it three times
- Doctors' group
- African nation
- Ageless
- When you hope to get somewhere
- Worn
- Deprives of vigor
- Used to have (Scottish)
- Where you live
- Muslim ruler title
- Basics
- Type of drug (abbr.)
- Spanish soldier
- It precedes two
- Illuminated

**GUESS WHO?**

I am a performer born in Indiana on January 29, 1982. I got my start doing local theater while in school. Eventually, I moved to Los Angeles to pursue a musical career. I was an "American Idol" runner-up, and released an album in 2009.

Answer: Adam Lambert

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**WED**  
1/29

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**Winter Naturalist Series: Nordic Ski Adventure**

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Prosper Road Trailhead, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Woodstock. Free. Enjoy cross-country skiing on moderate trails through northern hardwood forests, led by park naturalists. Recommended for intermediate and advanced skiers. Trail passes (\$20-\$35) and rentals available at Woodstock Inn & Resort Nordic Center. nps.gov/mabi.

**Michelob ULTRA Ski Bum Race Series**

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Wednesdays through March 12. Highline ski trail, Killington Resort, Killington. \$60 per individual. Open to skiers, snowboarders, and telemark skiers ages 21+. Compete weekly for Ski Bum glory, followed by après parties with food, drink specials, and prizes from 4-6 p.m. Training course available 10 a.m.-noon. Registration required. killington.com/ski-bum-race-series.

**Active Seniors Lunch**

11:30 a.m. (Wednesdays) The Lookout Tavern, 2910 Killington Road, Killington. \$5 donation towards the meal. 908-783-1050.

**Gentle & Restorative Yoga**

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (Wednesdays) Wise Pines, 184 Hartland Road, Woodstock. \$15 or \$30 for three classes. Yoga class for seniors. wisepines.com/events.

**Diabetes Support Group**

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

**Public Skating**

2-3:40 p.m. Union Arena, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock. Adult \$8, Youth \$6, Seniors \$5, Child under 3 Free, Super Senior (70+) Free. Skate rentals \$7 (figure or ice hockey). unionarena.net.

**Cribbage for Adults**

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

**Public Skate**

3-5 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

**Bone Builders at the Chaffee**

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

**Diabetes Support Group**

5-6 p.m. (Monthly, 2nd Wednesday) Community Health Castleton, 261 Route 30, Castleton. Free. For patients managing diabetes, to discuss challenges, ask questions, and provide support. Contact Michele Redmond at 802-277-5327. chcr.org/diabetes-support-group.

**West Coast Swing Dance**

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

**THURS**  
1/30

**Essentrics Stretch and Strengthen**

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

**Intermediate Line Dance**

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

**Learn to Curl**

10 a.m.-noon. (Tuesdays through Feb. 6) Wendell A. Barwood Arena, 45 Highland Ave., White River Junction. \$50 course fee, \$40 arena fee, \$80 membership fee. Learn the fundamentals of curling led by experienced instructors. Sessions include lectures, demonstrations, and on-ice practice. Equipment provided; participants should wear warm clothing and non-skid shoes. reg130.imperisoft.com/Dartmouth/ProgramDetail/313137363134/Registration.aspx.

**Survivors Support Group**

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

**Bone Builders**

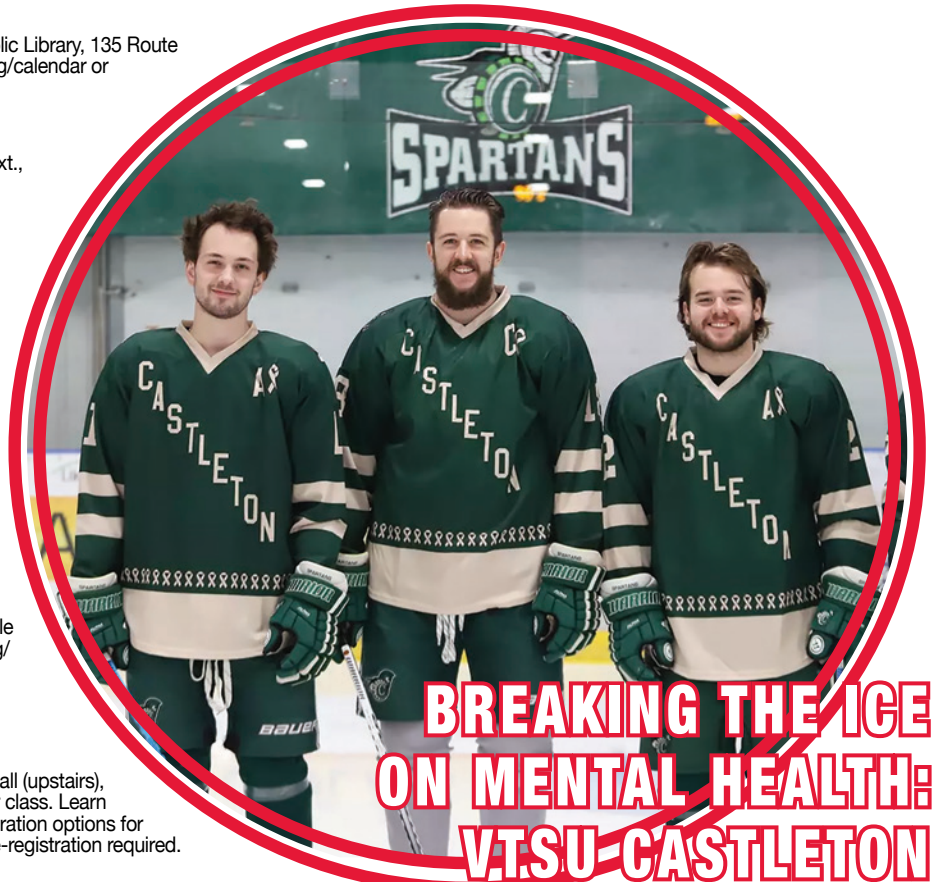
10 a.m. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Weights are provided. sherburnelibrary.org or 802-422-4323.

**Lunchtime Skate**

11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. Discounted admissions and skate rentals. Check site for pricing and details. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

**Information Gathering Session – The Future of the Vermont Farm Show**

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Vermont Farmers Food Center, 251 West St., Rutland. Farmers, agricultural workers, educators, students, and supporters of Vermont's food system are invited to join the Vermont Farm Show Board for an in-person discussion on shaping the future of the Farm Show. This session is part of a statewide effort to gather input on how the event can best serve Vermont's evolving agricultural needs. Snacks provided. vtfarmshow.com.



**BREAKING THE ICE ON MENTAL HEALTH: VTSU-CASTLETON MEN'S HOCKEY**

**FRIDAY @ 7 P.M.**

**LADIES & LASERS NIGHT: NECKLACE MAKING WORKSHOP**

**THURSDAY @ 6 P.M.**



**Chaffee: Artery**

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

**Ukelele Group**

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

**Michelob ULTRA Race World**

1-3 p.m. Thursdays through March 13. Pico Mountain, 73 Alpine Dr., Killington. Refer to website for details. Weekly race series featuring individual and team competitions, followed by after-parties at the Last Run Lounge with food, prizes, and Michelob ULTRA specials. picomountain.com.

**Play Bridge!**

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

**Green Drinks: Home Weatherization with Efficiency Vermont**

5:30-6:30 p.m. Virtual. Free. Learn about Efficiency Vermont's Home Performance with Energy Star program, which offers up to 90% cost reimbursement (up to \$9,500) for home weatherization projects, plus an additional \$15,000 for necessary repairs. sustainablewoodstock.org/event/green-drinks-home-weatherization-with-efficiency-vermont.

**Ladies & Lasers Night – Necklace Making Workshop**

6 p.m. – Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. \$25. Participants will create laser-cut necklaces in a fun and engaging environment. Due to high demand, an additional session has been added on Feb. 12. Please register to guarantee a spot. Sherburnelibrary.org

**The Price Is Right Live**

7:30 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$50-\$70. Experience the interactive stage version of the legendary game show, featuring fan-favorite games like Plinko, Cliffhangers, The Big Wheel, and the Showcase. Contestants are randomly selected to play for prizes, including vacations and a brand-new car. VIP packages available for meet-and-greet or a post-show spin of The Big Wheel. Complimentary vouchers not valid for this performance. paramountvt.org.



← **Calendar:** Email events@mountaintimes.info.....  
from page 16

**Stick & Puck**

7:45-9:15 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

**FRI**  
1/31

**Intro to Improv Dance**

10-11:30 a.m. (Fridays through Feb. 28) Artistree, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. \$150 for the entire class. Participants of all experience levels to explore creative self-expression through dance. The class incorporates various movement prompts, group and solo compositions, and music from diverse genres. Opportunities for reflection and somatic introspection are included. Registration required: hisawyer.com/artistree/schedules/activity-set/1111816?source=semesters.

**Bone Builders**

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

**Connections & Interconnections of Life Weekly Group**

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

**Stick & Puck**

1:30-2:50 p.m. Union Arena, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock. \$10 per session. Helmet required; other gear strongly recommended. unionarena.net.

**Partners in Housing Meeting**

1:30 p.m. The Hub, 67 Merchants Row, Rutland. A gathering of developers, landlords, service providers, and policymakers will address questions related to Vermont's housing crisis. Discussions will focus on revitalizing vacant properties, strengthening collaboration, and identifying funding sources for affordable housing development. vermonthouser@gmail.com.

**Stick & Puck**

3-5 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

**West Coast Swing Dance Classes**

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

**Ashley Gutermuth Comedy Night**

7-9 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, Grange Theatre, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Stand-up comedian Ashley Gutermuth, winner of The Tonight Show's "Seinfeld Challenge," brings her viral comedy to Vermont. With international performances and an award-winning Edinburgh Fringe show, Gutermuth's comedy explores life, stand-up, and military family experiences. artistreevt.org.

**Breaking the Ice on Mental Health – VTSU**

**Castleton Men's Hockey**

7 p.m. Spartan Arena, 100 Diamond Run Mall Place, Rutland. \$2-\$7 Vermont State University Castleton Men's Hockey hosts its fourth annual Breaking the Ice on Mental Health game against New England College. Proceeds from admission, an online auction for custom jerseys, and event sales benefit Rutland Regional Behavioral Health. The first 200 fans receive a custom tee shirt, with additional commemorative shirts, a raffle, and a bake sale available. castletonsports.org or rrmc.org.

**SAT**  
2/1

**Wondertee Golf Outing – Indoor Golf Tournament**

8 a.m.-10 p.m. – Stonehedge Indoor Golf, 172 South Main St., Rutland. An 18-hole, six-person golf team scramble benefit for the Wonderfeet Kids' Museum. Players can participate in contests like Longest Putt, Closest to the Pin, and Hole in One, along with a 50/50 raffle and team prizes. Register a team by calling Stonehedge Indoor Golf at 802-779-9595. Proceeds benefit Wonderfeet Kids' Museum. Three different flight times: 8 a.m.-noon, 1-5 p.m., and 6-10 p.m. WonderfeetEvents@gmail.com.

**Vermont Winter Farmers Market**

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

**Winter Group Hike – Poultney River Loop**

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Slate Valley Trails, 212 Main St., Poultney. Free. Join SVT volunteers for a guided winter hike along the Poultney River Loop as part of the 2025 Winter Hiking Series. slatevalleytrails.org.

**Artist Exhibition – Sandra Grant**

10 a.m.-4 p.m. Neale Pavilion, Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. This exhibition features the fiber art of Sandra Grant, a juried member of the League of New Hampshire Craftsmen known for her intricate rug hooking inspired by birds and nature. Proceeds from artwork sales benefit VINS. vinsweb.org.

**Chocolate Tasting**

Noon-4 p.m. The Gallery at the Vault, 68 Main St., Springfield. Free. Enjoy chocolate treats and live music while creating a Valentine or Luminaria. Donations appreciated. galleryvault.org.

**Crochet Workshop**

11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Green Mountain Yarn & Fiber, 285 Main St., Rutland. \$75. Learn to crochet ashawl using Lava by Elena Fedotova. Ruth will guide participants through the pattern over three sessions: Feb. 1, Feb. 15, and March 1. Suitable for beginners familiar with basic stitches. Students must purchase the pattern on Ravelry, yarn, and a size I crochet hook. Registered students receive 10% off three skeins of Rios. Preregistration required. greenmountainfibers.com.

**Rutland Railway Association & Model Club**

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

**Beginner Cardigan Knitting Class**

11:30 a.m.-1 p.m. Green Mountain Fibers, 34 Merchants Row, Rutland. \$165 for five sessions. Learn to knit your first cardigan with Amanda using Jennifer Hagan's Fundamental Top-Down Women's Cardigan pattern. This course is ideal for beginner sweater knitters who are comfortable with basic techniques. Class meets Saturdays: Feb. 1, 15; and March 1. Students must preregister and provide their materials. Registered participants receive a 10% discount on class yarn. greenmountainfibers.com.

**Art at the Chaffee: Drop N' Paint**

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

**Learn to Knit Cables**

3-5 p.m. Green Mountain Yarn & Fiber, 279 Main St., Rutland. \$35. Learn to create twisting and turning cable stitches with instructor Ellen. Students will knit a swatch using different cable techniques and receive the Main Street pattern from Tin Can Knits to practice at home. Materials list provided after registration. greenmountainfibers.com.

**Cantabile Presents: 'Night and Day'**

3 p.m. Norwich Congregational Church, 15 Church St., Norwich. Ticketless event; suggested donation \$15. Enjoy an afternoon of stirring choral music for treble voices featuring works by Sergei Rachmaninoff, Antonio Vivaldi, Irving Berlin, and Gwyneth Walker. cantabilewomen.org/february-2025-concert.html.

**Film Screening: 'Common Ground'**

3 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. \$15, or \$12 for Billings Farm & Museum members. The Woodstock Vermont Film Series presents "Common Ground," a documentary exploring how regenerative agriculture can restore soil health and combat climate change. Directed by Rebecca Harrell Tickell and Josh Tickell. Advance purchase recommended. billingsfarm.org/filmseries.

**Public Skate**

4:15-5:45 p.m. Wendell A. Barwood Arena, 451 Highland Ave., White River Junction. \$5 per person; skate rentals and sharpening available for \$5 each. Season passes also available. Enjoy public skating at this family-friendly venue. hartfordvt.myrec.com.

**Famous Hartland Roast Beef Supper**

4:30, 5:30, and 6:15 p.m. Hartland United Church of Christ, 10 Station Road, Hartland. \$10-\$25. Enjoy an all-you-can-eat roast beef supper with three seatings available. Payment is cash or check only, made in person the night of the supper. To reserve, call 802-281-3124 and leave a message. hartlanducc.org.

**WONDERTEE GOLF  
OUTING - INDOOR  
GOLF TOURNAMENT**

**SATURDAY @ 8 A.M.**

**Baked Potato Dinner and Ireland Tour Review**

5 p.m. Grace Church Fellowship Hall, 8 Court St., Rutland. \$15. Enjoy a baked potato dinner while Alastair Stout shares pictures and stories from the 2024 choir tour to Ireland. The evening features musical performances by John Kirk, Trish Miller, and members of the Grace Church Touring Choir. Tickets required. gracechurchvt.org.

**Night Hike**

5-6 p.m. Vermont Institute of Natural Science, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. \$10. Experience the night through sensory activities, test night vision, learn about different types of light after dark, and meet an education owl. VINS members and children under 3 free. vinsweb.org/event/night-hike-2025.

**Stick & Puck**

5:30-7 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

**Pink Floyd Laser Spectacular**

7 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$35.50-\$45.50. The cult-favorite laser light show returns, featuring the original master recordings of Pink Floyd set to high-powered lasers and large-screen video projections. Experience classics from "Dark Side of the Moon" and "The Wall" in a multi-generational spectacle. This show contains flashing lights and visuals that may affect those with photosensitive conditions. paramountvt.org.

**SUN**  
2/2

**Stick & Puck**

9:40-10:50 a.m. Union Arena, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock. \$10 per session. Helmet required; other gear strongly recommended. unionarena.net.

## Calendar:

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### Public Skating

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

### Film Screening: 'Just Getting By'

2 p.m. 749 Hartford Ave., White River Junction. Free. St. Paul's Episcopal Church hosts a screening of "Just Getting By," a documentary by Vermont director Bess O'Brien exploring food and housing insecurity in Vermont. A discussion with the filmmaker, local advocates, and service providers will follow. mtaylor@upvalleyhaven.org.

### Barstow PTO's Annual Paint & Sip Fundraiser

2-4 p.m. Mountain Top Resort, 195 Mountain Top Road, Chittenden. \$45, payable by check to Barstow PTO. Enjoy an afternoon of painting, hors d'oeuvres, and a cash bar while supporting Barstow PTO. Tickets: Stay after to dine at Mountain Top's renovated tavern or dining room. thebarstowpto@gmail.com.

### Film Screening & Discussion: 'Common Ground'

3 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. \$15, or \$12 for Billings Farm & Museum members. The Woodstock Vermont Film Series presents "Common Ground," a documentary exploring how regenerative agriculture can restore soil health and combat climate change. Directed by Rebecca Harrell Tickell and Josh Tickell. Sunday's screening includes a discussion with local farmers on regenerative practices in the region. Advance purchase recommended. billingsfarm.org/filmseries.

### Public Skate

3:15-4:30 p.m. Wendell A. Barwood Arena, 451 Highland Ave., White River Junction. \$5 per person; skate rentals and sharpening available for \$5 each. Season passes also available. Enjoy public skating at this family-friendly venue. hartfordvt.myrec.com.

### Science Pub: The Manhattan Project

4 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge and Taproom, 2551 Rte. 30 N., Bomoseen. Free, except for food and drinks. Physicist Gino Segrè and Dr. Bettina Hoerlin discuss their connections to the Manhattan Project, the science behind the atomic bomb, and key figures like J. Robert Oppenheimer and Enrico Fermi. Presented by Friends of the Castleton Free Library. castletonfreelibrary.org.

### Bone Builders

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

### Monday Movie

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

**Great Breakfast & Brunch**  
MTWTF: 7-12 | Sat, Sun: 7-1



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burger and a beer\*

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### Public Skate

1:00-3:00 p.m. Wendell A. Barwood Arena, 451 Highland Ave., White River Junction. \$5 per person; skate rentals and sharpening available for \$5 each. Season passes also available. Enjoy public skating at this family-friendly venue. hartfordvt.myrec.com.

### Drop-in COED Hockey

7:45-9:15 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

# TUES

## 2/4

### Learn to Curl

10 a.m.-noon. (Tuesdays through Feb. 6) Wendell A. Barwood Arena, 45 Highland Ave., White River Junction. \$50 course fee, \$40 arena fee, \$80 membership fee. Learn the fundamentals of curling led by experienced instructors. Sessions include lectures, demonstrations, and on-ice practice. Equipment provided; participants should wear warm clothing and non-skid shoes. reg130.imperisoft.com/Dartmouth/ProgramDetail/313137363134/Registration.aspx.

### Intro to Cabochon Stone Setting

1-4 p.m. Tuesdays through Feb. 4. CraftStudies Studio & School, 87 Maple St., Hartford, VT 05001. \$250 (for all four sessions). Learn to add gems to your jewelry in this four-session class. Beginners will complete a pair of earrings, while returning students can enhance previous projects. Includes bench time and basic materials. Registration required. craftstudies.org.

### Stick & Puck

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

### Handcraft Gathering

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

### Alzheimer's Support Group

4-5 p.m. (Monthly, 2nd Tuesday) Community Health, 71 Allen St., Suite 403, Rutland. Free. A monthly meeting for Alzheimer's caregivers and family members to share experiences and support one another. The group is run by participants with hands-on experience in caregiving. chcr.org.

### Line Dance Classes

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

### Rutland Area Toastmasters

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

### Suds & Science – 'Underground Allies: Trees & Mycorrhizal Fungi'

7-8 p.m. – Putnam's Vine/Yard, 6 South Main St., White River Junction. Explore the hidden world beneath the forest floor with Dr. Jordon Tourville, an ecologist with the Appalachian Mountain Club. Enjoy a relaxed atmosphere with a full bar and light bites. Free and open to all ages. vtecostudies.org/suds-and-science.

### Cuban Partner Dance

7:15-9 p.m. Tuesdays in January. St. Barnabas Church, 262 Main St., Norwich, VT. Beginner: \$25/4 weeks or \$10/class. Intermediate: Free with beginner class or \$10/class (instructor approval required). Learn the elegant Cuban dance "casino" in a welcoming community. No partner needed. Mini social dancing between classes. Bring clean shoes. uvcasineros.square.site.

## ONGOING

### 'FACES in Harmony'

5-7 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. Highlights include "artwork of faces," "The Peace Train," an annual photo contest, and a community wall. Through Feb. 28. chaffeeartcenter.org.

### 'The Art of Life': Exhibition

Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. "The Art of Life" exhibit, featuring photographs and collages by Robert Black. Works by Chaffee artist members will be on display and for sale. Donations appreciated. Exhibit runs through March 1. chaffeeartcenter.org.

### Cooking Classes at Mission Farm

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

### 'The Effect'

Through Feb. 9. Various Times. Briggs Opera House, 5 S. Main St., White River Junction. \$20-\$45. Shaker Bridge Theatre presents "The Effect" by Lucy Prebble. This provocative play explores love, ethics, and the complexities of a clinical trial for a new antidepressant. shakerbridgetheatre.org.

### 'King James'

Jan. 29-Feb. 16. Barrette Center for the Arts, 74 Gates St., White River Junction. \$34-\$74, \$24 youth and student tickets. Rajiv Joseph's play follows superfans Matt and Shawn as they bond over LeBron James' tenure with the Cleveland Cavaliers, navigating their friendship through shared love of basketball. northernstage.org.

### Okemo Inkeepers Race Series

Mondays, January - March, 10 a.m.-noon. Wardance slope, Okemo Mountain Resort, Ludlow. The 43rd annual race series welcomes skiers and snowboarders of all skill levels, ages 18-80, competing as teams or individuals. Enjoy a fun, competitive league with awards at season's end. Social gatherings follow on Monday evenings, 5-7 p.m., at local establishments. Contact Ken at okemoracing@gmail.com.

### Skating Lessons

Tuesday through March 5, 5:30-6:30 p.m., and Wednesdays, through March 6, 4:20-5:20 p.m. Union Arena Community Center, 80 Amsden Way, Woodstock. Skating lessons for all abilities, including Snowplow Sam (ages 3-5), Basic Skills (ages 6+), and Pre-Free to Free Skate levels. Winter session includes participation in the Annual Ice Show on March 9. Registration and details at uaskateclub.com.

### Women's Nordic Ski Skate Clinics

Wednesdays, 8:30-10 a.m., Fridays, 9:30-11 a.m. Woodstock Nordic Center, 14 The Green, Woodstock. \$30 per session or \$150 for six sessions. Intermediate to advanced skiers can join Olympian Tessa Westbrook to improve skate skiing technique. Sessions run through the end of the season, weather permitting. Registration at the Nordic Center lodge. woodstockinn.com.

## UPCOMING

### Rick Redington & Tuff Luv Record Release

Feb. 6 at Noon. Mountain Man Music, 5 Center St., Rutland. Vinyl record release event in-store with bagels provided by The Wild Fern. Separate album release events at The Wild Fern in Stockbridge on Feb. 7 & 8. Email to reserve a spot for the Wild Fern events. spreadintheluv@gmail.com.

### 16th Annual Vermont Adaptive VI/Blind Athlete

#### Winter Festival

Feb. 7-10. Pico Mountain, Killington. Vermont Adaptive hosts this national festival for blind and visually impaired athletes, offering Alpine skiing, snowboarding, and snowshoeing. The weekend includes group lunches, a Friday night welcome party, and a Saturday banquet. Participants can also try Vermont Adaptive's auditory rifle system, used in Paralympic Nordic Combined competition. south@vermontadaptive.org or call 802-353-7584.



# [MUSIC Scene]

By DJ Dave Hoffenberg  
Have a music scene coming up? Email [djdavehoff@gmail.com](mailto:djdavehoff@gmail.com)

## WED 1/29

**KILLINGTON**  
2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge- Nick Bredice  
6 p.m. Rivershed – Rhys Chalmers  
7 p.m. Pickle Barrel - Mihali  
8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Nick Bredice

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

**POULTNEY**  
7 p.m. Poultney Pub – Open Mic hosted by Danny Lang

**QUECHEE**  
6 p.m. The Public House – Chris Pallutto

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

## THUR 1/30

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

**BRIDGEWATER CORNERS**  
5 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Bobby Sheehan

**KILLINGTON**  
2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto

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

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

5 p.m. North Star Lodge Star Lounge – Nick Bredice

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

6 p.m. Rivershed – Chris Pallutto

6 p.m. The Foundry – Liz Reedy  
7 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Annie in the Water

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

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

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

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

**QUECHEE**  
6 p.m. Public House Pub – Name That Tune Bingo with DJ Dave

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

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

**SOUTH POMFRET**  
7 p.m. Artistree – Open Mic Night

## FRI 1/31

**BOMOSEEN**  
5 p.m. Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Scott Forrest

**CASTLETON**  
6 p.m. Blue Cat Bistro – Live Music

**KILLINGTON**  
11 a.m. Jerk Jamaican Mountain Grill – Subaru Winterfest presents Liz Reedy

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

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Rhys Chalmers and Nick Bredice

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

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

3 p.m. K1 Base Lodge (Outside) – Subaru WinterFest Main Stage featuring Sicard Hollow

4 p.m. The Foundry – Just Jamie

6 p.m. Rivershed – Hitch

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

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

7:30 p.m. The Foundry – Marc Edwards

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Liquid A

9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Just Jamie

9 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Big Bang Baby

**LUDLOW**  
8 p.m. The Killarney – Sammy B

**PITTSFORD**  
7 p.m. Hilltop Tavern - Karaoke with Sunset Entertainment

**POULTNEY**  
6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Breanna Elaine

**QUECHEE**  
5 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Nate Martel

**RANDOLPH**  
7:30 p.m. The Underground Listening Room – Hip Hop Night

**RUTLAND**  
6 p.m. Stonehedge Indoor Golf – Duane Carleton

9 p.m. Center Street Alley – DJ EG

## SAT 2/1

**BRIDGEWATER**  
8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – Comedy Show with headliners Mike Toohey & Dennis Rooney

**CHESTER**  
6 p.m. The Pizza Stone VT – Side Effects

**KILLINGTON**  
11 a.m. Jerk Jamaican Mountain Grill – Subaru Winterfest presents Liz Reedy

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Daniel Brown

1:30 p.m. K1 Base Lodge (Outside) - Subaru WinterFest Main Stage featuring Into the Fog

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton

2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Liz Reedy

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Daniel Brown

3:30 p.m. K1 Base Lodge (Outside) - Subaru WinterFest Main Stage featuring The Travelin' McCouneys

4 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Jamie's Junk Show with special guest opener Jenny Porter & Krishna Guthrie

4 p.m. The Foundry – Aaron Audet

5:30 p.m. Killington Wine Bar – Rick Webb

6 p.m. North Star Lodge Star Lounge – Marc Edwards

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

6 p.m. Preston's – Rhys Chalmers

6 p.m. Rivershed – Hitch

6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – James Joel

6:30 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Krishna Guthrie Band

7 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

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

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

9 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Liquid A

9 p.m. Wobbly Barn – Big Bang Baby

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

**LONDONDERRY**  
2 p.m. Black Line Tavern at Magic – Nick Bredice

6 p.m. New American Grill – Nick Bredice

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

2 p.m. Okemo's Jackson Gore Courtyard – Apres Afternoon with Dustin Marshall

2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Rhys Chalmers

8 p.m. Off the Rails – The What Knots

**QUECHEE**  
5 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Live Music

**RUTLAND**  
7 p.m. Moose Lodge – Karaoke with Sunset Entertainment

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

**WOODSTOCK**  
6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Rivalry

## SUN 2/2

**BRIDGEWATER CORNERS**  
3 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Liz Reedy

**KILLINGTON**  
10:30 a.m. Jerk Jamaican Mountain Grill – Subaru Winterfest presents Nick Bredice

Noon. Rivershed – Brunch with Hitch

1 p.m. K1 Base Lodge (Outside) – Subaru WinterFest Main Stage featuring The Tenderbellies

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

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Sammy B

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Liz Reedy

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tboneicus Jones

6 p.m. Rivershed – Trivia

6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Comedy & Cocktails

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

7 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Dizgo

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

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

**QUECHEE**  
2 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music

**RUTLAND**  
9 p.m. CJ's Suds South – Karaoke with Sunset Entertainment

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

## MON 2/3

**KILLINGTON**  
2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton

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

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

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

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

**LUDLOW**  
5 p.m. Little Mexico – Sammy B

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

**RUTLAND**  
7 p.m. Angler's Pub – Trivia hosted by Sunset Entertainment  
**STOCKBRIDGE**  
5 p.m. Wild Fern – Bow and River

**WOODSTOCK**  
6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Live Music

## TUES 2/4

**KILLINGTON**  
2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Sammy B

2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Liz Reedy

6 p.m. Rivershed – Sammy B

7 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Atmosphere with special guests Sage Francis and Mr Dibbs

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

**PITTSFIELD**  
7 p.m. Town Hall – Open Jam

**POULTNEY**  
6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Bluegrass Jam

**RUTLAND**  
5:30 p.m. Moose Lodge – Liz Reedy

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

**Woodstock Vermont Film Series**

**FEB 1 & 2**

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## Subaru WinterFest returns for a weekend of music, gear demos, and winter fun



Jan. 31 - Feb. 2 — KILLINGTON — Subaru WinterFest is back, bringing an action-packed weekend of live music, outdoor adventure, and winter lifestyle experiences to Killington Resort. Running from Friday through Sunday, this free event invites skiers, snowboarders, music fans, and adventure enthusiasts to celebrate their love for winter with gear demos, live performances, and special giveaways.

Throughout the weekend, attendees can explore the latest gear from Thule, Solo Stove, Mammut, Nordica, Dynamic Wax, 100%, Luno, and Wilderdog. Guests can enjoy warm beverages and snacks from YETI, Kate's Real Food, Vafels, and Alpine Start. Subaru and the National Ski Patrol will also offer insights on avalanche safety and rescue dogs. Subaru owners will receive VIP treatment, including special gifts while supplies last.

As part of Subaru's Love Promise and #SubaruLovesToHelp initiative, WinterFest will collect new pairs of socks to donate to the Open Door Mission in Rutland. Donations can be dropped off at the Subaru of New England tent in the WinterFest Village.

### Weekend highlights and schedule

All activities take place slope-side at the K-1 Lodge unless otherwise noted.

#### Friday, Jan. 31

- 9 a.m.: Gear demos and giveaways
- 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.: Live music by Liz Reedy at the Jerk Jamaican Mountain Grill
- 3 - 4:30 p.m.: Main stage performance by Sicard Hollow
- 4:30 p.m.: Daily drawing with over \$4,500 in outdoor gear prizes

#### Saturday, Feb. 1

- 6:30 - 8 a.m.: Guided uphill travel tour with Mammut (pre-registration required)
- 9 a.m.: Gear demos and giveaways
- 11 a.m. - 1 p.m.: Live music by Liz Reedy at the Jerk Jamaican Mountain Grill
- 1:30 - 3 p.m.: Main stage performance by Into the Fog
- 3:30 - 5 p.m.: Main stage performance by The Travelin' McCourys
- 5 p.m.: Daily drawing with over \$4,500 in outdoor gear prizes

#### Sunday, Feb. 2

- 9 a.m.: Gear demos and giveaways
- 10:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.: Live music by Nick Bredice at the Jerk Jamaican Mountain Grill
- 1 - 2:30 p.m.: Main stage performance by The Tenderbellies.
- 2:30 p.m.: Daily drawing with over \$4,500 in outdoor gear prizes

### Know before you go

Parking at K-1 Lodge will be limited, with shuttle services available between base lodges. All pets must be leashed and are not permitted inside base lodges or food venues. Attendees should store their equipment on designated ski racks rather than leaning them against fencing around the event space.

For more information, visit: [killington.com](http://killington.com).



Courtesy Subaru

Courtesy Killington Resort



Submitted

The Wondertee golf outing will occur all day Saturday, Feb. 1, at Stonehedge Indoor Golf, 172 So. Main St., Rutland.

## Wondertee golf outing to benefit Wonderfeet Kids' Museum

Feb. 1 at 8 a.m. — RUTLAND — Wonderfeet Kids' Museum is bringing its signature spirit of fun and play to Stonehedge Indoor Golf on Saturday, Feb. 1, for an exciting indoor golf tournament designed for adults. The 18-hole, six-person team scramble offers a day of friendly competition while supporting the museum's mission of inspiring curiosity and creativity in children through hands-on learning experiences.

Participants will have the opportunity to take part in various contests, including longest putt, closest to the pin, and a hole in one challenge. Fundraising activities such as a 50/50 raffle and team prizes will also be available. The tournament features

three different flights throughout the day: 8 a.m.-noon, 1-5 p.m., and 6-10 p.m., which allows flexibility for teams to choose a preferred time slot.

Funds raised from the event will directly support Wonderfeet Kids' Museum, helping to provide engaging educational experiences for children and families in the region. Businesses and individuals are encouraged to register a team or become an event or hole sponsor. Sponsorship contributions will assist in covering event costs and expanding the museum's outreach efforts.

Teams of six can register by calling Stonehedge Indoor Golf at 802-779-9595.

For more information, visit: [wonderfeet-kidsmuseum.org](http://wonderfeet-kidsmuseum.org).

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# LOCAL

# Academy Award nominations for 2025

The nominations for the 2025 Academy Awards came out on Thursday, Jan. 23, and any year where four of my top film picks get nominated for Best Picture and Director, I can't complain. Out of the 10 nominees for Best Picture, I've seen eight, and seven of those I've reviewed for The Mountain Times since I arrived in September of last year. I hope to see "Nickel Boys" and "I'm Still Here" in the coming weeks—if any theater in striking distance shows them. Otherwise, I'll have to wait until streaming. I hear they are both excellent films.



**Screens and Streams**  
By James Kent

So, what's my pick for Best Picture? I'd have to go with "The Brutalist." No film this year comes close in terms of ambition, emotional impact, and power. This film is making the rounds in theaters somewhat close to Vermont, so if you can catch this film in the theater, do so. "Anora" was another standout for me, but that film also has its detractors. I think its best chance for an Oscar win this year would be its lead

performance from actress Mikey Madison, a first-time nominee here for her stunning work as Anora, a sex worker from Brooklyn who goes on a crazy odyssey when she meets the son of a wealthy oligarch.

I'm a champion of "The Substance," and I'm excited for the love shown by The Academy for this darkly comic social satire horror film that would never in a million years have been recognized in previous years. Demi Moore received an Oscar nomination for Best Actress in a role she owns, and I'm happy she made the cut. The Best Actress category was competitive this year, and there were a good dozen or so worthy performances. That poses a problem when there are only five slots available. Someone was going to end up unhappy on Thursday morning. The word "snub" gets tossed around by entertainment outlets. Still, that's an obnoxious term intimating there was some conspiratorial bias on The Academy's part for someone not making it into the five. Even worse, it demeans those who did get in.



## The Best Actor race

The Best Actor award likely comes down to Adrian Brody or Timothée Chalamet. That's a tough call. My choice is Brody because what he does in "The Brutalist" is phenomenal. However, Chalamet had to look, act, sound, and sing like Bob Dylan and not come off like a caricature in "A Complete Unknown." You don't have a movie if Chalamet doesn't pull it off. This category is too tough to call.

## Best Director

I'm confident in picking Brady Corbet as the Best Director for "The Brutalist." I don't know if "The Brutalist" will also win Best Picture this year, but Corbet's direction was inspiring, and I think what he pulls off on a limited budget will be commended and awarded by The Academy. I'm glad The Academy recognized Coralie Fargeat for her direction of "The Substance." Fargeat's original vision, while paying homage to several other directors, makes this film rewatchable for those who don't mind their films taking things to the extreme.

## Actor in a Supporting Role

I've seen all the nominated performances in this category, and there isn't a bad pick in the bunch. I think Kieran Culkin's got this one locked, and he'd probably get my vote too. My runner-up pick would be Jeremy Strong as Roy Cohn in "The Apprentice." If Culkin hadn't come along with "A Real Pain," Strong would probably be the favorite here, but sometimes a performance is so good, there isn't any way they won't win, and that is where things are heading this year in terms of Supporting Actor.

## Actress in a Supporting Role

If I were to pick a shocking surprise win this year at the Oscars, I'd zero in on this category. Zoe Saldana, in "Emilia Pérez," will likely win, and she'd be my choice too, but don't discount Ariana Grande in "Wicked." The Academy likes to spread their votes around and reward several films. Aside from maybe a technical award, Grande's performance could be "Wicked's" best shot at a big prize in March.

Below is a complete list of nominees for this year's Academy Awards:

### Actor in a Supporting Role

- Yura Borisov, "Anora"
- Kieran Culkin, "A Real Pain"
- Edward Norton, "A Complete Unknown"
- Guy Pearce, "The Brutalist"
- Jeremy Strong, "The Apprentice"

### Actress in a Supporting Role

- Monica Barbaro, "A Complete Unknown"
- Ariana Grande, "Wicked"
- Felicity Jones, "The Brutalist"
- Isabella Rossellini, "Conclave"
- Zoe Saldana, "Emilia Pérez"

### Writing (Adapted Screenplay)

- "A Complete Unknown" (Screenplay by James Mangold and Jay Cocks)
- "Conclave" (Screenplay by Peter Straughan)
- "Emilia Pérez" (Screenplay by Jacques Audiard; In collaboration with Thomas Bidegain, Léa Mysius, and Nicolas Livecchi)
- "Nickel Boys" (Screenplay by RaMell Ross & Joslyn Barnes)
- "Sing Sing" (Screenplay by Clint Bentley, Greg Kweddar; Story by Clint Bentley, Greg Kweddar, Clarence Maclin, John "Divine G" Whitfield)

### Writing (Original Screenplay)

- "Anora" (Written by Sean Baker)
- "The Brutalist" (Written by Brady Corbet and Mona Fastvold)
- "A Real Pain" (Written by Jesse Eisenberg)
- "September 5" (Written by Moritz Binder, Tim Fehlbaum; Co-Written by Alex David)
- "The Substance" (Written by Coralie Fargeat)

### Animated Feature Film

- "Flow"
- "Inside Out 2"
- "Memoir of a Snail"
- "Wallace & Gromit: Vengeance Most Fowl"
- "The Wild Robot"

### Animated Short Film

- "Beautiful Men"
- "In the Shadow of the Cypress"
- "Magic Candies"
- "Wander to Wonder"
- "Yuck!"

### Cinematography

- "The Brutalist" (Lol Crawley)
- "Dune: Part Two" (Greig Fraser)
- "Emilia Pérez" (Paul Guilhaume)
- "Maria" (Ed Lachman)
- "Nosferatu" (Jarin Blaschke)

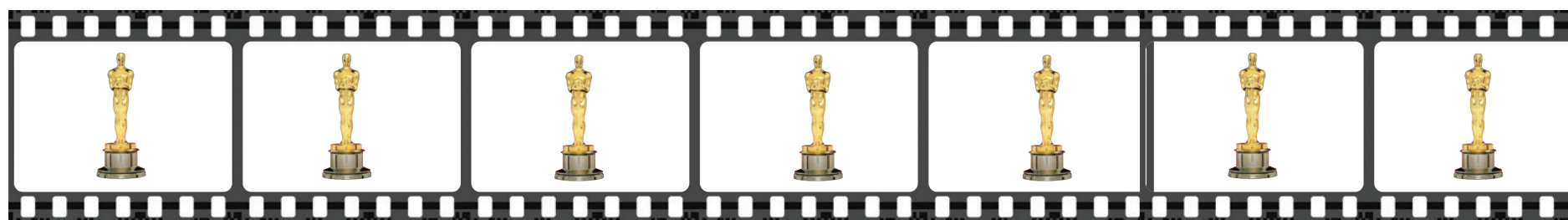
### Costume Design

- "A Complete Unknown"
- "Conclave"
- "Gladiator II"
- "Nosferatu"
- "Wicked"

### Film Editing

- "Anora"
- "The Brutalist"
- "Conclave"
- "Emilia Pérez"
- "Wicked"

Screens & Streams → 23



# Exploring regenerative agriculture with 'Common Ground'

Feb. 1 & 2 at 3 p.m. — WOODSTOCK — The Woodstock Vermont Film Series presents "Common Ground," a documentary highlighting how regenerative agriculture can restore soil health and mitigate climate change. Screenings occur Saturday and Sunday at 3 p.m. at the Billings Farm & Museum Visitor Center Theater.

Directed by Rebecca Harrell Tickell and Josh Tickell, "Common Ground" follows farmers, scientists, and advocates using regenerative practices to enrich soil, improve food quality, and support sustainability. The film builds on the themes of their 2020 documentary "Kiss the Ground," showcasing how ancient farming wisdom and modern innovations can enhance environmental and economic resilience. Featuring narration by Laura Dern and Jason Momoa, the film presents actionable solutions for a sustainable future.

A post-film discussion on Sunday will feature local farmers, including Mari Omland of Green Mountain Girls Farm and Rosa Donaldson, assistant farm manager at Billings Farm & Museum. Panelists will explore regenerative agriculture practices in the region and ways to support local farmers.

The Woodstock Vermont Film Series continues select Saturdays and Sundays at 3 p.m. through Feb. 23. Tickets are \$15 per person and \$12 for Billings Farm & Museum members.

For more information, visit: [billingsfarm.org/filmseries](http://billingsfarm.org/filmseries).



Courtesy Area 23A

"Common Ground" will play at Billings Farm on Feb. 1 & 2 at 3 p.m.



## ← Screens & Streams

from page 22

### Makeup and Hairstyling

- "A Different Man"
- "Emilia Pérez"
- "Nosferatu"
- "The Substance"
- "Wicked"

### Live-Action Short Film

- "A Lien"
- "Anuja"
- "I'm Not a Robot"
- "The Last Ranger"
- "The Man Who Could Not Remain Silent"

### Music (Original Score)

- "The Brutalist" (Daniel Blumberg)
- "Conclave" (Volker Bertelmann)
- "Emilia Pérez" (Clément Ducol and Camille)
- "Wicked" (John Powell and Stephen Schwartz)
- "The Wild Robot" (Kris Bowers)

### Music (Original Song)

- "El Mal" from "Emilia Pérez" (Music by Clément Ducol and Camille; Lyric by Clément Ducol, Camille and Jacques Audiard)
- "The Journey" from "The Six Triple Eight" (Music and Lyric by Diane Warren)
- "Like a Bird" from "Sing Sing" (Music and Lyric by Abraham Alexander and Adrian Quesada)
- "Mi Camino" from "Emilia Pérez" (Music and Lyric by Camille and Clément Ducol)
- "Never Too Late" from "Elton John: Never Too Late" (Music and Lyric by Elton John, Brandi Carlile, Andrew Watt and Bernie Taupin)

### Documentary Feature Film

- "Black Box Diaries"
- "No Other Land"
- "Porcelain War"
- "Soundtrack to a Coup d'Etat"
- "Sugarcane"

### Documentary Short Film

- "Death by Numbers"
- "I Am Ready, Warden"
- "Incident"
- "Instruments of a Beating Heart"
- "The Only Girl in the Orchestra"
- International Feature Film
- "I'm Still Here" (Brazil)
- "The Girl With the Needle" (Denmark)
- "Emilia Pérez" (France)
- "The Seed of the Sacred Fig" (Germany)
- "Flow" (Latvia)

### Production Design

- "The Brutalist"
- "Conclave"
- "Dune: Part Two"
- "Nosferatu"
- "Wicked"

### Sound

- "A Complete Unknown"
- "Dune: Part Two"
- "Emilia Pérez"
- "Wicked"
- "The Wild Robot"

### Visual Effects

- "Alien: Romulus"
- "Better Man"
- "Dune: Part Two"
- "Kingdom of the Planet of the Apes"
- "Wicked"



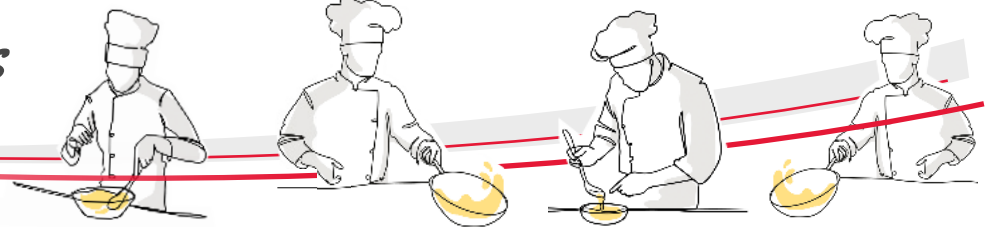
Courtesy A24

"The Brutalist" landed 10 nominations at this year's Academy Awards.





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seasoned connoisseur or a curious newcomer, our diverse selection and knowledgeable team are here to guide you. [killingtonwinebar.com](http://killingtonwinebar.com), 802.353.6423.



**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](http://killingtonmarket.com) 802-422-7736 or 802-422-7594.



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The Back Country Café is a hot spot for delicious breakfast foods. Choose from farm fresh eggs, multiple kinds of pancakes and waffles, omelets or daily specials to make your breakfast one of a

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[www.vermontsushi.com](http://www.vermontsushi.com) 802-422-4241.



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Base Camp Snowshoe tours in Killington offer a unique way to experience Vermont.

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## “The Pitt” is a high-energy thrill ride that ups the ante for medical dramas

Network television thrives on three styles of genres: police procedurals, legal procedurals, and medical procedurals. “Grey’s Anatomy” is in the midst of its 21st season. “Chicago Med” is in its 10th season, and new shows such as “Brilliant Minds,” “Doctor Odyssey,” and the comedic “St. Denis Medical” are all focused on the medical genre. Of course, the belwether standard in medical shows is “ER,” and before that, “St. Elsewhere.” The one thing that ties all of these programs together is that they are/were prime-time network shows and, on network television, there are standards, practices, and limits to



**Screens and Streams**  
By James Kent

how Hollywood can tell such stories. It’s surprising how long it’s taken for a hospital-themed program to make its way to subscription television, but with MAX’s new show, “The Pitt,” the well-worn genre gets new life breathed into its plots and tropes.

Noah Wyle, yes, “ER’s” Noah Wyle, stars as a Pittsburgh hospital emergency room senior attending physician, Dr. Michael Robinavitch. He’s as close to his character from “ER” as one might expect, and while the name on the badge may be different, we could consider “The Pitt” a spiritual cousin to Wyle’s previous hit show.

Screens & Streams → 38



Courtesy IMD

(L to R) Noah Wyle, Isa Briones, Patrick Ball, Taylor Deardon, and Katherine LaNasa

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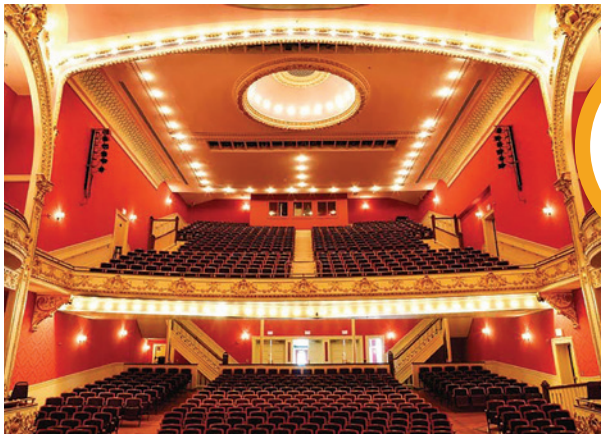
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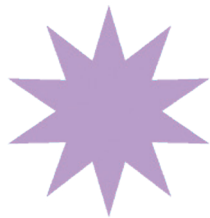


# DOWNTOWN RUTLAND



DOWNTOWNRUTLAND.COM

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In 2016, Rutland native Eileen Gennette Coughlin became the owner and steward of Pyramid, bringing her extensive background in sound healing and business management. A Reiki Level 3 practitioner, she has shaped Pyramid into a heart-centered community where individuals can explore innovative wellness

practices designed to relax the mind, align the body, and inspire the spirit.

Pyramid specializes in sound healing, meditation rooms, and energy work, offering a variety of classes and workshops focused on personal growth and well-being. Whether visitors want to experience a vibrational sound therapy session, browse a unique collection of crystals and spiritual tools, or relax in the salt cave, Pyramid provides a sanctuary for those seeking balance and renewal.

Coughlin's vision is to empower individuals on their wellness journeys, using holistic approaches to foster healing and transformation. Pyramid remains a cornerstone of Rutland's wellness community, helping people cultivate inner harmony and self-discovery.

*Location: 120 Merchants Row, Downtown Rutland  
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By Shandi Marie Photo

Pyramid Holistic Wellness Center



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**Solutions** From page 15

### Crossword

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

### Sudoku

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

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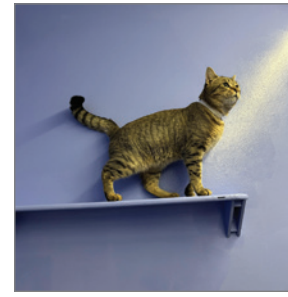
# Rutland County Humane Society



**Piggy**—2-year-old. Female. Pit bull. White.



**Maggie**—2.5-year-old. Spayed female. Pit bull. Black.



**Turkey**—1-year-old. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair. Brown tiger.




**Emma**—1-year-old. Female. Terrier mix. Brindle/white.




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**BLUEY**

Bluey—Female.



**HAM**

Ham—2-year-old. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair. Black.



**TJ**—1.5-year-old. Male. Pit mix. Grey/blue.



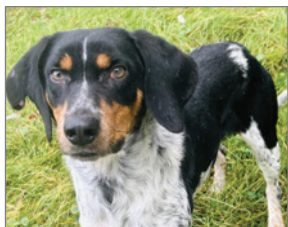
**Graham**—1-year-old. Neutered male. Great Dane/pit bull mix. Tan/white.



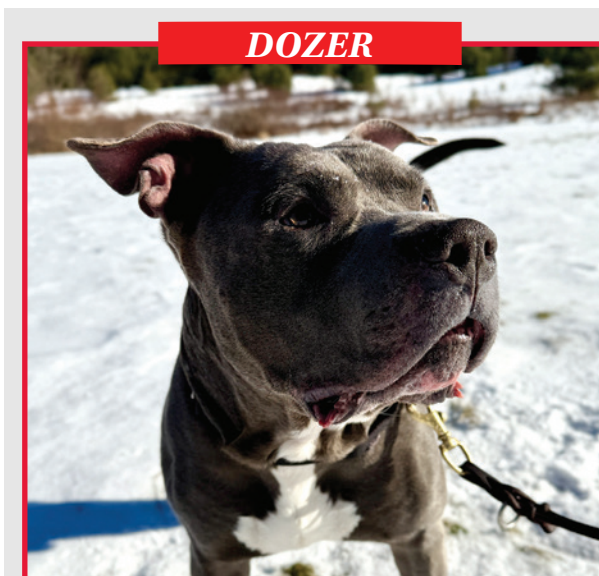
**Daisy**—3-year-old. Spayed female. Pit bull mix. Tan and white.



**Pixel**—9-year-old. Spayed female. Domestic shorthair. Orange tiger.



**Tyrone**—2-year-old. Neutered male. Hound mix. Tri-colored.



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# Cosmic Catalogue

## **Aries** March 21 - April 20

Even though you might want to avoid it, given the current circumstances of your ruler being retrograde, you do need to face a few issues. If you're long overdue for an honest conversation with a friend or someone within a group or community you're involved with; this week is the time to have it. Don't sweep matters under the rug. In fact, you might be surprised by just how well things go if you just have a good old heart-to-heart with someone.

## **Leo** July 21 - August 20

A conversation is all it takes to clear up any confusion or uncertainty in a key relationship. Too often, we gloss over the nitty-gritty to try and keep the light at its brightest. However, peering into the dark, revealing confessions, and being honest, while daunting, can actually draw you closer together. What you've been fearing the most could turn out to be your biggest blessing. Nothing ventured, nothing gained. Share your most intimate thoughts.

## **Sagittarius** November 21 - December 20

It's amazing how fast life can change when you decide to change. The seemingly insignificant act of making a few small adjustments in your daily routine can be all it takes to bring back a new lease on life. The choice to do something different. The choice to change. The choice to keep the faith, no matter what happens, is a choice that will always serve you well. This week, do lean into those who have got your back.

## **Taurus** April 21 - May 20

It's one thing to be working hard and doing all the right things in life regarding your career or the overall direction you're steering your life. This week, you may need to ask yourself if it's even what you really want. If you're changing your mind about something, then you need to admit that. This doesn't mean you're flaky or not reliable. It means that you're honoring within yourself what it is you truly value and acting accordingly.

## **Virgo** August 21 - September 20

Is what you're currently doing what you really want to be doing? Some important decisions may need to be made this week, especially if you're growing tired of the same thing, same result. That is the definition of insanity, and you're far from insane. Instead, recognize what isn't working and make the appropriate adjustments. You'll be surprised that the very thing you've been avoiding is the breakthrough you need. Face this reality, and the results you're after will come to you much more easily.

## **Capricorn** December 21 - January 20

Financial moves are possible this week as money planet Mercury bumps into wealth planet Pluto, in your Money Zone, no less! So, do be sure to think deeply about your next money move. Do your due diligence. Research and investigate what needs to be researched and investigated. Once you've established the facts of the matter, the next step is to trust your intuition. If something feels off, trust that. If it feels like the right move, then make it.

## **Gemini** May 21 - June 20

The making of a potent decision is possible this week. Consider how your worldview has slowly shifted over the past couple of years. It could be about study, travel, or a question of faith. As Mercury, your patron planet, connects with Pluto, it might be time to take the plunge into something you've been exploring for some time. Even if you're a little afraid, the antidote to that is an unshakable belief in yourself. Go for it!

## **Libra** September 21 - October 20

If you're not quite satisfied with the joy and happiness you're experiencing, choose to change it. This may entail taking action and doing something differently. It could also be a mindset that needs to shift. In fact, the broader the horizons you can explore in your mind the more likely your perspectives can shift. It seems really simple: change your thoughts and your life. Be a magnet for the energy you want to receive.

## **Aquarius** January 21 - February 20

An important personal choice can be made this week. Life has taken on a much more somber tone for you in recent months. Reason being, life is changing in unique and profound ways for you. When there are changes, there are choices. Some of these are easy, while others take some time to finally figure out. Do keep in mind that the decision you've been avoiding is the one you really need to make. Sometimes, you just need to get out of your own way!

## **Cancer** June 21 - July 20

If life takes on a "this old chestnut" vibe to it this week, don't despair. Patterns repeat until they are learned, and the Cosmos shows you there are still a few weak spots that require shedding. Do see this as an opportunity rather than an obstacle. Challenges tend to arrive just before the breakthrough happens. Also, you're never given a situation you can't handle. Face your fears and develop your self-confidence. Trust that the blessings you want will arrive.

## **Scorpio** October 21 - November 20

A change in direction within a key relationship is possible this week. This shift hasn't been overnight; it's been ongoing for several years. You need to figure out what you really want in a relationship. If somebody is kicking your tires, it might be time to kick them to the curb. If you're not sure what you even want, then do put your hand on your heart. Chances are, you know deep down you need more. Be honest, if nothing else.

## **Pisces** February 21 - March 20

If you feel as though you've been stuck in a rut and doing little more than working hard, then you need to change that. While the reality is, there may be little that you can change. However, if you can make a few small choices in your everyday habits that feel right for you, it may be all it takes. If you need to get a sense of self back, then do it. Little habits that liberate you momentarily from the daily grind will restore you.

## The cost of conformity

Some words, once spoken, can't be taken back. When a piece of information is shared or revealed, it's very difficult to hide it again.

Collectively, we are on a timeline where, for some, the truth is becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish. Meanwhile, for others, there's never been any question about the difference between a lie and the truth.

You might be crystal clear about some topics. While on others, the muddied waters might be clouding your better judgment. In an era of intentional confusion, you'll need to trust your instincts.

Reducing a situation to facts alone isn't always enough. Facts can be misconstrued, forged, or fudged, depending on who shares them.

Now, more than ever, when the facts don't add up, it's not only inauthentic but also immoral not to say anything.

Each one of us was born with a song inside us. If you're not singing it out of fear of what others may think or how you might look, you could miss out on the wonderful blessings currently in escrow, waiting for you to receive them.

Remember, the cost of conformity is that everyone likes you except yourself. Conformity, in fact, could be the greatest lie ever told.



Cosmic Catalogue  
By Cassandra Tyndall

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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.

## More than a nest: Squirrel dreys

In the starkness of winter, squirrel dreys reveal themselves in the tree canopy. They've been there all along — just screened by trees' leafy crowns for much of the year. Dreys are shaggy masses of leaves nestled against a tree trunk or cupped in a fork of branches 20 to 40 feet above the ground. Squirrels rear their kits in them and use them as shelter during many months of the year.

"It's always kind of magical when the leaves fall down, and you see these other homes of citizens in the neighborhood," says Ken Benton, director of education at North Branch Nature Center in Montpelier, Vermont.

Roughly 1 to 2 feet in diameter, dreys are often mistaken for the nests of large birds such as eagles and hawks. But while those birds prefer platform-style nests made primarily of sticks, squirrels make their shelters out of leaves, grass, and shredded tree bark. Crows' nests are similar in size and location to squirrel dreys but use pencil-length sticks to form an open cup. Squirrel dreys, on the other hand, are fully enclosed; squirrels typically make the entrance v, and flush with a tree trunk or branch. What's more, dreys are more multipurpose than nests are. Birds typically inhabit their nests only from the time they lay eggs through when their young have fledged. Squirrels, however, can be found sleeping and resting in dreys throughout the year — making dreys longer-lasting home bases.

"For the most part, they're taking shelter from nocturnal predators, like owls. A sleeping squirrel would be an easy and tasty snack for a large owl," said Nate

Marchessault, staff ecologist at the Harris Center for Conservation Education in Hancock, New Hampshire.

In the Northeast, all squirrel species — grey, red, and flying — make dreys, but grey squirrel dreys are the easiest to spot. Red squirrels prefer to build theirs in pines and coniferous trees, while grey squirrels go for deciduous trees. Flying squirrels

tend to build smaller nests, often in conifers. Sit and watch a grey squirrel for a while, and it will likely lead you to its drey, scampering up a tree trunk — perhaps with fresh nest lining clamped between its teeth — and disappearing into its shaggy home. Flying squirrels are nocturnal, so it's much more difficult to find where they shelter from predators and the elements.

Grey squirrel dreys are made up of three distinct layers. An outer layer of sticks and leaves helps insulate the cavity from water and wind. This is what's visible to us from ground level. Within that is a layer of young, pliable shoots, which squirrels gnaw off trees and weave into a round cavity. It's this cavity where squirrels will rest, sleep, and raise their young, so they line it with suitably soft material, such as feathers, fur, and grasses. (I've even spotted a cotton rag hanging from an abandoned squirrel drey!)

"They really like it cozy in the middle of their dreys," Marchessault says.

Now in mid-winter, squirrels have mostly abandoned their dreys for the more effective shelter of tree hollows. These cavities — some bored by woodpeckers and others formed naturally, such as after a tree

The Outside Story → 38



### The Outside Story

By Emily Haynes



## Growing citrus trees as houseplants

By Amy Simone, Extension Master Gardener, University of Vermont

Imagine having sunny orange, bright yellow, and luscious green fruit growing in your home, especially during this gray, cold time of year. While we do not associate citrus plants with our northeast climate, several varieties can be grown as indoor/outdoor houseplants.

Citrus plants, native to Southeast Asia, have been cultivated for over 4,000 years. Their fruit is actually a type of berry with a leathery rind called a hesperidium. They are found in tropical and subtropical regions that offer warmth, lots of humidity, and sandy, slightly acidic soil.

Citrus fruits need consistently hot temperatures to produce sugar, which our climate does not offer. Therefore, sour citrus fruits such as lemons, limes, and small orange varieties like Satsuma and Calamondin are among those best suited to growing as houseplants.

Citrus trees can grow to 20 feet in their natural environments, which is certainly not manageable as a houseplant! Thankfully, there are dwarf varieties like tangerine (Satsuma orange), lemon (Ponderosa or Meyer), kumquat (Fortunella species), citron, and Calamondin orange. These will reach a more reasonable height of 3 to 5 feet.

Plant your citrus in a well-draining pot filled with cactus or citrus soil mix, or use regular potting mix amended with perlite. Fertilize with a high-nitrogen fertilizer formulated for acid-loving plants, and only while the plants are actively growing and flowering, generally from April through October.

In the winter, place your citrus plant in a sunny south-facing window away from cold drafts and ensure it receives at least six hours of direct sun daily. Supplement with artificial light if needed. Wipe the leaves periodically to remove dust—group several houseplants together to create more humidity, or run a humidifier near your citrus plant.

As temperatures consistently reach above 50 degrees Fahrenheit in the spring, gradually move your citrus plant outdoors, protecting it from direct sun at first. After a few days, place it in full sun and pay attention to its watering needs, which will be more frequent than when it was indoors.

Depending on your citrus variety, you may get flowers only in the spring or spring to fall. Dwarf citrus varieties are mostly all self-fertile, meaning that you do not need a second plant for pollination to occur.

You do, however, need insects to pollinate the flowers. If your citrus plant is indoors during flowering, you get to play pollinator. Use a clean, dry paintbrush or cotton swab to collect pollen from one flower and rub it on another.

In the fall, acclimate your citrus gradually so that it can move back indoors before the outside temperatures drop below 40 degrees Fahrenheit.

Don't be alarmed if your citrus plant sheds some of its baby fruit. Potted plants cannot support that much fruit and will naturally shed the extra. However, fruit drop is also associated with temperature extremes, so take care to avoid those.

Dropped leaves are the plant's response to overwatering. Flower drops will occur if the soil becomes too dry.

Most importantly, add a little patience to your citrus care routine, as young plants may take years to flower and produce fruit. Lemons and limes can take six to nine months to ripen, and oranges can take up to a year. Those colorful and delicious fruits cheering up your home will be worth it.



By Amy Simone



## Picture this

I purchased my first iPhone nearly 15 years ago. I would have jumped on board earlier, but the product wasn't available in my little Vermont town. Prior to that, I had several flip phones, but I was always pining for Steve Jobs' glorious invention.

I just looked back, and it appears that I took my first digital iPhone photo in early 2011. It was a shot of my then 7-year-old son flashing me the peace sign while sipping on a beverage. We were obviously eating at a sushi restaurant because, in the next photo, he's holding two chopsticks on his head like devil horns.

While I wouldn't consider myself a serious "shutterbug," I do like to take photos of people and things that I find interesting. When there's a family event or special occasion, I tend to be the annoying guy nudging everyone into a group for a commemorative shot.

To date, I've held up my phone to take a photo 3,699 times, which seems like an obscene number to me. This got me curious, so I asked my son and his girlfriend (both 20 years old) how many photos they had on their phones. My son had just over 1,700 while his girlfriend boasted 46,343 (I'm still trying to comprehend the latter number).

My son's relatively low number was surprising, given that he spent several years taking mindless selfies with Snapchat. However, he corrected me by noting that Snapchat doesn't save the photos.

My curiosity was still unresolved, so I did some online research. Not surprisingly, since the introduction of the smartphone, the number of photos people take daily has increased significantly.

Americans capture about six photos per day using their mobile devices. This frequent photography results in the typical smartphone user storing nearly 2,800 photos on their device. Globally, it's estimated that over 5 billion photos are taken daily, with smartphones accounting for 94% of these images. It's now estimated that users will take more than 2 trillion photos on their smartphones each year.

After reading the data, I had to admit that I'm more apt to pull out my phone to capture a moment than most peo-

ple. However, it should be noted that, unlike others who take multiple shots of the same moment, I religiously go back and delete all of the versions until I find the one I like best. If I didn't do that, I'd easily have three times the amount.

Of course, as much as I enjoy digital photography, I am not beholden to the medium. I still have a DSLR camera that I'll pull out from time to time, but quite honestly, it's almost for nostalgic reasons at this point. The new smartphones are just so damn good.

And while printing photos is so "yesterday," I still enjoy doing that quite often. I can snap a great photo and, within minutes, pull up my CVS app, load the image, apply a frame, and have the whole thing ready to pick up within an hour. I can't tell you how many times I've captured a special moment and had a physical print of it prepared to hand out a short time later. Of course, I could text or airdrop the digital version via my phone, but let's be honest, who doesn't love getting a framed print now and then?

Ultimately, this longstanding love of photography came from my mother, who always made it a point to take photos of my brothers and me while we were growing up. When she got her first smartphone, it didn't take her long to adjust to the new medium. She's now 90 years old and still taking photographs with her phone daily. She even crops, edits, and color-corrects any photos we send her. (Note: She's got 1,592 photos on her smartphone.)

This week's feature, "Beau is Afraid," also focuses on the influence of a mother figure, but the impact is profoundly negative in this case.

Starring Joaquin Phoenix, "Beau is Afraid" is a study of mental illness. The entire film is about one man's descent into psychological chaos brought on by a commandeering mother who obliviously damaged her son during his impressionable youth. Subsequently, the boy grows up into a hapless degenerate incapable of leading his life in any sort of meaningful way.

I have to admit, this film was interesting to watch, primarily because of the hallucinatory episodes that marked the main character's reality. Unfortunately, the story was as disjointed as the main character's mental capabilities, leading to a so-so experience.

Check this one out if you're curious about the approach. Just be prepared for something wildly unhinged and difficult to follow.

An irrational "C+" for "Beau is Afraid" is now available to stream on Amazon Prime Video.

Got a question or comment for Dom? You can email him at [moviediary@att.net](mailto:moviediary@att.net).



### The Movie Diary

By Dom Cioffi



By Merisa J. Sherman

On a recent bitter cold day at Killington, thank goodness for gondolas and bubbles.

## Bone-chilling cold

I can feel my shoulder blades clenching together, harshly forcing my shoulders open. The tightness extends down my spine, stiffening my back to the point where it's hard to rotate around my lumbar spine. My arms drop from my shoulders, aching pain, and I can feel the tingle all the way down to my fingertips. My neck is stiff, and I can feel the bones grinding against each other as I try my neck circles.

I am cold. Brutally so. The muscles in my back are tighter and stiffer than I ever really thought they could be when not injured. No matter how many times I try to roll my shoulders, I cannot seem to break up the stiffness in my muscles.

It's a bone-chilling cold, the kind that penetrates way beyond goosebumps. The kind that you think can never leave you, even after a nice, hot shower. My turns become stiff and sloppy, and I am reduced to a Level 5, fumbling around on the trail because I cannot separate my upper and lower bodies. I'm too frozen.

My hips are bright red. I know this without having to take my long johns off. A part of me hopes that this cold will just freeze the white fat off of my body, but I know that's not the case. But I can feel the fat on my hips solidifying. Fat has a lower water percentage than muscle (30% compared to 70%), but there is no blood or warmth

heating up that water, so it hardens. Thankfully, it also shrinks in the cold, so my ski pants fit a little easier.

This weather isn't that wonderful dry cold they get in Colorado or Utah that creates their champagne powder. This is the moist cold that we get here, the bitter cold. The cold that seeps through every nook and cranny of your jacket, and you can feel the wind on your bare stomach. This cold is invasive, penetrating every inch of your body right through to your bones.

It's the kind of cold that lures you. You look outside; the sun is radiant, and the sky is a beautiful clear blue. So you think you can make it. You think it's going to be a gorgeous bluebird day, and so you bundle up in your most expensive outfit. You know, the thickest long johns, the heated vest, socks, and gloves. All exposed skin slathered with Dermatone. The neckie so thick that you cannot move your neck left to right without moving your whole body. You become Ralphie from "A Christmas Story."

And you ski until you cannot move anymore on snow that squeaks so loudly and doesn't move because it, too, is freezing in the bitter temps. The snow is freezing. Seems like an oxymoron, but that's what we get. Frozen snow. The natural snow that looks so deliciously fresh but literally

Living the Dream → 38



### Living the Dream

By Merisa Sherman



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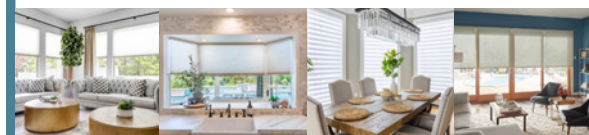
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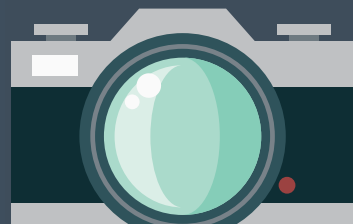
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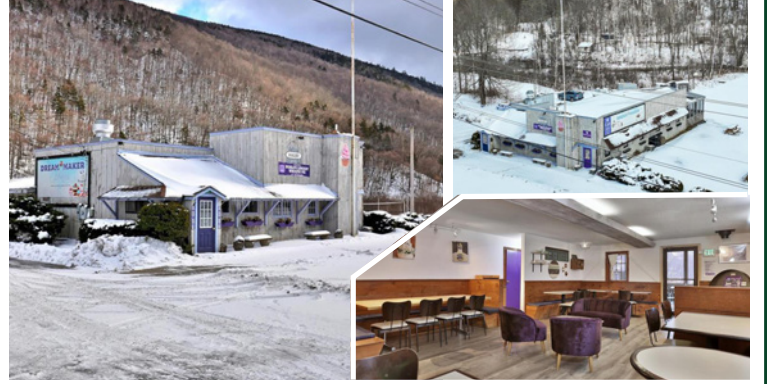
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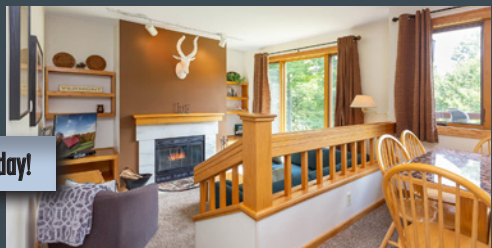


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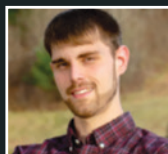
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## ← The Outside Story:

from page 32

limb falls — are better water-proofed and wind-proofed, and help squirrels stay protected during the coldest and snowiest months of the year. Squirrels like to spruce up these cavities by lining them with the same materials they use to line their dreys. If squirrels can't find a suitable cavity to winter in, they'll remain in their dreys, sometimes huddling together to stay warm.

Grey squirrels give birth to two litters of kits each year: once between January and February and the other in late summer. The winter litter may be raised in cozier tree cavities or more exposed dreys, and the summer kits will be raised in dreys.

During winter ecology lessons with children, Benton encourages them to canvass their neighborhoods and temporarily count the number of squirrel shelters on view. The next time you're outside, see how many dreys you can spot. Though the squirrel that built it may be napping in a tree cavity instead, if you see rustling, the occupant may not have found a warmer spot to spend the winter.

*Emily Haynes is a writer currently living in Washington, D.C. An avid birder and hiker, she loves exploring the forests of the Northeast. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org.*

## ← Living the Dream:

from page 33

doesn't move, and you trip over it when you try to slide. The kind that doesn't want to be skied, but we're going to do it anyway because that's where the Fun Signs are.

Two years ago, I was invited to meet up with some high school friends in Puerto Rico for the last week of January. I scoffed at the idea of missing a week of skiing for the beach, especially since I only get to ski for half a year. I didn't want to waste the week of skiing for an island escape. My body finally warmed up from the inside out, and I could feel all my muscles relax during the coldest month of the year. It feels sacrilegious to say this, but...it was glorious.

To be honest, over the past few years, I have changed my mind about this brutal cold weather. I used to think of myself as badass for surviving it all. I have all the right gear, the good stuff I've invested in for conditions like these. But I don't want to anymore. A friend of mine has a hat that reads— "90 DAY CLUB. Because we don't ski in the rain." Well, I absolutely love skiing in the rain; it makes me happy 'caus I sing and dance while channeling Gene Kelly.

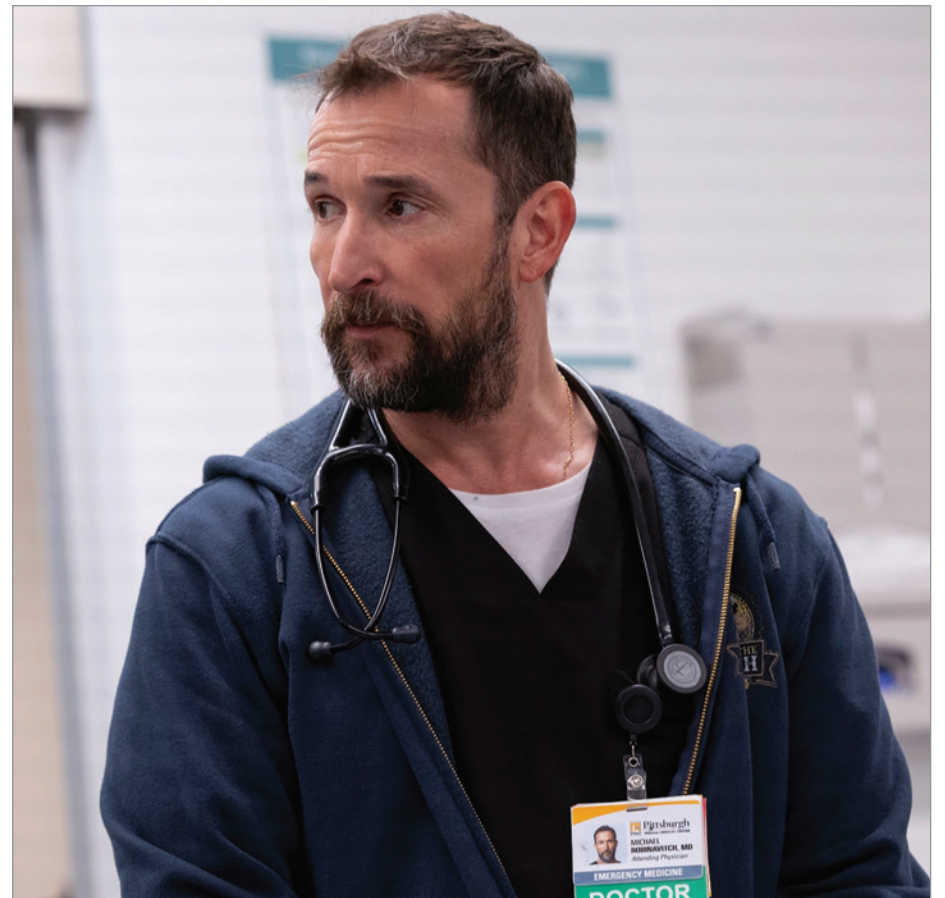
But the cold? The bitter January cold that threatens to take your skin, your ears, your nose, and anything else you leave exposed. I have decided that I no longer need to prove to anyone that I can survive any weather. That there's no bad skiing, just bad dress. But you know what? I don't have to ski every day when the temps are below zero. It takes an entire day just to thaw out. I know I can do it, I just don't want to anymore. I can appreciate the beautiful day by looking out the window with a mug of hot chocolate (and lots of marshmallows) and a wonderful book.

*Merisa Sherman is a long-time Killington resident, global real estate advisor, and Coach PomPom. Share your Killington stories at Merisa.Sherman@SothebysRealty.com.*



Killington

By Polly Mikula



Courtesy WarnerMedia

Noah Wyle stars as Dr. Michael Robinavitch on MAX's "The Pitt," which began airing on Jan. 9.

## ← Screens & Streams

from page 26

"The Pitt" serves up much of the same classic storylines and plot essentials we've come to expect: Pittsburgh Trauma Medical Hospital is an understaffed, over-populated-with patients healthcare facility with doctors and nurses still dealing with the psychological stresses from the COVID-19 pandemic, including Wyle's "seen-it-all" Dr. Robinavitch. "The Pitt" starts where these shows always begin, on the first day of the arrival of new medical students and interns. So far, so good. I know I'm not making things too enticing for those not already addicted to these types of shows. But here is where "The Pitt" sets itself apart from all of those shows that came before it.

### A day in the life of an emergency department

"The Pitt" is a 15-episode season played out that depicts a single day. The action begins at 7 a.m. and won't end until 10 p.m. that night at the conclusion of episode 15. This Jack Bower "24" style approach is perfect for the adrenaline junkie. From the outset, "The Pitt" establishes an overwhelmed emergency department waiting room, where people may be waiting several or more hours to be seen. With this endless supply of new patients, "The Pitt" doesn't need to worry about things getting boring. After 15 episodes, chances are, someone who came into the emergency room that morning may still be waiting.

Each episode (four episodes have aired so far) brings new cases, emergencies, and holdovers from the previous episodes. Slowly, we get to meet the cast. A point of contention from my wife (a nurse practitioner), who noticed all of the doctors and nurses wearing their badges at an appropriate mandated level, and all of the interns and medical students wearing their badges on their waists is she said that wearing the badge at one's waist is illegal. I guess this was done purposely to help better establish who is an intern and medical student and who are the established nurses and doctors. However, the way "The Pitt" goes about the protocols, diagnosis, and treatments on the show, she said, was amazingly accurate.

### Accurate and gruesome

Another element that sets "The Pitt" apart from other medical shows is its ability to show an emergency room at its goriest. This show is not constricted by the censorship found in a typical network drama. It goes for realism at every turn, making some moments squeamish even when seeing such an approach is refreshing. Also, swearing and other content that might prove too much for network television isn't an issue here. So, while "The Pitt" may ultimately not offer much more than those medical shows that came before it, the execution is new, exciting, and reason enough to give the show a watch. It bolsters a fine cast of engaging characters, and Wyle delivers a performance nuanced enough (almost) to make you think he's been running an emergency department since he left "ER" in 2005.

There is a lot I'm leaving out here, but trust me, it's more fun to watch the show cold and enjoy your pulse beginning to race as these episodes unfold. With this a-day-in-the-life formula and never-ending patients in wait, "The Pitt" could run for years to come.

"The Pitt" airs Thursdays on MAX.



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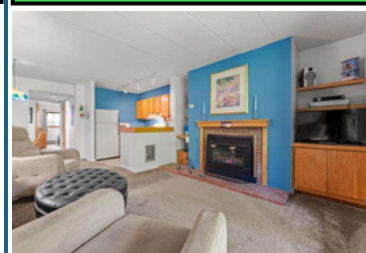
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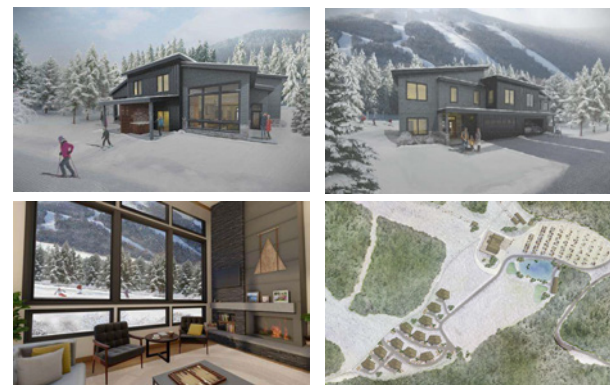
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