



## VERMONT OFFERS FREE ADMISSION TO STATE PARKS

The state of Vermont is offering free admission to state parks and state historic sites June 10-11 as part of Vermont Days.

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## GOV. PHIL SCOTT COMES TO RUTLAND

Gov. Phil Scott spoke to a supportive crowd at Rutland's Southside Steak House Monday morning, June 5, hosted by the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR).

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## WILDFIRE SMOKE CAUSES HAZE, AIR QUALITY ADVISORY

The Vermont Dept. of Environmental Conservation issued an air quality advisory on Monday afternoon, June 5, warning the air quality could be dangerous for at-risk groups. Haze could be seen throughout the region, Tuesday.

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By Erica Canada

## Sherburner is open, ready to ride

Jordan Spear, director of marketing at Killington Resort, rides the new Sherburner trail with his family — Amy Spear, vice president of tourism at the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, and 4-year-old daughter Ella — Saturday, June 3. The Spears attended the official ribbon cutting before riding the trail for the first time with a group of enthusiastic locals. The Sherburner is a 3.4 mile loop that connects with Pesky Cairn at Gifford Woods. The new trail was made possible in part by a \$75,000 grant from the state as well as contributions from Killington Mountain Bike Club and town of Killington. See more photos from the ribbon cutting and group ride event Saturday on page 4.

## Aldermen increase parking rates, fines

### Staff report

Parking rates and fines are going up in Rutland.

The Board of Aldermen unanimously voted on Monday, June 5 to increase the meter rates to \$1.50 per hour, up from 50 cents an hour.

The board also voted 6-4 to double fines to \$30 for an expired meter. A second violation would be \$45 and a third violation would be \$60.

Prior to the vote, the parking committee compared Rutland's parking rates to nine nearby towns, where they found the parking rates ranged from 95 cents an hour in Barre to \$2.35 per hour in Lake George, New York.

Alderwoman Sharon Davis pushed back on the increases, explaining nearby towns don't compare to Rutland.

Downtown parking → 10

## How Killington stayed open until June

New snowmaking technology and a passionate team helped make it possible

By Brooke Geery

Most people don't associate skiing and snowboarding with the month of June, but at Killington Resort, it's always the goal. That being said, it's no easy feat. Ask anyone who showed up on June 4 last year and they're sure to tell you it was an incredible experience complete with smiles and tie-dye t-shirts. They'll probably also mention rappelling down the Superstar headwall and traversing large strips of mud to make it to the bottom.

This year, things were different. With temperatures in the 80s at the end of May, many at the resort didn't expect to make it through Memorial Day weekend. But when June 1 hit, a reasonably thick white strip of snow covered Superstar from top to bottom, with only a short walk between the snow and the lift at the base. The top of the lift was connected, and the headwall was skiable all day without hitting rocks.

How did they pull it off? It took a little help from Mother Nature, a team of people working long hours, and a bit of new technology.

Grooming manager David Wright, a graduate of the KSRM program at Green Mountain College (now Resort Hospital-

Skiing in June → 4



By Brooke Geery

Skiers and riders enjoy the last day on Superstar, June 1.

# Bear Mountain housing development in Killington receives Act 250 permit

By Katy Savage

After more than a year-long wait, developers were granted a permit to start phase one of a 102-unit ski on, ski off housing development in Killington.

The developer, Ottawaquechee Realty Associates, LLC, was awarded an Act 250 permit for Phase 1 of the three-phase project on June 1, pending a 30 day appeal process.

"We're pleased to have it but it's basically cut into our available warm weather period that you

can be building," developer Steve Malone said.

The project, called Base Camp at Bear Mountain, located on Bear Mountain Road, was first considered 15 years ago, but was put on pause when the economy collapsed in 2008.

With the Act 250 permit in hand, Malone will now execute a sales agreement that was put in place in 2007 to purchase 25 acres of land from Killington Resort.

"We've been on calls all morning with under-

lying contractors to make sure we can still get started," Malone's partner Richard Saunders said.

Phase 1 consists of building 12 duplex buildings, totaling 24 units. It also includes installing a gatehouse, an access road, driveways, parking lots, and water storage and distribution systems.

"That's the macros of the next 24 months," Saunders said.

Saunders and Malone applied for the Act 250

Act 250 → 3



# Governor Scott cites shrinking workforce, student population and housing shortage as main economic challenges

Says immigration is a possible opportunity during visit to Rutland

By Curt Peterson

Gov. Phil Scott spoke to an audibly supportive crowd at Rutland's Southside Steak House Monday morning, June 5, hosted by the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region (CEDRR).

Scott cited the state's economic challenges, including a shrinking workforce, student depopulation in the school system, and the housing shortage. He said each day six workforce members leave Vermont and student numbers drop by three. As a result, the general population is aging — Vermont is the second oldest state after Maine.

This puts a strain on the economy.

When asked about possibly drawing younger families and workers to Vermont from the pool of immigrants at the U.S. border — particularly skilled and trainable individuals — to help fill necessary gaps in Vermont. Scott agreed the immigrant pool is an obvious source to remedy some of Vermont's demographic problems, and could help the state economically in the future. He said he has written letters both to former president Trump and subsequently to president Biden, asking for an increase in immigrants assigned for resettlement in Vermont.

Trump did not respond. Biden allotted a higher number, but it was not a significant increase, Scott implied.

In a March 2023 report on state-by-state immigration status for the non-profit Immigration Research Initiative, David Dyssegaard Kallick wrote, "The president, without action from Congress, has a great deal more influence over refugee resettlement than other aspects of immigration policy."

Whoever is president can set the cap on refugee resettlement each year.

The resettlement program applies only to those with refugee status — not to undocumented border crossers who are non-refugees.

Refugee status requires documentation of persecution for at least one of five characteristics: race, religion, nationality, being a member of a particular social group, or political opinion, according to U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services.

Surprisingly, Vermont is high on the list of resettlement jurisdictions, ranked No. 6 among the 50 states on a per

capita basis.

In the past 10 years 2,001 refugees have been placed in the state, 310 per 100,000 residents. In 2020 there were more than 30,000 new applicants for refugee status.

Scott said the major challenge when accepting refugees is adequate housing, already a serious problem for native Vermonters. The state has invested over \$30 million in addition to private investment in creating new housing.

He said the Legislature ignored his budget request for \$5 million for renovating unused dwellings to improve housing accessibility.

"This program was a success in the past, putting 600 housing units into the market, but the legislators didn't want to re-fund it," he said, Monday.



By Curt Peterson

Gov. Phil Scott addressed Rutland area residents and business owners at CEDRR's Legislative Breakfast, Monday, June 5.

# Two Leicester men shot in targeted attack; one killed

LEICESTER— One man was killed and a second was injured in a shooting Sunday night, June 4, in Leicester.

Police said the shooting was a targeted act directed at the victims, and there is no broader threat to the general public.

State police responded after they received a 911 call reporting a disturbance on Route 7 at about 9:55 p.m. on Sunday. Law enforcement officers discovered one man dead just north of Fern Lake Road and a second man suffering from gunshot injuries. The injured man was taken to the hospital.

Police did not identify the men, but a person in the neighborhood said the shooting took place at the Lanpher residence. The state police crime scene search team was reportedly at that property at 1352 Route 7.

State police are investigating a report that a black Nissan sedan was seen leaving the area around the time of the shooting. Police are continuing to seek a suspect or suspects tied to this incident, along with the black Nissan sedan.

The state police would like to speak to anyone who might have seen something suspicious or out of the ordinary between 9:30-10 p.m. Sunday near the location where the shooting occurred. Anyone with information should call the VSP New Haven barracks at 802-388-4919 or leave an anonymous tip online at [vsp.vermont.gov/tipssubmit](https://vsp.vermont.gov/tipssubmit).

This investigation involves members of the Vermont state police Major Crime Unit, Bureau of Criminal Investigations, Field Force Division and Victim Services Unit. Police departments from Brandon and Middlebury are providing assistance.

# Wildfire smoke causes haze and air quality advisory

By Erin Petenko/VT Digger

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation issued an air quality advisory on Monday afternoon, June 5, warning the poor air quality could be dangerous for at-risk groups.

Wildfire smoke from Quebec was reported as far as the Upper Valley on Tuesday morning, June 6.

Widespread fires in Alberta, Nova Scotia, Quebec and eastern Ontario have caused "unhealthy" air quality across parts of the U.S., but this is the first time this year it has affected Vermont so heavily, according to Bennett Leon, planning section chief of the department's air quality and climate division.

The National Weather Service forecast there would be improvements throughout the day, while scattered rain could reduce the wildfire smoke even further, meteorologist Rebecca Duell said. But since the wildfires are ongoing, there could be "off and on" impacts to Vermont in the near future.

Leon said the current level of pollutants in the air is considered "unhealthy for sensitive groups," including people with respiratory conditions, young children, older adults and people who work outside. The department recommends at-risk groups stay indoors with the windows closed, and everyone should keep an eye out for symptoms such as coughing and shortness of breath.

According to the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, school activities with short outdoor periods such as recess should be safe, but for longer activities like athletics, kids may need more breaks and less intense activities.

Leon said Vermonters could use the agency's AirNow.gov website to check the air quality in their area going forward, along with more detailed recommendations for different categories of air pollution.

# Registration for gift-of-life blood drive now open

Appointments are now available for the third annual Pete Giancola Gift-of-Life Mini Marathon Blood Drive, which will be held July 11 at Noel's at the Franklin Events Center and the Rutland Elks Lodge.

Vermont's second-largest blood drive, after the winter Gift-of-Life Marathon, is intended to help replenish supplies of critically needed blood during the traditionally difficult summer collection season. The drive is named for former Rutland resident Pete Giancola, a local business leader and philanthropist who received numerous blood donations over a 10-year battle with cancer. Giancola died in 2020, and the annual drive was named in his honor that year.

The drive will be held July 11 from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. at both sites. Appointments are strongly encouraged and may be made by calling 800-RED-CROSS or visiting [redcrossblood.org](https://redcrossblood.org). Enter sponsor code MINIGIFT. Noel's at the Franklin Events Center is at 1 Scale Avenue in Rutland. The Elks Lodge is at 44 Pleasant Street.

The drive is sponsored by Green Mountain Power. This year's theme is helping build community, which Giancola did through his work in Rutland.

"Blood donors gave Pete a tremendous gift," said Terry Jaye, who played music with Giancola and is a longtime blood drive supporter. "We hope to draw Pete's friends and family members in to continue his legacy by donating blood in his name."

Grace Giancola, one of Pete's four children, said blood donors gave the family an incredible gift during his cancer treatments. "We had an entire decade with my dad thanks to donors who selflessly gave of themselves," Grace said. "It was an incredible gift, one we hope to help other families receive, as every donation can help extend or improve someone's life."

Summertime, when high schools and colleges are closed, is among the most difficult times of the year to collect blood. Steve Costello, one of the organizers, said the drive raises awareness of summer shortages and helps fill local and regional needs each year. The goal is to collect 267 pints.

"The need for blood is never-ending, but summer donors are particularly important," Costello said.

Donors will receive a GMP pen and a Red Cross dry bag, which can keep items dry at the beach, while boating or kayaking, or in unexpected summer rains.



# Stable Inn in Rochester opens

By Katy Savage

An 1840s mercantile that once supported the agricultural community back when Rochester was dominated by farms and the logging industry, has been transformed into an inn.

The Stable Inn in Rochester opened in May after five years of renovation and development. A grand opening celebration is scheduled for June 7 at 3 p.m., with local musicians and food prepared by a wood-fired oven.

“It took quite a while to organize it,” said owner Anne Mackay.

Mackay owns a couple businesses on North Main Street in Rochester with her husband, Doon Hinderyckx, including a bike shop and art gallery. They originally opened the inn in 2014 as a hostel.

“It evolved to become a very large energy project,” Mackay said. “We decided to go all out and see how a property like this could be developed.”

They kept the original timber frame but added new fixtures to the inside and redid the foundation. They also worked closely with Efficiency Vermont to make the building as sustainable as possible with a pellet stove, solar panels and heat pumps.

“I think it’s the future now,” Mackay said. “When we went through Tropical Store Irene, we made that commitment that the future for us was going to be self-sufficient. We don’t want to feed into the old energy models anymore.”

Mackay secured a historic preservation grant and tax credit to help with



By Brett Yates

The Stable Inn in Rochester is now open after extensive renovations.

part of the renovation.

The inn now has 14 rooms, ranging from shared rooms to private ensembles, plus a community kitchen for guests to prepare their own food.

“The ceilings are all very low,” Mackay said. “The floors roll around in every direction. It was basically a gut renovation. Saving the building has been really gratifying.”

Mackay said it will be a space for artist’ retreats and for people who want to access recreational assets of the area, like the Velomont Trail. The Stable Inn is also part of the Vermont Huts Association, which provides affordable shelter on Vermont’s trails

for people hiking, cross country skiing and mountain biking.

“You can come rent a room very affordably,” Mackay said.

The inn is one of four businesses owned by Mackay and Hinderyckx within their BigTown Vermont (BT—VT) hub. Green Mountain Bikes, which opened in 1987, has been a staple in the community, while BigTown Gallery opened in 2003. They plan to open another business — Green Mountain Bikes Rental Center — in 2024.

Festivities for the opening celebration begin on June 7 at 3 p.m. For more information visit [bigtownvermont.com](http://bigtownvermont.com).

**Act 250:** .....  
from page 1  
permit in December 2021 and moved through the extensive process, which considers wildlife, building aesthetics, water and air pollution, and other factors, with few questions or concerns from state officials.

The first step this summer is to move a snowmaking waterline, which sits underneath some of the build sites. The work will lower the grade of the Bear Cub Ski Trail, and deconstruct the Devil’s Fiddle ski lift.

“That’s the most sensitive piece of the infrastructure that has to be done and it has to be done right,” Saunders said.

The Act 250 commission has not yet approved the master plan for the entire three-phase project, explaining “there is not yet sufficient evidence to support such a conclusion,” under criterion 1A of the Act 250 law.

The law requires the developers to show water health and environmental regulations will be met after site construction.

If approved, Phase 2 will build 72 residential units consisting of townhomes and multi-family buildings. Phase 3 will consist of six single-family residences.

The Act 250 permit requires each phase of the project to be built out in its entirety before proceeding to the next phase. The developers have also stated they plan to build homes only when they have purchase and sales agreements. It’s unclear how long it will take for the entire project to be completed.

“It depends on the market, the economy,” Malone said. Saunders and Malone have sold about 15 units so far and spent last week reconnecting with those buyers. “I’m sure they’re going to be thrilled because they’ve been waiting,” Saunders said.



## Remembrance for Clary Jonker to be held June 10

A remembrance will be held for Clary Jonker on Saturday, June 10 from 3-5 p.m. at the Killington Welcome Center. There will be drinks, hors d’oeuvres and share

memories of Clary. If you plan to attend, view and RSVP to the invite online at [tinyurl.com/claryjonker](http://tinyurl.com/claryjonker) or leave a text or voicemail at 802 422-9518.

## KILLINGTON FOOD SHELF



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

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## MOUNTAIN TIMES

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

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Jason Mikula ..... Marketing Manager & Co-Publisher  
Katy Savage ..... Assistant Editor/Office Manager  
Lindsey Rogers ..... Marketing/Advertising Consultant  
Pat Wise ..... Graphic Designer

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For classifieds/yard sales: [classifieds@mountaintimes.info](mailto:classifieds@mountaintimes.info)

For events: [events@mountaintimes.info](mailto:events@mountaintimes.info)

### Contributors:

Julia Purdy	Sandra Dee Owens
Curt Peterson	Brett Yates
Gary Salmon	Kevin Theissen
Dom Cioffi	Robin Alberti
Mary Ellen Shaw	Dave Hoffenberg
Paul Holmes	Victoria Gaither
Merisa Sherman	Jim Harrison
Liz DiMarco Weinmann	Alison Clarkson



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The Mountain Times • P.O. Box 183

Killington, VT 05751 • 802-422-2399

Email: [editor@mountaintimes.info](mailto:editor@mountaintimes.info)

[mountaintimes.info](http://mountaintimes.info)



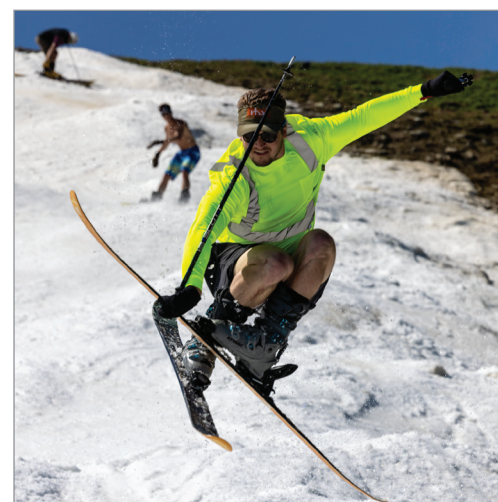
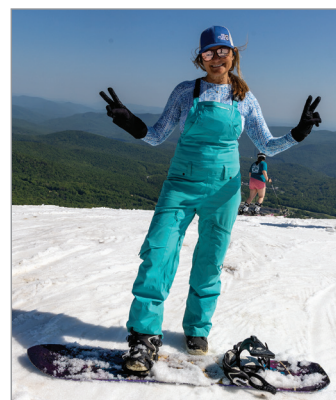
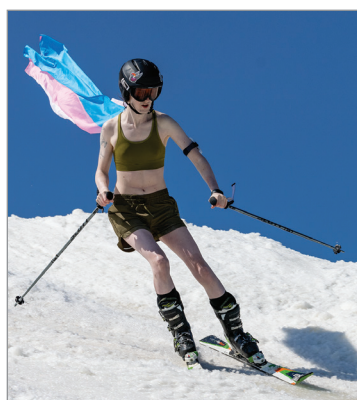
# Killington Mountain Bike Club debuts new trail: Sherburner

Photos by Erica Canada

The ribbon was official cut Saturday, June 3, at Gifford Woods.



By Brooke Geery, Killington Resort



## Skiing in June: from page 1

ity Management at Vermont State University) and Beast team member since 2005, said improved snow farming was possible thanks to the new Leica system from Prinoth. This technology took several seasons to be installed at Killington and was used for the first time during winter 2022/23. It comes from the construction world, essentially using the GPS location and precise elevation of the cat to calculate the depth of the snow at any given time.

Wright explained: "It's not radar!" he laughed. "It uses a LIDAR scan of the mountain, which was a multi-year process. We flew the mountain and got our terrain model of what's actually there, elevation and trail edges. The second part was installing the GPS rovers and cellular devices connected to the computer in the machine, which talk to a base station outside of my office and make the calculation of the depth of the snow under the cat. Having the terrain model, we know the elevation of the terrain in every given spot. As the machine drives over the snow, it calculates that difference and the operator can see it in real time on the screen."

Short version? "We were able to manage the snow better than in previous years," Wright summarized.

Of course, keeping snow through May in Vermont requires a lot of snow to begin with. Efforts to build out Superstar began during an unseasonably warm November for the Heroic Killington Cup over Thanksgiving weekend. The snowmaking team managed to take things from grass to World-Cup-skiing-ready in a matter of days. That base layer held up to several melt downs and every time the temperatures dropped and capacity allowed, the guns blasted Superstar, as well as the rest of Killington and Pico Mountain. Not only did this make for some great "manmade pow days" in December-March, it built up over 30 feet of base on Superstar and kept the season alive long after most resorts had called it quits.

Wright explains how snowmaking and grooming work together.

"We are part of the Snow Surfaces Department, led by Dave Lacombe," he said. "We have a daily snow plan call that we get with Mountain Ops, Marketing and Ski Patrol.

A lot of those decisions about where to make snow are made based on grooming [and ski patrol] reporting back. In the past it was institutional knowledge, we would just use whatever operators were saying - this is weak, that's strong, we need to make snow here, run these guns, run those guns. Snowmaking would go and factor that into their plan. A lot of times snowmaking will reach back out to us and say, hey, can those guns go off? And now with the software we can run over a trail and go like, yeah, we're good. Kill it."

During the peak of the season, The Beast has 40 cat operators working in two shifts with 26 total snowcats to provide excellent skiing and riding daily. Once May hits, the workload and numbers drop significantly — the grooming team consists of Wright and 2-3 operators. The Snow Plan calls get shorter, but there are still decisions to be made on the best plan of attack.

"Our strategy depends on the weather," Wright said. "How did it ski? Did it get bumped up? What is our end game? The more we disturb the snow, the theory is the faster it melts. Groom the whole trail? Groom half the trail? Groom none of the trail? It depends. We leave machines at the top and at the bottom. There's been nights where we've not groomed anything but the load and unload and let it ski naturally and bumped wall to wall. And we adapt the plan as needed when we actually get out there."

Diehard skiers enjoyed the fruits of their labor every weekend, and many didn't want it to end. But as May wrapped up and the mercury topped 80, it was time to call it for the season. With June 1 falling on a Thursday, we debated holding out for one final Saturday send off, but ultimately the team decided on quality over longevity. History would prove we made the right call, as the snow had melted quickly and a rain cloud covered what was left on Saturday, June 3, eroding it down to mud.

"It was a challenging season but thanks to our great team and the aid of new technology, we were able to provide the best June skiing at Killington Resort," Dave Lacombe said. "Quality is something we stake our reputation on, so it feels great to deliver."



# The Godnick Adult Center: a lifeline against loneliness, isolation

While many area residents and visitors sadly noted the end of the ski season, others are rejoicing that summer is finally here. We're the ones who counted the days until we could enjoy Vermont's picturesque scenery, quaint downtowns, and abundant

arts offerings – in comfortable sandals and sundresses.

There are older adults reading this, however, who are not the rugged outdoorsy type, nor do they enjoy loud and crowded musical performances, or spending hours on their feet meandering in and out

of whimsical shops and chilly galleries.

Instead, they may still be experiencing the isolation and loneliness customarily associated with winter.

In fact, U.S. Surgeon General Dr. Vivek Murthy recently launched a campaign to combat what he has called "our epidemic of loneliness and isolation...an underappreciated public health crisis that has harmed individual and societal health." Two years ago, neurosurgeon and CNN chief medical correspondent Dr. Sanjay Gupta released a book titled: *Keep Sharp: Build a Better Brain at Any Age*, which became a bestseller. Among Dr. Gupta's most adamant recommendations for combating brain decline at any age are: exercise and socialize.

As June is National Alzheimer's Awareness Month, it's worth noting that for people over 40, isolation and loneliness are two of the most pressing risk factors for Alzheimer's disease, which the Alzheimer's Association indicates affects more than 55 million people worldwide.

Here in Vermont, we are fortunate that

there are several community centers within 20 miles of the Killington-Rutland area that offer engaging, stimulating, and inspiring activities for older adults. According to state records, Vermont has 48 of these centers. The Godnick Adult Center, on Woodstock Avenue in Rutland, is one such place.

Built in 1971 as a senior center, it was renamed the Godnick Adult Center in 1999, in honor of Dr. Robert Godnick, a longtime Rutland resident and physician who was a passionate advocate for seniors and was instrumental in the development of the Center.

Today, the Godnick Adult Center is part of Rutland's Recreation and Parks Department and funded by the City of Rutland and private donations. The Center is open to all adults, non-residents as well as residents, regardless of income or ability. At first glance it seems like any other place that offers older adults opportunities to socialize, learn new skills, and stay active.

There are arts and crafts workshops, plus social events, and fitness classes that include yoga, Pilates, Zumba, and fitness training. The Center also offers computer classes, financial literacy workshops, and memoir writing as well as support groups for caregivers and people with disabilities.

However, for some older adults who are experiencing tremendous loss and loneliness, the Godnick Adult Center is nothing short of a lifeline, facilitated by a team of educators, social workers, recreation specialists, dietitians and other professionals.

"I have so many stories of individuals who had a hard time just walking through the door," said April Cioffi, the Godnick Adult Center's program director, in a recent interview.

"When they come in, we greet them with warmth and understanding," Cioffi said. "They may recently have gone through a divorce. They may have just lost a spouse. They might have called three or four times before they even came in," she added.

Cioffi has been with the Rutland Recreation and Parks Department since 2006,



Submitted

*April Cioffi, the program director of the Godnick, gives two thumbs up after enjoying a ride.*

earning several promotions along the way. A graduate of St. Michael's College, with a B.A. in fine and studio arts, Cioffi worked at the Rec department during her summers off, running youth-oriented camps for hockey, basketball, and soccer.

It's reasonable for anyone to wonder how Cioffi's background with youth recreation led to her running a program that nurtures older adults' capacity for improving their overall health.

When asked, Cioffi (who just turned 40) quipped, "I consider myself an old soul. I don't feel like I'm always doing the things that my age group is doing, like risk taking. As you can see, I've stayed in the same job for 16 years, which is not the norm for my age group."

Through her work at the Godnick Adult Center though, Cioffi has emerged as a leading Vermont advocate for senior health, lifelong learning, and anti-ageist attitudes. Among her many responsibilities, she is president elect of the Vermont Parks and Recreation Association and serves on key committees promoting health. Plus she is married, with two children, ages 13 and 10, and two adult stepchildren.

The Godnick Adult Center recently was awarded a grant to build a more accessible walking path behind the facility, an initiative that was prompted by a community survey. To that point, Cioffi praises various partners that facilitate the Center's work, including AAA, the Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging, Come Alive Outside, other Vermont senior centers, and the Vermont Department of Disabilities, Aging, and Independent Living.

She is also quick to praise Kim Peters, the director of Rutland's Recreation and Parks Department. When I approached Cioffi and Peters simultaneously regarding an interview for this feature, Peters immediately deferred to Cioffi, which is admirable in and of itself.

As Cioffi concluded our interview, she emphasized how vital the Godnick Adult Center is to so many in our area.

"We have some folks who come first thing in the morning on Monday to do an exercise class and end up staying all the way through our activities and not leaving until three o'clock," she said. "This is a place they want to come back to. We have people who tell us that this place changed their life."

For more information, visit: [rutlandrec.com/godnick](http://rutlandrec.com/godnick) or call 802-773-1853.

Liz DiMarco Weinmann, MBA, is principal and owner of Liz DiMarco Weinmann Consulting, L3C, based in Rutland, serving charitable and educational institutions: [lizdimarcoweinmann.com](http://lizdimarcoweinmann.com).



Submitted

*A group participates in a chair aerobics class at the Godnick Adult Center in Rutland, one of the many movement offerings at the center.*



# A big deal

Earlier in the session, one of our colleagues on the House Appropriations Committee, Rep. Woodman Page of Newport, referred to one of the changes in the Medicaid program as a big deal when explaining his sections of the budget on the House floor. The change he was



By Rep. Jim Harrison

referring to may or may not have been a big deal, but it was the way he said it that we all remember. It was straight forward monotone. And to have a little fun at Woody's expense, we have used his line with several subsequent floor announcements

since then.

While some of those may have been stretching the "Big Deal" term, the Governor's veto of the state budget bill really is a big deal. This is arguably the only must-pass bill all session. It authorizes spending (\$8.5 billion) for virtually all that the state government does for the coming fiscal year beginning July 1 and is referred to in Montpelier as "the Big Bill."

It also guarantees the Legislature will return on June 20 to address this veto.

The Legislature can override his veto with a two-thirds vote of both the House and Senate; sustain his veto and then pass a new budget with enough votes to override another veto; or find some middle ground with the Governor to get his signature on a new version.

Unlike the recent compromise on the debt ceiling legislation in Washington between Speaker McCarthy and President Biden, there is a real likelihood that Vermont legislative leaders will enact the budget bill, H.494, by enlisting their supermajorities to override the veto.

When the budget passed the House on May 12, some Democrats and Progressives opposed the measure as they argued for more spending, not less as the governor proposed, to continue the motel voucher program.

In Scott's veto message he wrote, "...I'm also concerned the substantial increase in ongoing base spending, that Vermonters must bear into the future, is not sustainable. This increase — more than twice the rate of current inflation — is especially concerning because it does not include the full cost of the new programs

created this year that rely on new tax revenue or will otherwise add to Vermonters' costs, including the childcare expansion, universal school meals, the clean heat standard and more..."

When the Legislature returns on June 20, other bills vetoed will also be considered for override votes. While the list of bills in that category is not yet complete, here are some we know:

- H.305 – increases in professional license fees
- H.386 – allowing 16-year-olds to vote on local elections and hold office in Brattleboro
- H.509 – allowing non-citizens to vote on local elections in Burlington
- S.39 – increased compensation and insurance benefits for legislators
- S.6 – limiting law enforcement interrogation techniques

Additionally, the new payroll tax included in the childcare bill could invite a veto on H.217. The bill was delivered to the Governor on May 31, so he has until June 6 for action. Another bill, H.165, which adds close to \$30 million to property taxes for universal school meals, has not been sent to the governor as of this writing. It is unclear whether he will support the measure.

Although the focus of the legislative session later this month will be on the vetoes, especially the all-important budget, other bills, such as the expansion of Vermont's bottle deposit system could see further action.

And while the full Legislature is on recess until June 20, the special committee on impeachment inquiry for Franklin County's sheriff and state's attorney, has begun meeting. If the committee concludes there are impeachable offenses for either of two officials, the House may be called back to vote on impeachment later this summer. If impeachment articles are approved by two-thirds in the House, the measure will go to the Senate for a trial. Two-thirds vote in the Senate is necessary for conviction.

I will plan another update following the June 20-22 session. In the meantime, enjoy the sunshine!

You may reach me at [JHarrison@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:JHarrison@leg.state.vt.us) or [harrisonforvermont.com](http://harrisonforvermont.com).

*Rep. Jim Harrison is the statehouse representative for Mendon, Killington, Chittenden and Pittsfield. He can be reached at [JHarrison@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:JHarrison@leg.state.vt.us) or [harrisonforvermont.com](http://harrisonforvermont.com).*

## Governor signs housing crisis bill

Gov. Phil Scott signed S.100 – known as the Housing Opportunities Made for Everyone or HOME Act – on June 5, which will enable more significant progress addressing Vermont's housing shortage.

"This bill represents what we can get done when we all come to the table, work through our differences, and reach compromise to the benefit of all Vermonters, especially our most vulnerable and marginalized," said Governor Phil Scott. "I want to thank the committees of jurisdiction for their efforts on this bill and for staying at the table until the last days of the session to get the bill over the finish line. We will continue to focus on turning the tide of this housing crisis. More important work lies ahead, but this bill is a great start."

The HOME Act modernizes local zoning and land use regulations by allowing higher density development in areas with sewer and water service, which will create more housing opportunities and affordable homes for more Vermonters.

Key provisions of S.100 include:

- **Affordable and Inclusive Housing Expansion:** The bill creates resources to support the construction and rehabilitation of safe and affordable housing units, prioritizing the needs of low-income individuals, families, and vulnerable populations while expanding successful programs like the Vermont Housing Improvement Program (VHIP). S.100 also promotes inclusive and accessible housing options by updating accessibility standards in new construction and renovations.
- **Land Use Regulations:** The bill lowers barriers to housing development in smart growth areas without compromising environmental protections. It aligns state and local land use policy to enable more homes to be built in State designated centers. This bill enables Act 250 exemptions for affordable housing in all the designated centers, including villages.
- **Municipal Zoning Reforms:** The bill standardizes municipal zoning in residential districts served by water and sewer by lowering parking thresholds, increasing building and lot standards and permitting multiunit dwellings and shelters to be built, supporting more housing options for both low- and middle-income Vermonters (effective December 2024).

The bill includes additional provisions and directs funding to further address the needs of renters and homeowners, which will be finalized with the state fiscal year 2024 budget.

"As I've said before, we can't build housing in the clouds," said Department of Housing and Community Development Commissioner Josh Hanford. "This bill creates opportunities to create new and more dense housing in the places we want it, rehab previously offline units, and reform our land and zoning laws all of which will begin to address this housing crisis. We are thankful to all our local, regional, and state partners along with the legislature for reaching this compromise."

This legislation is the result of a months-long collaboration and negotiation led by legislators and supported by the Scott administration, municipal leaders and planners, environmental organizations, homebuilders and more.

"Vermonters have never been more unified in asking us to prioritize permanent, affordable housing," said Sen. Keshia Ram Hinsdale (D-Chittenden). "They can be proud that we set aside our differences in Montpelier and forged an uncommon alliance to deliver historic reforms. Creating a pathway to homeownership should not be partisan, and what we accomplished put Vermont families ahead of political gridlock, so we can see smart, compassionate growth in all corners of the state."

"This is an issue that, directly or indirectly, affects all Vermonters," said Rep. Seth Bon-gartz (D-Bennington-4). "It is rewarding that the Administration and the Legislature were able to come together, work shoulder-to-shoulder, and get something this important done for the people of Vermont."

"We are at a critical moment on the issue of housing, and I believe this bill will be an important step forward," added Scott. "Given the depth of our housing crisis, we know there are more reforms needed to really turn the tide, particularly with Act 250. Since I became governor, I have pushed for needed changes, which the Legislature has yet to adopt. I will continue to pursue commonsense modernizations to make sure all Vermonters can afford a safe, decent home."

## State employees to enroll in family and medical leave July 1

Gov. Phil Scott today announced continued progress towards the implementation of the Vermont Family and Medical Leave Insurance Plan (VT-FMLI). The Department of Financial Regulation approved the VT-FMLI insurance coverages and rates filed by The Hartford, a private insurance carrier who was selected to deliver and administer the program benefits.

Phase 1 of the three-phased program goes into effect on July 1, 2023, when state employees are enrolled

in the program.

"This is an important step as we move forward with Vermont's innovative paid family and medical leave program," said Scott. "Within two years, every working Vermonter and employer will have access to this affordable program, without relying on a mandatory new tax. It truly will be a win-win."

The benefits will provide up to six weeks of paid family and

The benefits will provide up to six weeks of paid family and medical leave.

medical leave benefits at 60% of an employee's average weekly wage for an employee's own serious health condition, bonding with a child, or caring for family members. Employers could opt to expand upon this baseline benefit.

"I am very pleased with the timely review and approval of The

Hartford's filing on the part of my staff to keep the Vermont Voluntary Paid Family Medical Leave Program on schedule to meet the

Phase 1 implementation date," said Kevin Gaffney, commissioner at the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation. "We look forward to a successful implementation, leveraging the experience, expertise and efficiency a private insurer brings to the process."

Upon completion of the Phase 1 implementation, the state will work closely with The Hartford to educate and promote Phase 2 (employer groups of two or more) of the program for a July 1, 2024 implementation. "The dept expects to receive a product and rate filing for Phase 2 of the program later this year with a goal of approving those programs by year end 2023," Gaffney added.

The voluntary nature of the program will allow Vermont employers to tailor a plan that suits their needs.



# State awarded \$1 million grant to expand community-based mental health, substance use services

On May 30 the Vermont Department of Mental Health announced that the state had received a new federal grant to help provide mental health and substance use services to more people throughout the state.

The \$1 million, one-year planning grant aimed at developing a network of Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs).

“We’re excited and grateful to be one of just 15 states to have received this grant,” said Emily Hawes, commissioner of the Dept. of Mental Health. “CCBHCs are next-level opportunities for us to build on the broad network of services Vermont has in place to support the mental and physical health of Vermonters,” she said. “This grant will help us continue our move from fee-for-service payment and support our new programs, such as the 9-8-8 National Suicide Prevention Line, and Mobile Crisis Response.”

CCBHCs are community-based mental health and substance use disorder treatment providers that offer a wide range of services, including 24/7 crisis care, outpatient mental health and substance use disorder treatment, primary care screening and monitoring, and peer support services. The new grant will support the development of a comprehensive state-wide plan for CCBHCs in Vermont. This plan will include the solicitation of stakeholder and community input, establishing certification standards, and developing a reimbursement model for the implementation and sustainability of CCBHCs across the state. The clinics must meet rigorous standards for quality of care and service delivery and provide evidence-based treatment services tailored to meet the unique needs of individuals and families.

“The CCBHC model supports our ongoing efforts to holistically integrate mental health and substance use programs into a comprehensive system of care that treats the whole person,” said Health Commissioner Mark Levine. “This funding will help us provide even greater access to high-quality, evidence-based services when and where Vermonters need them.”

Under the new federal designation, states can receive Medicaid for a wider range of services and can typically offer them more widely, giving them a greater potential to help people before they are in crisis, Commissioner Hawes said. “CCBHCs will help Vermont expand access to high-quality, evidence-based care for all Vermonters and their families, no matter where they live,” she said.

## Needs by the numbers

- The number of youth and adults in Vermont seeking emergency services increased by nearly 50% between 2019 and 2022.
- Substance-use related deaths in 2022 were the highest ever recorded in a calendar year in Vermont, with

237 known opioid-related accidental and undetermined deaths among Vermonters, with some death certificates still pending.

- Alcohol remains the most frequent substance related to a substance use disorder diagnosis, and alcohol-attributable deaths increased by 36% between 2017 and 2021 (328 in 2017 to 446 in 2021).
- 92% of Vermonters who died of an accidental overdose in 2019 and 2020 had a substance use disorder diagnosis, and 53% had a mental health diagnosis.

At the state and national levels, the initiative has seen wide bipartisan support.

“My administration is committed to ensuring that everyone who needs mental health and substance use services has access to the

care they need,” said Governor Phil Scott. “This grant will help us make progress towards that goal.”

“CCBHCs would build on our current system of care, helping to ensure access to integrated mental health and substance use services, provide 24-7 crisis services, and serve people who need care when and where they need it, regardless of their ability to pay,” said Sen. Virginia ‘Ginny’ Lyons, Chair of the Vermont Senate Committee on Health and Welfare and Representative Lori Houghton, Chair of the House Committee on Health Care, in a joint statement. “We are excited to explore the potential this model could bring to Vermont.”

Four of Vermont’s designated agencies (Clara Martin Center, Rutland Mental Health Services, Health Care and Rehabilitation Services, and Northeast Kingdom Human Services) are already implementing CCBHC Planning, Development, and Implementation or Improvement and Advancement grants with other agencies hoping to join in the future.

Vermont Care Partners, which represents the state’s Designated and Specialized Services Agencies, said they “look forward to continuing to work together with the Departments to further explore the benefits of becoming a CCBHC demonstration state.”

The Dept. of Mental Health, together with the Health Dept., will begin work on program design in the summer, including soliciting input from individuals, families, providers, and community members about how the program should look in Vermont. The first part of the stakeholder process will consider a new name for the program. Vermont does not use the term “behavioral health” to describe mental health and substance use services.

For more information or for opportunities to share your voice and experience, please visit Certified Community Behavioral Health Clinics (CCBHCs) at Dept. of Mental Health: [mentalhealth.vermont.gov](https://mentalhealth.vermont.gov).



By John Hall, VTF&W

*Landowners who have fields can help protect grassland birds such as bobolinks (pictured above) by delaying mowing until later in the summer; VTF&W suggest August.*

## State urges to protect grassland birds by mowing later

Bobolinks, Savannah sparrows and eastern meadowlarks enrich our summers with their songs, but their populations have suffered dramatic, long-term declines due to the loss of their grassland habitat.

“These species have experienced declines across the continent, but on Vermont’s grasslands, especially in larger fields and more open landscapes, there are ways we can help,” said Rosalind Renfrew, biologist for the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department.

Landowners can make a difference by altering the times of year they mow fields. Fish and Wildlife is encouraging landowners to help these beloved species by waiting to mow fields

used by grassland birds, giving them a chance to rear their young.

“People maintain open, grassy fields in Vermont for a variety of reasons, from producing hay to providing pasture for grazing, to simply maintaining scenic beauty,” said Renfrew. “Mowing or brush hogging are the most common ways Vermonters maintain a grass landscape. For those who can afford it, mowing schedules can be timed to allow grassland birds to successfully raise chicks.”

Bobolinks, Savannah sparrows and eastern meadowlarks build nests right on the ground, among the grasses and wildflowers. Deer fawns, wild turkey chicks and other animals also take refuge in grass fields.

According to Renfrew, landowners who do not need to mow for animal forage can accommodate nesting birds by cutting late in the summer, preferably after August 1.

People concerned about invasive plants may choose to sometimes mow a section of their field more frequently, to keep invasive plants in check. “It can mean temporarily sacrificing part of the field,” says Renfrew, “but it can better maintain quality habitat for the birds over the long term.”

Landowners who face a loss of income from delayed mowing can apply for assistance through the Natural Resources Conservation Service or The Bobolink Project.



## GUEST EDITORIAL

## Governor's vetoes hit their mark

By Angelo Lynn

*Editor's note: Angelo Lynn is the editor and publisher of the Addison County Independent, a sister publication of the Mountain Times.*

Gov. Phil Scott's expected veto of the budget last week, and his more recent veto of a legislative pay raise, struck their mark with the expected outrage by the Democratic-dominated Legislature. But our bet is that many Vermonters may be shaking their heads in agreement with the governor, if not outright approval.

Here's the skinny: The budget presents a spending proposal that is 12.1% higher than the year before. That's at least double inflation, and almost everyone agrees that such increases can't be sustained, particularly since the federal pipeline that has been sending extra federal aid is not expected to continue. All year, Gov. Scott has been preaching that it's time to start curtailing spending before the state runs up huge deficits.

Tom Pelham, the former finance commissioner under Gov. Howard Dean and tax commissioner under Gov. James Douglas and who served on the Vermont House Appropriations Committee as an Independent, makes this point well in a recent essay. In that column, he compares the current budget quandary with the 1990-91 recession that led to Vermont's then fiscal crisis. Pelham recalled that the Legislature in 1986 had authorized \$480.3 million in spending, but by 1990 had increased it (during a time of statewide growth) to \$715.8 million — an average annual increase of 10.5%, far exceeding the 4.1% growth of Vermont's economy.

Then the 1990-91 recession hit and Vermont's economy tanked. Unemployment went from an all-time low of 3% in 1988 to 7.7% in the spring of 1991 and stayed over 7% for a year. Vermont lost 15,000 jobs. Declining state revenues led to a massive budget deficit that forced Govs. Richard Snelling and Dean to raise taxes and curb spending for the next four years before the debt was paid off.

The state's bond rating was cut, Pelham continued, and didn't recover until 1998.

The pandemic has brought on similar changes in Vermont's spending with the federal government doling out over \$10 billion in total aid. One of the consequences of that aid is that Vermont's budget has seen average spending increases of 9.49% over the past four years, growing from \$1.84 billion in FY 2018 to \$2.64 billion in FY2022, and the FY 2024 budget of \$2.71 billion calls for a 12.1% increase of General Fund and Transportation spending over the \$2.42 billion budget in FY 2023.

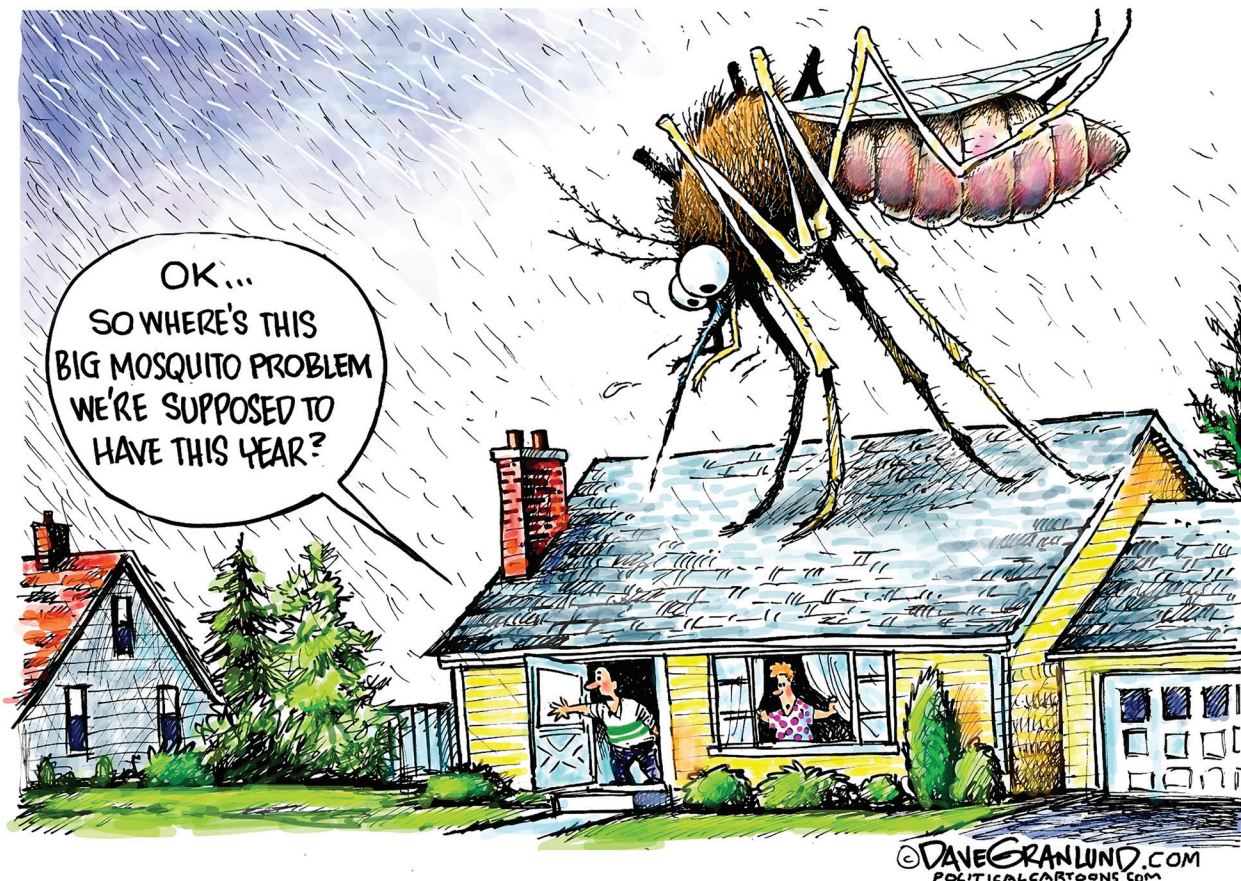
As Vermont's spending has skyrocketed, the Federal Reserve is actively working to slow down the economy with interest rate increases, purposefully engineering (if all goes well) a slight recession to cool the economy.

Pelham is not suggesting Vermont's economy will tank like it did in 1990-91, rather that it doesn't take much of a dip in a small economy to make a big difference and cause years of fiscal pain down the road. Rather, he's suggesting that a little austerity now might prevent years of suffering as the state witnessed in the early 1990s.

To that end, Gov. Scott's budget veto sends a timely warning

Vetoes → 10

The budget presents a spending proposal that is 12.1% higher than the year before. That's at least double inflation, and almost everyone agrees that such increases can't be sustained.



Big Mosquito problem by Dave Granlund, PoliticalCartoons

## LETTERS

## There is no space for poverty and misery in a rich nation

Dear Editor,

Reading about the housing crisis in Vermont and all over the country, and how a judge could change in one stroke of his pen the fate of hundreds of unhoused Vermonters, it is one grave sign that our society and our governments (federal, state and local) are moving toward a catastrophic end.

I was born and raised in Europe, came to this country many years ago, and eventually became a U.S. citizen. Yet, my upbringing keeps me linked to European values. In a rich society populated by multibillionaires, it is simply not acceptable to have a very large part of the population being unhoused. I am not using the term homeless because sometimes being homeless is an individual choice. Being unhoused is not a choice; it is being shoved out of your house by a society that doesn't properly care about its own citizens.

The responsibility is by all means and without doubt of our governments and at every level of government.

Unhoused → 10

## Vermont should ban trapping

Dear Editor,

The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife has recently proposed new trapping regulations they call "Best Management Practices (BMPs)" in response to Act 159, which was passed last year by the Vermont Legislature. The purpose of Act 159 was to improve trapping safety and the welfare and humane treatment of trapped animals. However, the BMPs do little if anything to improve animal welfare. For example, research finds that 30% of animals that are trapped can suffer amputations, even death, and the traps still meet the BMP criteria. A member of Protect Our Wildlife, a Vermont-based wildlife advocacy organization, found a trap containing a severed paw while hiking in the woods. The animal had literally chewed off its own leg to escape the trap. This trap is marketed as a "padded" BMP-approved leghold trap.

Trappers consider trapping to be a time-honored tradition they enjoy. To non-trappers, it's a tradition whose time has come and gone. Some argue that trapping is necessary to obtain scientific information that

is used to help animals. This may have been true in the distant past but there are now many ways to gather needed scientific data that don't involve trapping. Contrary to what trappers would have you believe, animals caught in traps suffer intense physical pain and fear until the trapper comes to kill them — sometimes for more than 24 hours because trap check times are nearly impossible to enforce. When the end comes it's rarely quick and easy.

For reasons difficult to fathom, trappers seem to take pride in killing because they take pictures and videos of trapped animals and post them on social media. In one widely-seen video, a trapper can be seen approaching a trapped bobcat. He pokes it with an orange stick before picking it up by its leg. As the bobcat fights to get away the trapper says "we're gonna break in the whacking stick." Someone's voice is heard saying "he's a little guy." And, in fact, he is "a little guy." He's not much bigger than a house cat, far from fully grown. And yet his life will end by being beaten to death with "a whacking stick" so the trapper can sell its fur to

someone who doesn't need a fur coat to keep warm.

Based on a 10-year average, approximately 9,000 Vermont animals — red and gray foxes, mink, bobcats, beavers, muskrats, otters, raccoons, and others — are caught in traps and killed each year. If a pet dog were treated like this, the perpetrator would be fined and/or go to jail. It's hard to understand why wildlife can be treated this way.

A coalition of wildlife organizations (Protect Our Wildlife, Vermont Wildlife Coalition, and the Humane Society of the U.S.) supported two bills, S.111 and H.191, that sought to ban recreational trapping in Vermont except to protect property. This was partly in response to a 2017 survey by UVM's Vermont Center for Rural Studies that found 75% of Vermont residents want to ban trapping in the state.

Also, a 2022 Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department survey found that only 42% of Vermonters want trapping allowed. Although these bills had 25 sponsors, neither one was brought up for discussion. Why committee hearings weren't held on these bills remains

Trapping → 10



## CAPITAL QUOTES

June is Pride Month and some corporations, including Target, Bud Light and Kohl's are seeing backlash for selling products and supporting the LGBTQ community.

**"LGBTQI+ Americans are defiantly and unapologetically proud – and my Administration will always stand with them in the enduring struggle for freedom, justice, and equality. When one group's dignity and equality are threatened, we all suffer,"**

President **Joe Biden** tweeted.

**"I think this will embolden alt-right actors, who now are going to believe that with social media campaigns and targeted actions against retailers that they can proceed in limiting visibility of LGBTQ people,"**

said **Sophie Bjork-James**, a professor at Vanderbilt University, who researches the white nationalist movement.

**"There are TWO genders: Male & Female. Trust the science!"**

said Republican Rep. **Marjorie Taylor Greene**.

**"The fact that a small group of extremists are threatening disgusting and harsh violence in response to Target continuing its long-standing tradition of offering products for everyone should be a wake-up call for consumers and is a reminder that LGBTQ people, venues, and events are being attacked with threats and violence like never before,"**

said **Sarah Kate Ellis**, president and CEO of GLAAD, a LGBTQ media advocacy group, in a written statement.

## OP-ED

# Federal debt ceiling deal will heighten hunger and poverty in Vermont

By Anore Horton and John Sayles

*Editor's note: Horton and Sayles are executives at Hunger Free Vermont.*

Hunger is a solvable problem, yet in the federal debt limit deal, one of the negotiated "tradeoffs" is to take food off our neighbors' tables. People over 50 and under 55 who receive SNAP benefits, known in Vermont as 3SquaresVT, will now have to prove that they either worked or volunteered for 80 hours in the previous month. This means of official pay stubs, approved volunteer sheets, or other "proof," submitted every month simply to receive anywhere from \$23 to a few hundred dollars per month to purchase food, or these benefits will be subject to time limits.

The debt ceiling agreement comes at the expense of people all across America, including tens of thousands of people in Vermont trying to make ends meet. The expansion of cruel and arbitrary requirements and time limits will only deepen hunger and poverty, in Vermont and beyond. Telling people who are struggling to make ends meet that without documented hours of labor, they can only use 3SquaresVT for three months out of every three years will certainly not significantly lower the national debt.

Who will be required to prove they are eligible? Neighbors who are unable to work yet not disabled enough to qualify on a government form; family members caring for children so parents can work; a friend working off the books for a small business; or someone in a rural area with no transportation or internet access. In Vermont, the newly proposed work requirements will apply to about 2,500 more people than the current work requirements. 30 years of research shows that imposing work requirements and time limits on food benefits simply takes food away from people, making it harder to get and keep a job. Food is a basic need and should never have a time limit.

Adding burdens to people ages 50-54

who receive food assistance as the price for allowing the government to pay its bills is immoral. These changes will do one thing: punish people with lower income and working-class people for systems outside of our control, like underpaid labor markets and lack of affordable housing, childcare, transportation, and sick leave, to name only a few. Neighbors who qualify for 3SquaresVT benefits but, due to this policy change, will be subject to work requirements and time limits, will continue to experience hunger.

This federal policy choice also shifts the responsibility to ensure that no one in this wealthy country goes hungry to a network of organizations already reeling from the end of 3SquaresVT Emergency Allotments in April. Many of the Vermont Foodbank's network partner food shelves and pantries saw record guest visits in May. This change puts impossible pressures on food banks and the small, local community-based food programs that are already stretched thin by increased need. How can we ask the people who show up every day for neighbors across our state to do more when we have a federal system that already works – if politicians would only let it?

Food banks and the charitable food system are not the solution to hunger. Tens of millions of people in the U.S. and well over 100,000 people in Vermont can't afford enough nourishing food. People are working and contributing to our communities, yet they still can't go to the store and afford to buy the food they need. Elected representatives need to stop cutting existing, successful programs and start listening to solutions to hunger being offered by communities across Vermont and around the country. Hunger is solvable. Hundreds of community organizations are ready to partner. Policymakers, let's get down to the real work.

## Economic stewardship must be central to veto session decisions

By Megan Sullivan

*Editor's note: Megan Sullivan is the vice president of government affairs for the Vermont Chamber of Commerce.*

The 2023 legislative session has been underscored by new and increased taxes and fees on both individuals and businesses, leading to \$150 million of likely cost increases for Vermonters. This significant burden is particularly concerning given the ongoing economic pressures of high inflation, workforce shortages, and declining state revenue from personal income tax. All of this is happening as the state settles into a post-pandemic baseline.

While economists from both the Legislature and the Governor's Administration warned that revenue would decline, state revenue is falling faster than predicted. The General Fund, Transportation Fund, and Education Fund all failed to meet monthly expectations in April. This was the second month in a row that revenue targets were not met, emphasizing the need for fiscal responsibility to be at the center of decisions made by the General Assembly



## Vetos: from page 8

to the Legislature, whose best intentions are to extend too much help to too many.

It wouldn't hurt Vermont to have this veto sustained and have the Legislature trim a few of the budget's excesses.

Among those excesses is S.37, which doubles the salaries of legislators by 2027 and, more egregiously, extends health care coverage for the legislator and family for the entire year. Lawmakers currently receive \$14,616 plus allowances for food and lodging during the 18-week session, which runs from January to mid-May. Under the new legislation, rank-and-file salaries would jump to \$29,766 annually by 2027, starting in 2025. (That's \$1,210 per week versus the current \$812.) The law also extends the same health care benefits that full-time state employees receive — a benefit that yields \$9,946 for a single person and \$27,300 for a family. Lawmakers, like other state employees, would pay 20% of the insurance cost.

The total cost of the added wages is just under \$5 million, which isn't a budget buster and there are some valid reasons for it, but we agree with the governor that locking in higher salaries as the state prepares for more austere budgets ahead doesn't make good sense.

Plus, there are other options, such as keeping the same salaries as they currently have for a 90-day session, which ups the weekly wage but discourages what very few Vermonters want — a full-time Legislature. Indeed, this bill didn't get the media, or public, attention it deserves; a redo next session would be the best outcome of the governor's veto.

We take a similarly tough approach to ending the federally supported program to house those unable to find housing in area motels.

The Legislature spent most of four months this session knowing the funding was going to run out and chose to do nothing about it. They worked on housing issues, certainly, but assumed (as did the governor) that the state would not step in to fund a temporary federal program that was pandemic related. It was only after public outcry that Democratic leaders suddenly were accusing the governor of being heartless by not continuing the program and advocating for more funding to continue the program — this time on the backs of Vermont taxpayers.

There was a reason the Legislature didn't act sooner: it was never a program the state funded before, the state doesn't have firm data on how many of those currently housed in motels (a bit over 2,000) will be homeless or will be able to find housing as they did prior to the program, and the budget is already over-extended. That hasn't changed.

A rational way forward is to let the federal program expire, create emergency funding for those families most in need and who have prospects for long-term employment, and get a better grasp of the numbers of homeless that deserve the state's help. For those who are just freeloading off the state (hey, that's a reality and as long as the state offers to pay for a free motel room, there are people who won't seek other solutions), let them know the free motel stay is over. An emergency session can be held in September to appropriate new money if needed, but at least by then the state will have a more realistic assessment of how many folks need help and how best to get that to them.

This is not to say the Legislature has increased this year's budget without reason, nor without good effect.

Expanding the childcare benefits is crucial to the state's long-term economy as it restores affordability for those young Vermonters hoping to be able to raise a family here. Similarly, many of the measures to support more housing, provide reasonable health care and a good education, and implement measures to protect the environment, are the necessary building blocks of any state that expects to thrive. Gov. Scott has been slow to recognize that the state needs reasonable investments in such assets (including tax increases to add the childcare benefits) just as much as it needs a frugal approach to spending.

Both are needed. That said, the practical reality is that any revision to this year's budget would necessarily be modest to gain Democratic support. The real benefit would be a possible change in the legislative mindset for next year — perhaps even a move to set budgets over the next few years not to exceed the state's rate of economic growth. That, in itself, would be as monumental as it is necessary.



Submitted

## Okemo donated lunch to EMS staff for EMS week

*In honor of the 49th year of National EMS week, Okemo Mountain Resort staff delivered lunch to the members of the Ludlow Ambulance team as a thank you for their hard work. Okemo supports the EMS dedicated providers and is thankful for the partnership the resort has with Director of Ludlow Ambulance Stephanie Grover and the town of Ludlow. Pictured above (l-r): Bruce Schmidt, Okemo VP & GM; Mary Mancino, Ludlow Ambulance; and Diane Depalma Vullo, Okemo executive assistant serve lunch.*

## Downtown parking: from page 1

"We are not a destination town," Davis said. "The people that are going to pay these are you and your next door neighbors."

Davis said she supports the meter increases but not the hefty fines.

"Do I think we double, triple, quadruple them? Absolutely not," Davis said. "I can't support this."

The topic has been an ongoing discussion on the Board of Aldermen. It was previously discussed in December 2022. Members of the board said at the time the rates were too much of a jump.

Davis reminded board members of a survey sent to area businesses, which showed many business owners were not in favor of an increase.

"These downtown merchants pay a hefty tax," Davis said.

Alderman John McCann hoped the high rate would entice people to pay the parking meters and avoid the fines.

"Ideally nobody would pay these fines," he said.

Meanwhile, Alderman Larry Cupoli didn't think the increases would be effective and would only discourage people from paying their fines.

"Doubling the fine, I think, is going to make it even more difficult for people to pay — they probably won't," Cupoli said.

Some board members said employees who work downtown take the parking spots from potential customers. They hoped the higher rates would encourage employees to use the parking deck.

Alderman Kiana McClure said most people who owe the city parking money are repeat offenders.

"These repeat offenders have said themselves that it's cheaper to get a parking ticket in downtown than it is to feed the meter for a work day," she said. "Why play the system?"

The \$1.50 meter rate was established as a maximum for the city. The Board of Aldermen created a new committee to establish parking zones and appropriate rates for each zone.

Mayor Mike Doenges said it would take about 30 days to implement the new parking meter rates.

## Trapping: from page 8

a mystery. According to the article in the Independent, after a public comment period, the Fish & Wildlife Department and the Fish & Wildlife Board (both made up of hunters and trappers) will vote on the BMPs they themselves created. These will then take effect in January, 2024. Because Fish & Wildlife's BMPs are so ineffective, wildlife advocates will continue working hard to pass S.111 and H.191 and ban recreational trapping.

Ten U.S. states and more than 100 countries worldwide have already banned or severely restricted trapping because of its inherent cruelty and non-selective nature. Isn't it time for Vermont to join these states

and countries that are trying to make the world a better, kinder place for all — humans as well as the animals we share the planet with?

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department will be accepting public comments from May 17-June 30, 2023, on their new proposed regulations. I hope you will take a moment to speak up

## Unhoused: from page 8

Too many politicians work for themselves, for lobbyists, and for the money sources that support their election. Too many, at every level of government, have lost the moral value of being an honest and proud servant of the people of this country. Servant, yes, and servant of the people: This is what governments are supposed to be. Instead they are lost in

Servant of the people:  
This is what governments are supposed to be.

weird ideas about freedom, in strange ideas about less government or no government. To the point where a large part of our population has been convinced that the government is a sort of a noxious body estranged from the people of this country.

The housing crisis is the ditch where irresponsible governments and politicians have thrown a very large portion of our citizens. This is a major issue; this is a crisis of immense proportions, affecting not just the unhoused individuals, but our entire economy; and it will be a very difficult task to reverse it.

We all need to put pressure on all our federal, state and local politicians to get to work as servants of our citizens before this becomes an uncontrollable issue and a shame for a country that presents itself as the most democratic in the world. It is time to take to the streets and visibly demonstrate that this is not acceptable, regardless of the color of our political credos. There is no space for poverty and misery in a rich nation.

**Giordano Checchi  
Marshfield**

for Vermont's wildlife. Ask the F&W Department to ban recreational trapping and give wildlife the humane treatment it deserves. You can email your comments to ANR.FWPUBLICCOMMENT@vermont.gov. Subject line: trapping and coyote regulation.

**Dottie Nelson,  
Middlebury**



WORDPLAY

'KITTY CAT WORD SEARCH' Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards

SUDOKU

Solutions →21

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

- CAT
- CUDDLE
- FELINE
- FUR
- HIDDEN
- HUNT
- INDEPENDENT
- LITTER
- LIVES
- LOUNGE
- MEOW
- MICE
- NIGHT
- NINE
- POST
- POUNCE
- PURR
- SCRATCH
- SLEEPING
- STEALTHY
- WHISKERS
- YARN

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Solutions →21

CLUES ACROSS

1. Flat tableland with steep edges

5. Where there's \_\_, there's fire

10. Talked incessantly

12. Skill

14. Without shame

16. Where teens spend their days (abbr.)

18. Boxing's GOAT

19. Used to anoint

20. Cluster cups

22. Footballer Newton

23. They make up a forest

25. Split pulses

26. Self

27. Post-office box

28. Test for high schoolers

30. Large, flightless bird

31. Expectorated

33. Falsehood

35. Prickly, scrambling shrub

37. French river

38. Told on

40. Hillside

41. Peyton's little brother

42. Soviet Socialist Republic

44. Cathedral city in Cambridgeshire

45. Witness

48. Brews

50. Yellowish-

brown

52. Arctic explorers, abbr.

53. Mexican agave

55. A type of "cast"

56. Encourage

57. Atomic #52

58. Relating to position north of south of equator

63. Gadget whose name you forget

65. Another recording

66. Small blisters

67. Dark brown or black

CLUES DOWN

1. Licensed for Wall Street

2. " \_\_ and flow"

3. A very large body of water

4. Accumulate on the surface of

5. Central cores of the stem

6. Angry

7. Ceramic jar

8. Scraped a car

9. \_\_ route

10. Soviet labor camp system

11. Strong hostilities

13. Vitamin of the B complex

15. Go quickly

17. Toast

18. A team's best pitcher

21. A Philly culinary specialty

23. Small child

24. Unhappy

27. Trims away

29. Characterized by crying eyes

32. Soft touch

34. American spy organization

35. A person's chest

36. Came from behind to win

39. Fall back

40. Nellie \_\_, journalist

43. Great places to kayak

44. Suffer patiently

46. Majestic bird

47. Electroencephalograph

49. Organic compound used as an antiseptic

51. Objects connected to the

web (abbr.)

54. Ship as cargo

59. The bill in a restaurant

60. Upper-class young woman (abbr.)

61. Judge in OJ Simpson trial

62. One's grandmother

64. Siberian river

How to Play

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

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

Level: Intermediate

Guess Who?

I am an actor born in California on June 6, 1947. I started acting as a child in a local children's theater. I am best known for my work as a nightmare-inducing character who slashed his way through several horror films.

Answer: Robert Englund

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## Something isn't right

For several months now, there has been a bright shining star in the Western horizon in the evening. That star is Venus and she's the star to keep an eye on now. Reason being, she's going to be taking a longer than usual journey through the sign of Leo. Instead of her usual month-long visit, Venus arrives in Leo on June 5 and she'll stay there until October.

There are many twists and turns to these Venus chronicles in the upcoming months, but this week, you may recognize that something isn't right. It doesn't matter how much you ignore it or hope that it will get better or even go away,

some monsters need to be faced head on in order to defeat them.

These monsters are likely to involve how you might have given your power away in a certain situation. How you thought you were doing the right thing or even the good thing, but now all of that could be called into question.

There is no immediate answer or even a solution, but it might be worth reflecting on how you gave your power or sovereignty away.

What you valued, you made vulnerable and buyer's remorse may be kicking in.



Cosmic  
Catalogue  
By Cassandra  
Tyndall

## Shine Like a Sunflower

Sunflowers,  
They follow the sun,  
They shoot up to the sky,  
So beautiful,  
So bright,  
They aren't letting anyone put them down,  
They just keep on shining,  
Bright and brilliant,  
Lighting up the world around them  
You know,  
You can be like a sunflower,  
You are beautiful and brilliant,  
You light up the world,  
You are the world's light,  
You lead them through hard times,  
You shine bright for them,  
They shine bright for you.



The Poetry  
Journey  
By Bree Sarandrea

## Woodstock Union High School announces its senior's plans post graduation

- Jordan Lee Allard, Merrimack College, Marketing and Communications
- Emma Halpin Allegretti, Villanova University, Environmental Studies & Communication
- Meghan Jennifer Bailey, Gap Year
- Cody Edward Bartlett, Army National Guard
- Austin Robert Bloch, Plymouth State University, Business Administration
- Christopher Morrill Bradley, Gap Year
- Jacob Jonathan Carey, College, Exercise Science
- Nicholas William Champine, Carpentry
- Jared Lewis Clark, Information Unavailable
- William Robert Coates, University of Vermont, Business
- Owen Michael Crossmon, Oregon State University, Outdoor Product Design
- Maya Cassidy Cully, University of Vermont, Psychology
- Stephen James Darling, CDL Certification Program
- Ethan Derek Dean, Worcester Polytechnic Institute, Mechanical Engineering
- Emma Mae Durney, Working towards LNA certification and working at The Village
- Audrey Eve Emery, University of Vermont, Environmental Science
- Graham Brendan Farrington, Landscape Construction for ArborScape
- Kali Lynn Filiault, Information Unavailable
- Skylee Lauralai Gadapee, Savannah College of Art and Design, Film & Television
- Joshua Dylan Garcia, Information Unavailable
- Aryana Saje Gibson, Information Unavailable

Graduation plans → 29

## Of dewdrops and spider webs

On a foggy morning walk, it may seem as if the spider webs on your path have turned into jeweled wonders, every thread a string of gems as smooth as pearls and as sparkling as diamonds. Each of these "jewels" is a drop of water the web has collected from the misty air. As with many beautiful natural phenomena, dew drops on a web are shaped by forces we can't see. In this case, two factors are at play: the physics of water and the micro-structures of silk.

Let's talk first about the physics of water, starting by zooming in on the air around us. Some of that air is water, its molecules bouncing about in the gas state. When the air is humid and contains many water molecules, these molecules can accumulate onto objects as a very thin film of liquid water. This water tends to break apart into drops, thus the water that accumulates around the threads of a spider web will quickly separate into individual spheres.

Many surfaces and objects bead with dew, but not all of them collect large, aesthetic drops. On spider webs, the molecular structure of the silk comprising the web actually helps grow the eye-catching drops.

A spider uses three types of silk to build an orb web, the flat, spiral net most of us are likely to picture when we think of a spiderweb. Dragline silk forms the framework, including the radial lines. Super-stretchy flagelliform silk forms the basis of the spiral. A finishing coat from one of two very different sticky silks makes the spiral a successful insect capturing trap. One group of orb weaving spiders brushes woolly cribellate silk onto their capture spirals, while the others blob on gluey aggregate silk.

Water condenses from the surrounding air onto the dragline silk of the web frame, then beads into separate drops. However, the two different types of sticky silks used to coat the web's capture spirals each have unique shapes which interact with water at the microscale.

A microscopic view reveals that cribellate silk is a series of fibrous tangles attached to the smooth supporting flagelliform thread, like rope strung with burs instead of beads. Because they are composed of many fibers, these tangles have a lot of surface area for water to condense onto. That water slides over to accumulate on the smooth supporting thread, leaving room on the cribellate tangles for more water to collect. This process can grow large drops of water over time.

Only a few cribellate orb weaver species live in northern North America, however, so the orb webs you're likely to see in our region have gluey

aggregate silk – rather than the cribellate silk – on their spirals.

Aggregate silk achieves the same sticky ends as cribellate silk, but in a completely different way. This silk is composed of gluey blobs that require the right balance of hydration: not enough water and the glue dries out, too much and it becomes too diluted to stick to incoming prey. Each spider species' gluey silk has been tuned by natural selection to have an ideal stickiness in the typical humidity of their home. The spiders achieve this by customizing their aggregate silk mixtures with different blends of salts, which absorb water from air. Species that build by stream sides, for instance, use glue that absorbs just the right amount of water

from humid air. Conversely, species that build in meadows have glue that can absorb just the right amount of water from drier air.

Spiders arrange this aggregate silk on the capture spiral in discrete beads, with smooth thread in between, to allow the stretchy underlying silk to deform around struggling insect prey. These gluey beads can swell with water to double their original size on wet mornings. The pattern of the droplets and their spacing matches the microscale glue arrangement laid down by the spider when it spun its web. So those strings of ephemeral gems that appear on spider webs on dewy mornings reveal the otherwise unseen beauty of the microverse of molecules and physics.

Rachel Sargent Mirus lives in Duxbury, Vermont. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. *The Outside Story* is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org.



The Outside  
Story  
By  
Rachel  
Sargent Mirus





# Chances are...

Evelyn Adams loved playing the lottery and dreaming about the day she might finally win big. Initially she spent \$25 a week on tickets, but over the years her growing passion to play drove her spending to over \$100 a week, hinting at the first signs of a burgeoning gambling problem.

Adams was in no position to spend this kind of money given that she was a single, middle-aged woman working at a small convenience store in Point Pleasant Beach, New Jersey. But then one day in October 1985, everything changed. Her investment in the New Jersey Lottery finally paid dividends when she won the grand prize of \$3.9 million.

Winning the lottery is one of the most exciting things that can happen to a person, so imagine how Adams felt four months later when she won again, this time taking home the \$1.4 million jackpot.

The odds of Adams winning her first jackpot were 1 in 3.2 million, while the odds of her winning the second jackpot were 1 in 5.2 million. The odds for winning both are nearly incalculable. Unfortunately, the \$5.3 million turned out to be more of a curse than a blessing.

Instead of managing her newfound wealth responsibly, Adams squandered the money on extravagant purchases, frequently exotic vacations, and excessive gambling. She also faced financial misfortune due to lending money to friends and family members who failed to repay. Her generosity coupled with poor financial decisions quickly depleted her lottery fortune.

Adams eventually wound up in financial ruin, unable to sustain her lavish lifestyle and mounting debts. She was forced to sell her house and relocate to a cramped trailer where she became dependent on state aid to survive.

Her story serves as a cautionary reminder that even significant lottery winnings can vanish if not managed wisely.

And Adams is not alone in her experience.

Another notable case is that of Jack Whittaker, a West Virginia businessman who won a \$315 million Powerball jackpot in 2002. While winning such a large sum of money would typically be seen as a dream come true, Whittaker's life took a turn for the worse after his win.

Shortly after winning, Whittaker faced a series of personal and financial difficulties. He experienced numerous incidents of theft and robbery, with criminals targeting him due to his newfound wealth. On one occasion at a strip club, thieves broke into his custom



The Movie  
Diary  
By Dom Cioffi

Lamborghini and stole over a half a million dollars in cash.

Whittaker's granddaughter, whom he lavished with his newfound wealth, also faced legal troubles and tragically passed away due to a drug overdose.

Whittaker's financial mismanagement and excessive spending further contributed to his downfall. He made impulsive decisions and faced multiple lawsuits and legal issues. He also faced allegations of assault and was involved in various controversies with women and the media. The attention surrounding his lavish lifestyle and personal struggles eventually took a toll on him.

Ultimately, Whittaker expressed regret about winning the lottery, stating that it had

The Certified Financial Planners Board of Standards says nearly one-third of lottery winners eventually declare bankruptcy.

brought more negative experiences than positive ones. He died in 2020 with much of his fortune diminished.

The Certified Financial Planners Board of Standards says nearly one-third of lottery winners eventually declare bankruptcy. They also state that lottery winners are more likely to declare bankruptcy within three to five years of their winnings than the average American.

One common thread that most lottery winners face is how their friends and family prey upon them after they've won. It's hard to imagine the stress and distrust inherent in

such situations, but the broken hearts probably cause the majority of the pain.

Stress and heartbreak are central themes in this week's feature, "To Leslie," starring 2022 Academy Award nominee Andrea Riseborough. Riseborough portrays a single woman who is seven years removed from winning the lottery, having foolishly squandered the money and now facing homelessness.

This is a harsh film to watch, but the performance of Riseborough propels the story with such depth and sentiment that the viewer is left struggling with her.

Check this one out if you're in the mood for an Oscar-worthy performance tucked inside a gripping portrayal of a woman trying to survive in a world hell-bent on crushing her.

A priceless "B+" for "To Leslie," now available for streaming on Netflix.

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



By Merisa Sherman

Here's a toast to skiing Superstar on June 1 — a fitting end to the longest season in the East.

## The last day

It's the earliest day of the season (for my family anyway). We were in line an hour before the lifts started, with Bloody Marias and breakfast sandwiches in hand, way earlier than we would get there for any powder day. We won't even wait on line on opening day, choosing instead to start the season as representatives of the 2 O'Clock Club.

But Last Chair Day is different. It's your last time to see your ski and snowboard friends until next season, your last chance to give a hug or take a selfie with friends who have become more like family over the years. Drawn together by a common love of snow sports, we gather, not because we want to, but because we need to.

And so we cannot miss the line. It's also the last day for groomies, and nobody wants to miss that. Especially when the team worked so hard to piece the whole thing together in one beautiful white stripe. It's

beautiful, especially when compared to the patchy mess that we saw only 12 hours earlier. That one shift alone has me convinced that Killington has the absolutely best grooming team in the business.

This year was stunning, although I did miss carrying my skis with me on the chairlift, it was wonderful to feel the weight of my skis dangling from the lift one last time. It is a simple feeling, that floating swing of the skis, but in some ways it's more natural to me than walking. Riding that damn lift is part of who I am, who I always will be.

I'm so comfortable on that lift, one arm draped around the back as I turn to my compatriots to chat and watch my ski family take their runs. The pace is different today, a little bit slower, as everyone is not only looking out for rocky sections but also cherishing the final moments on the glacier. You can feel the reluctance, the unwillingness to let the moment end but also the dichotomy of the joy in celebrating the season.

And so we are there, taking our final lift accessible laps of the year, surrounded by friendship and love. You know you love something when you experience it every day, yet still want to take photos like a tourist at the top. And take photos we did. Over and

Living the dream → 27



Livin' the Dream  
By Merisa  
Sherman







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## ← Living the Dream: from page 25

over again, our arms wrapped around each other with the beautiful valley sprawled out below us. Hugs that are filled with thank you's for making each and every day on snow an amazing one.

But the turns, those are ours alone. I timed my first run of the day perfectly. With no one around me, I was able to throw my skis out from underneath me and just let my body do what it wanted. I could feel my heart and breath in time with my movements, the compression at the end of the turn a welcome grounding only because I know my skis will fly out from underneath me again. My hair is flowing behind me and my skis swing like a pendulum as I soar down the mountain. It is glorious and I cannot stop. I am one with the moment, a feeling that I am going to have to wait for months to feel again.

My heart is pounding so hard, I can feel my lungs expanding as I skip to the end of the snow, a few quick turns throw in just to slow down and finish it off. That was it. The rest of the day will be opportunities to go down memory lane, to take a run talking to my dad, to ski with the BF and to enjoy all the variety of turns that can be had. To ski the left side, the right side and even risk the

middle. To explore every inch of the white stripe for the final time.

Then, finally, to drink champagne at the summit while we wait for the ski patrol to ask us to leave. To stay up top in celebration but also futile protest. Please don't let the ski season be over just yet, let us have just a few more minutes with the snow under our feet and our family surrounding us. I look around and it amazes me how many of these people I have ridden the chair with

I am one with the moment, a feeling that I am going to have to wait for months to feel again.

over the years, people who I met on the chair or in the gondola, strangers who have now become family.

It is an amazing thing when you find your people. People who love snow sports and winter and Killington just as much as you do, if not more. People who breathe in cold air and feel only warmth. To all of you who make this community the most amazing place that it is, I cannot thank you enough. From the bottom of my heart. Thank you.

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## Economic stewardship:

from page 9

during the upcoming veto session.

Record-high spending in recent years has been possible due to the influx of one-time federal funds for pandemic relief. However, without the ongoing federal aid, legislators seem determined to maintain record levels

These measures will further strain Vermonters, limiting the ability to invest, save, and stimulate economic growth.

of government spending by raising new taxes and fees on Vermonters. Amid economic uncertainty, businesses, in particular, are expected to take on several new tax measures. The average Vermont business has five employees, and the ramifications of increased costs will be felt across communities. This means that our local coffee shops, general stores, plumbers, mechanics, and breweries, as well as those they serve, will all be impacted.

The veto session will be an opportunity for legislators to review and consider the long-term implications of excessive spending proposals on the economy.

The collective impact that legislative action, or inaction, will have on businesses and individuals is already staggering:

- The first-ever state payroll tax would have working Vermonters set to pay \$100 million annually.

- DMV fees are poised to increase across the board by \$20 million.
- Licensure and renewal fees through the Office of Professional Regulation would increase for many of Vermont's regulated professions.
- Fuel costs could increase by 70 cents a gallon with the creation of the Clean Heat Act.
- Property taxes are expected to rise by an additional \$30 million with an increase in state funding for nutrition programming.
- A Trump-era tax on business was upheld. The State and Local Tax (SALT) cap deduction workaround would have saved Vermont businesses \$20 million in federal taxes but was derailed in the final days of the session.

These measures will further strain Vermonters, limiting the ability to invest, save, and stimulate economic growth. While we believe in the importance of funding critical programs and addressing pressing issues, we also know that it's possible to achieve a balance between spending and the economic vitality.

The Vermont Chamber of Commerce encourages legislators to seek input from constituent businesses and carefully evaluate the potential long-term consequences that veto session bills will have on Vermont. We can strike a balance between addressing critical needs and ensuring a favorable business environment. By centering economic stewardship, we will foster a prosperous Vermont for all.



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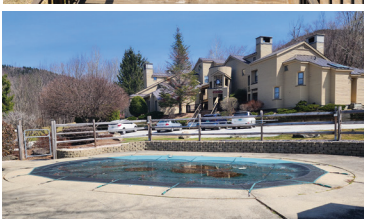
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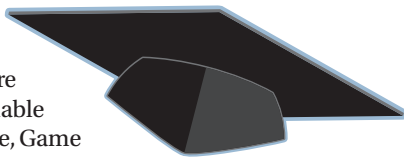
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## Graduation plans:

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- Myeia Michelle Griffin, Vermont State University, Applied Business and Technology Management
- Lily Nicole Gubbins, St. Lawrence University, Environmental Studies
- Cyrus Winter Harkins, Spring Brook Farm
- Norah Elizabeth Harper, Saint Joseph's University, Biology
- Anne Elizabeth Hauze, Swarthmore College, Religion
- Nathaniel Leo Hough, Information Unavailable
- Daniel Varian Jones III, St. Lawrence University, Business
- Isabel Hetty Jacoba Konijnenberg, Williams College, Biology and Economics
- Holden Jeremiah Larmie, Flint, Blake and Boles Roofing
- Samuel Lewis Leggett, University of North Carolina Chapel Hill, English
- Luke Hudson Maxham, Trade school for plumbing, working for St. Cyr Plumbing and Heating
- Declan Rowan McCullough, University of Vermont, Environmental Science
- Daphne Elizabeth McDermott, University of Vermont, Studio Art
- Graeme C McKeon, Anna Maria College, Sports Management and Recreation
- Zedekiah Theodore Wood McNaughton, Hamilton College, Undeclared
- River Jordan Miles, University of Vermont, Biochemistry
- Emily Grace Miller, O'Brien's Aveda Institute, Cosmetology
- Shelby Ann Miller, New England College, Illustration
- Andries Benjamin Morin, Vermont State University, Electromechanical Engineering
- Dillon Estelle Moss, Virginia Commonwealth University, Interior Design/Interior Architecture
- Natalie Rae Parent, Florida International University, Education
- Ethan Joseph Parker, Information Unavailable
- Joss Gregory Perkins, Information Unavailable
- Jack Peter Rasmussen, Project Search at Rutland Regional Medical Center
- Cooper David Redmond, Rochester Institute of Technology, Electrical Engineering
- Aidan David Francis Reed, Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, Biochemistry and Biophysics
- Corbin Alexander Richardson, Information Unavailable
- Morghan Lee Robinson, Work and Animal care
- Damon Xavier Rogers, Information Unavailable
- Reece Thomas Sheehan, Champlain College, Game Design
- Alec Norman Smail, Colorado College, Political Science
- Rowan David Smail, Tufts University, Biology
- Daniel Paul Smith, Middlebury College, Computer Science
- Logan Anthony Sudol, Pennsylvania State University, Architecture
- Oliver Fraser Szott, University of Vermont, Computer Science
- Kyra Tarleton, Online Criminal Justice, work, travel
- Hayden Scott Taylor, Vermont Technical College, Construction Management
- Violet Lucy Tuckerman, University of Tampa, Marketing
- William Watson Underwood, University of Rhode Island, Business
- Ethan Daniel Westney, University of Vermont, Business
- Ariana H Winawer-Stein, University of Vermont, Economics
- Forrest N Yeager, Ohio University, Philosophy



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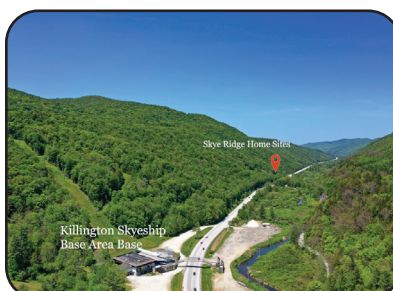


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# Prevent tick-borne illness

By George Fjeld

*Editor's note: Dr. George Fjeld is a retired physician.*

Summer's almost here and it's time to get outside! Fun things like walking the dog, going for a hike, swimming, and paddling in the lake or playing a round of golf are a few of my favorite options.

However, nothing ruins an outdoor experience like being covered in ticks or, worse yet, finding one attached. Ticks carry a variety of diseases, including Lyme disease (named after Lyme, Connecticut, where it was discovered), Ehrlichiosis, Babesiosis, Rocky Mountain spotted fever and Anaplasmosis. We worry most about Lyme disease but the U.S. Centers for Disease Control reports cases in the Northeast of all of these diseases. While there are treatments available for most of them, wouldn't it be better to not get them in the first place?

"An ounce of prevention is worth a pound of cure" goes the old saying, and it is especially true in the case of tick borne diseases. Ticks live in grassy areas, brush and bushes as well as forests. That kind of sounds like all of Vermont, doesn't it? I remember hunting through a bunch of whips a few years ago and finding 16 ticks on my clothes and skin afterwards!

Luckily, there are ways to keep the ticks away. You don't have to spend the summer holed up inside your house, just take a few simple measures to protect yourself. Ticks are upward climbers. This means they'll get on your shoes or socks and climb up your clothes until they reach a spot to get under clothes next to your skin. Tucking your pants into your socks is a good first step. They also fall from trees and bushes. Wear a hat! Ticks are great hitchhikers and will get a ride on your pets to get into your house. Brush your pet when they come in or use a skin-safe bug repellent on them.

To prevent tick bites, you can use Environmental Protection Agency-registered insect repellents containing DEET, picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus or its active ingredient IR3535, para-menthane-diol (PMD), or 2-undecanone (derived from wild tomato plants) for exposed skin. All of these are proven to work for both ticks and mosquitoes for a period of time after application.

I'm looking forward to products containing nootkatone, derived from grapefruit (and responsible for the fruit's classic smell) to hit the market widely. Approved by the EPA in 2020, it not only repels but also kills ticks and mosquitos. Grapefruit oils may work but may be irritating to the skin and also stain clothing, so they should be applied to hats and gloves used outside.

Wearing permethrin-treated clothing will keep ticks from hitching a ride on your clothes. Available as a spray or in new clothing already treated, it lasts for at least six washings and a study showed it worked for a year. To treat your clothes, wash and dry them

and lay them out outside. Spray them liberally on both sides and allow to dry before wearing. There is evidence that shoes and socks are especially important. Don't put permethrin on your skin! It's toxic! Studies show that there is no significant absorption from the clothing after daily wear for three months, so that's where to apply it.

Check for ticks when you come home from outdoor adventures. Check twice, the little suckers can be hard to spot. Ask a trusted friend to check hard-to-see, awkward areas or use a mirror. Look in the scalp, hairline, ears and behind the ears, under arms, belly button, waist, groin and behind the knees. Or, as The New York Times says: Check yer back and yer crack and yer pits and your bits for ticks.

If you do happen to find a tick attached, don't panic! Tick removal is easy. Using fine tweezers, grasp the tick close to the skin and pull sharply upwards away from the skin. Don't squeeze the belly or abdomen of the tick. If you happen to leave behind little black specks, don't worry. These are the mouth parts and removing them doesn't help prevent disease and may cause secondary infection. Treat the wound with a little antibiotic ointment.

The other option is a commercially available tick removal tool called a tick twister. It looks like a tiny pry bar but is used to slip around the head of the tick and rotated to make the tick release its tenacious hold on the skin. I have found it very useful and less traumatic than tweezers.

It is normal to have a small red spot surrounding the bite, which may itch and last a couple of days. It should not get bigger! If it does, contact a medical professional.

If you get ticks from your backyard or frequently-used path, you may consider cleaning up your yard (just joking). Really, you can reduce the tick population in a limited area by taking care of the white-footed mice in this area! These mice are the natural hosts for the ticks. Providing them nesting materials treated with permethrin will reduce or eliminate the ticks. To do this, take toilet paper tubes and stuff them with cotton balls treated with the same permethrin spray you used on your clothes. Scatter these around the area you would like to treat. You should notice a difference in a few weeks!

So, get protected and get out to enjoy our great Vermont spring, summer and fall!

## Ixodes scapularis (Blacklegged ticks or Deer ticks)



Courtesy Vermont Agency of Agriculture

There are 15 known species of ticks in Vermont. The blacklegged tick, more commonly known as the deer tick, is the most abundant tick in Vermont. The blacklegged tick is responsible for over 99% of all tick-borne diseases reported to the Vermont Department of Health. These ticks can transmit Lyme disease, anaplasmosis, babesiosis, Borrelia miyamotoi disease, and Powassan virus disease.

## Dermacentor variabilis (American Dog ticks)



Courtesy Vermont Agency of Agriculture

Another common tick in Vermont is the American Dog Tick. This tick is common April-September and is commonly found on dogs and cats. It does not spread Lyme.

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# Fires, swimming are prohibited at fishing access areas

With the beginning of summer and anglers fishing from shore, the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department reminds people that open fires and swimming are prohibited at all Vermont state fishing access areas.

Open fires and their remnants, create unsafe areas for other anglers and boaters to use and enjoy. The remnants of these fires are also unhealthy for the animals and fish that live in the adjacent waters. Fish and Wildlife cleans up the toxic waste left by open fires on state lands annually at considerable expense.

Swimming at fishing access areas is prohibited due to safety concerns and because the primary uses of the fishing access areas is for launching and retrieving motorboats and for shore fishing.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department maintains 203 developed fishing access areas on lakes and rivers throughout the state. These areas have allowed uses determined by law, and swimming is not one of them.

The access areas were purchased and are maintained with funds derived from the sale of fishing licenses and motorboat registrations, as well as a federal excise tax on fishing equipment, fishing tackle and gasoline for motorboats. These funding sources explicitly prohibit activities that are in conflict with fishing and boating.

Fish and Wildlife regulations prohibit certain uses of fishing access areas including, but not limited to — swimming, littering, camping, picnicking, making a fire, parking of vehicles not related to priority uses, and commercial activity.

“Vermont State Game Wardens will be strictly enforcing the rules at state fishing access areas this summer,” said Col. Justin Stedman, Vermont’s Chief Game Warden. “Please help keep our lands clean and open for others to enjoy, and report violations to your local warden or use the

anonymous Operation Game Thief online report form on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website at this link: [tinyurl.com/yxv8x7tk](https://tinyurl.com/yxv8x7tk). Reports of time-sensitive violations should be called in to a local State Police radio dispatcher who can contact a warden.”



By John Hall, VTF&W  
*VTF&W maintains 203 fishing and boating access areas on lakes and rivers in Vermont, dept. reminds folks not to swim.*

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