



By Zach Godwin,  
Killington Resort

### SUPERSTAR LIFT TO BE REPLACED IN APRIL, FIS WORLD CUP BACK IN 2026

After 38 years, the Superstar Quad at Killington Resort is being replaced—this time with a 6-seater. The process will take 8 months and require the FIS World Cup to relocate to Colorado for one year.

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### Q&A WITH KILLINGTON SELECT BOARD CANDIDATES

With just two weeks to go until Town Meeting Day, candidates for local offices are vying for support. See where candidates for the Killington Select Board stand on some of the most controversial topics facing the town.

Page 8



### PEG-TV MAKES HISTORY ACCESSIBLE

In the past two years, PEG-TV has been digitally restoring archived videos for people to rediscover online.

Page 37

## Sousa's in the hot seat

By Polly Mikula

A Feb. 6 petition calling for the “resignation or removal” of Mountain Views Supervisory Union’s (MVSU) Superintendent Sherry Sousa garnered 114 signatures as of Tuesday, Feb. 18, but school leaders, educators and some district board members have since come to her defense.

Sousa, who has worked for 30 years in the district, many of which were as a middle and high school special educator, came under pressure after the district settled its second discrimination and harassment case in two years.

Last year’s lawsuit stemmed from four years of purported harassment against a male student at Woodstock Elementary School and Middle School that cost the district \$97,500 to settle out of court. This year’s settlement of \$175,000 was the largest school-based claim in the history of the Vermont Human Rights

Sousa → 5



By Pat Wise

### Winter Fest sculptures decorate downtown

Four sculpting teams braved adverse conditions to create snow artworks for the Vermont State Qualifier Snow Sculpting Competition as part of Rutland Winterfest, Feb. 15-16.

## 200 inches and counting

Staff Report

The ski season is shaping up to a record year locally and across the East Coast. At 204 inches, Killington Resort, is on pace to have its largest season total since 2006-07. It has received more snow than Vail, thus far. Tuesday marked the 97th operating day at Killington, which means the season is just about half over (*see related story about spring plans, page 2*).

The season started with a huge storm on Thanksgiving that dropped nearly 2 feet of snow just before the FIS World Cup races.

While there was a rain/thaw just before the New Year, it hasn’t rained at higher elevations since.

Perhaps most notable is the consistency: Every week at least 4-6 inches of new snow has fallen keeping the slopes fresh. This past weekend’s storm added 11 inches, with 21 inches total over seven days, according to Killington Resort.

# Unions weigh in on Rutland’s mayoral race

Incumbent City Mayor Mike Doenges gains labor endorsement while challenger Henry Heck claims ‘smear campaign’

By Greta Solsaa/VTDigger

The two candidates, incumbent mayor Mike Doenges and current alderman Henry Heck, vying for Rutland City’s highest office went toe-to-toe for the first time in a forum Wednesday night, Feb. 12, to discuss the pressing issues facing Rutland.

In the mayoral forum was held at PEG-TV. The topic list included affordability, public safety and the city’s aging infrastructure, allowing each candidate to strike his core messages.

Doenges spoke about maintaining “momentum” on the projects and initiatives that he shepherded during his first term, including the Capital Investment Plan, affordable and market-rate housing development, and the development of the downtown with the TIF district and the hotel development in the works.

A previous city clerk for Rutland, Heck said that if elected, he will look to reduce costs for taxpayers, but otherwise has “no set objectives” because his goal is to listen to residents who feel unheard before determining his actions.

But this week’s joint union endorsement of the incumbent mayor and labor complaints leveled against his challenger suggest the two candidates’ track records with workers while serving

Mayor race → 6



By Greta Solsaa

Pictured (l-r): Candidate Henry Heck, moderator Rich Clark, and incumbent Mike Doenges at the Rutland mayoral forum on Wednesday, Feb. 12.

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# Killington prepares for spring: longest season in the East and Superstar lift replacement

## Audi FIS Ski World Cup to return in 2026

Killington Resort, the largest ski and snowboard resort in Eastern North America, has announced plans for the replacement of its Superstar Express Quad and outlined its spring skiing operations for 2025. The 38-year-old Superstar lift will close to the public on April 13, making way for a new high-speed six-passenger lift set to debut in December 2025.

### World Cup moves for 2025

Due to the Superstar lift replacement, the Audi FIS Ski World Cup will relocate to Copper Mountain, Colorado, for Thanksgiving Weekend 2025. The event is expected to return to Killington in 2026.

### Superstar lift replacement timeline

Once the lift is turned over to Doppelmayr, removal is expected to take six weeks, with much of the work occurring on snow to minimize environmental impact. Grooming tractors will be used to access terrain that traditional construction vehicles cannot reach. While Superstar trail will be closed during this period, other trails will remain accessible via Launch Pad.

The entire project is expected to take eight months.

“While we know spring skiing and riding will look a little different this year, this \$12 million investment will elevate the guest experience for decades to come,” said Mike Solimano, president & CEO of Killington Resort. “That said, we’re still committed to hosting the longest ski season in the East and will stay open as long as Mother Nature allows.”

### Spring skiing plans



Courtesy Killington Resort

Superstar Express Quad will close to the public on April 13. A new high-speed six-passenger lift will debut in December of this year.

Despite the Superstar lift closure, Killington remains committed to spring skiing and will continue lift service in other areas:

- K-1 Gondola: Open daily through May 11, with access to North Ridge and the Canyon.
- Snowdon Triple & Canyon lifts: Operating Friday-Sunday after May 11, conditions permitting.
- Bear Mountain lifts: Expected to run until mid-to-late April.
- Snowdon Six Express & Ramshhead Express Quad: Running through April 20.
- Snowmaking efforts: Focused on Double Dipper, Downdraft, and Lower East Fall (Canyon area), with additional snow

made on Rime and Reason (North Ridge area) to extend the season.

### Spring Pass details

Killington offers a Spring Pass for unlimited skiing from March 14 through the end of the season. It goes on sale Feb. 22 for \$359.

### Commemorating Superstar’s Quad

To honor the Superstar Express Quad’s legacy, Killington encourages skiers and riders to complete 87 rides on the lift this season—matching the year it was built (1987). Those who complete achievements in the Killington App will be entered to win the first ride on the new Superstar Six chairlift next season.

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

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

# Rutland County employers get over \$100,000 in unclaimed property

Vermont Treasurer Mike Pieciak joined Rutland Mayor Mike Doenges on Thursday, Feb. 13, to return over \$100,000 of unclaimed property to Rutland County employers. The event was held in connection with the Treasurer’s Claim Your Money campaign, an effort to return at least \$1 million of unclaimed property to Vermonters in the month of February.

“Vermonters have over \$130 million waiting to be claimed, and as employers face rising costs and workforce shortages, our office is working hard to return these dollars to communities like Rutland that need it most,” said Treasurer Pieciak. “I hope Vermonters will search MissingMoney.com to see if they, a family member, or a local business have unclaimed property waiting for them. Searching is easy, free, and it takes minutes.”

The ‘Claim Your Money’ campaign was announced in connection with National Unclaimed Property Day, Feb. 1 to encourage Vermonters to search for unclaimed property. The effort will include targeted paid advertising, collaboration with local lawmakers, and public events. Already, the campaign has returned over \$600,000 of unclaimed property to Vermonters.

Mayor Doenges thanked Treasurer Pieciak for returning forgotten funds to Rutland employers, highlighting the benefit to their bottom line.

“These recovered funds represent a significant boost to our local businesses, many of whom are working to find ways to maximize every dollar,” said Mayor Doenges. “I’m excited that Treasurer Pieciak and his team have been

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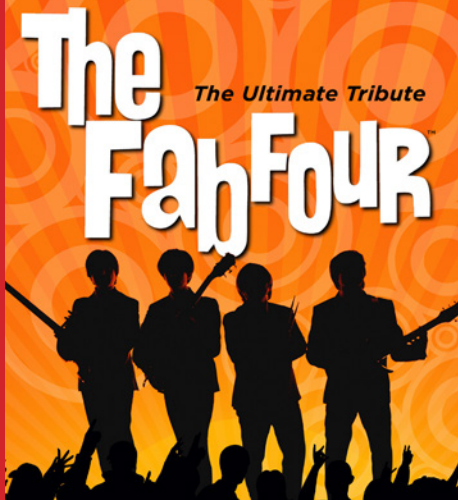
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MONDAY, MAY 5 | 7:00 PM



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TUESDAY, APRIL 22 | 7:00 PM



FRIDAY, MAY 2 | 7:00 PM



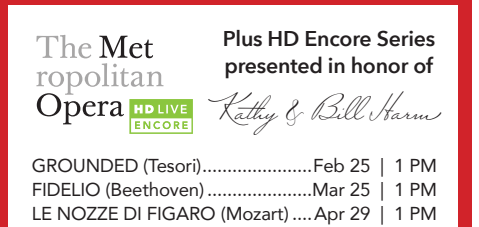
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# The heartbeat of Vermont: Leaders with empathy, engagement, and enthusiasm

For four decades, Vermont has been my cherished refuge, especially when I was working fulltime in Manhattan and traveling for clients. Yet, as the years passed, my tolerance for winter's icy grip diminished, and for the past two winters, I sought refuge in the sun-kissed embrace of Carmel-by-the-Sea, California. The siren call of sunshine and balmy temperatures, the sight of flowers blooming and trees adorned with verdant leaves — in February, no less — amidst Carmel's storybook cottages, was irresistible. However, my 2024 experience there taught me why Barbra Streisand's 1964 anthem, "People," still resonates.



**For the Greater Good**  
By Liz DiMarco Weinmann

My husband's new role as CEO of a marketing firm in New Jersey created a challenging bi-coastal dynamic in our otherwise harmonious 43-year marriage. Adding to my unease, torrential rains battered Carmel early in my stay, bringing power outages and restless nights. Plus, the concerns of the politically conservative and affluent Carmel residents seemed worlds away from my own values and interests.

One glorious March morning, as I sat by the Pacific Ocean emailing clients on the East Coast, a profound realization swept over me: weather alone was not a sufficient reason to abandon my comfortable Vermont home and the community I held dear. This winter, despite alarmingly

low temperatures, I've rediscovered a refreshing sense of buoyant energy and warmth right here in Vermont, largely thanks to a group of enthusiastic young professionals.

Over the past three months, I layered up in toasty clothing to venture out and embrace winter head-on. Meetings with young leaders often stretched into the evening, as they shared their dreams, challenges, opportunities, and insightful perspectives — related to their careers, housing,

Who will be more invested in Vermont's long-term health and prosperity than its young leaders? Who is thinking more about the future, not just next year, but a decade from now?

personal lives, and how to make Vermont an even better place to live.

There's a palpable sense of belonging among these individuals, a connection that some older Vermonters might not fully appreciate. As French sociologist Emile Durkheim advised, the ability to build and maintain meaningful relationships and community, is paramount, regardless of the weather. He posited that society is like an organism, with each part contributing to the whole, a concept vividly illustrated in Vermont.

Among the youthful Vermont leaders who exemplify these qualities are Polly Lynn Mikula and Jason Mikula, of course — the young leaders who make this newspaper

possible; Olivia Bucksbaum, a gifted ambassador for the Rutland region; Jen Yakunovich, development director at New Story Center; David Justice, an advocate for adult education at Vermont Adult Learning; Hal Issente and Alexandra Jakab at the Downtown Rutland Partnership; Jaziah Derosia, owner of Camille's Experienced Clothing; Mose Cassaro, a veritable genius in entrepreneurial finance; Tammy Landon, the empathetic owner of The Gymnasium downtown; and marketer Kiana McClure, who, at 26, is Rutland City's youngest alderwoman.

Regarding McClure, while some older Vermonters might call her "...a piece of work," I consider her a work of peace. She works exceedingly hard, possesses boundless optimism, and is exceptionally knowledgeable and empathetic about crucial issues like food insecurity and housing — the latter as a renter herself.

Young Vermonters like McClure also possess an almost insatiable curiosity and passion about how technology, environmental sustainability, and economic development can create advantages for Vermont's future. Unfortunately, some older Vermonters stifle this zeal. Perhaps threatened by the creativity and intellectual firepower of these young leaders, the elders persist in propagating outdated ideas that are no longer beneficial for Vermont.

Let me be clear that, at my age, I'm not disregarding hard-won experience. In fact, when I was earning my MBA 15 years ago, I conducted extensive research on dozens of inspirational older leaders, because all the leadership case histories at that time focused solely on young white men.

It's the people → 16

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**OBITUARY**

# Richard T. Godfrey, Jr., 96

Richard T. Godfrey, Jr., beloved husband, father, and grandfather, died of natural causes on Wednesday, Feb. 12, at the White River Junction VA Medical Center.

“Dick” was born July 08, 1928, in Norton, Massachusetts, to Richard T. Godfrey, Sr., and Grace (Howard) Godfrey. In 1946, he graduated from Segreganset Agricultural School in Segreganset, Massachusetts. Upon graduation, Godfrey enlisted in the Army/Air Force and was stationed as a gas plant operator at Randolph Field Air Force Base in San Antonio, Texas. He was deployed to the Philippines and Korea to construct oxygen plants in 1949 and 1950. When the war broke out in 1950, he was redeployed to combat, where he sustained injuries and earned a Purple Heart before returning to the Philippines to construct another oxygen plant.

In 1952, while stationed in the Philippines, Godfrey met Soledad (Sally) Carlotta, with whom he “was immediately smitten.” They married in 1952. They would be married for over 50 years before Sally passed away in 2004 from cancer. Their time together took them from Cape Cod to Florida before moving to

His projects included the Barrows Towne Road and Cricket Hill areas in Killington.

Killington in 1967 to raise a family. Godfrey leveraged his mechanical aptitude in Killington by becoming a builder and developer over the next 30 years. His projects included the Barrows Towne Road and Cricket Hill areas in Killington. Godfrey and Sally then spent 10 years in the antique business, where he plied his skills fixing, repairing, and renovating antiques. Upon Sally’s passing, Godfrey spent 20 years in Las Vegas, Nevada, where he kept busy in his community helping



Submitted  
**Richard T. Godfrey, Jr.**

neighbors with various odds jobs well into his late 80s.

In 2019, he moved to Quail Hollow in West Lebanon, New Hampshire, to be close to family.

Known for his friendly demeanor and active lifestyle, Godfrey was always in the company of his many friends. At 96, he could still be seen at the coffee group, going out to breakfast or lunch with a buddy, playing Friday night card games and Saturday night cribbage, riding the bus for his weekly grocery shopping trip, or walking around the circle at Quail Hollow getting his exercise.

Dick Godfrey, Jr. is survived by a son, James (and wife Eileen) of Woodstock, Vermont, a son, Stephen of Orwell, Vermont, and a grandson, Lucas of Boston, Massachusetts, who was the apple of his eye. He is also survived by his brother, Norman, of Fort Pierce, Florida.

He was predeceased by his wife Sally, sister Dorothy, and brother Joseph.

Funeral arrangements will be held June 20, from 3-5 p.m. at the Cabot Funeral Home, with a reception to follow at the Thompson Senior Center, both in Woodstock.

Memorial contributions may be made to North Country Honor Flight, PO Box 2644, Plattsburgh, NY 12901. Please note: “In memory of Richard Godfrey, Flight 50.”

An online guestbook can be found at [cabotfh.com](http://cabotfh.com).

## ← Sousa: from page 1

Commission (HRC) and stemmed from “MVSU’s utter failure to protect a Black child who suffered racism and abuse in the school system,” according to the petition.

The petition also notes other allegations of threats, bullying and sexual assault that have been inadequately addressed by district leadership over the past few years. “The abuse that happens to our students under Superintendent Sousa’s leadership goes beyond the stories we hear when the district settles yet another lawsuit,” it reads.

“Within our schools, the superintendent bears the ultimate responsibility to ensure an inclusive, equitable and safe environment is not just our aspiration but our kids’ reality,” the petition continued.

Petitioners also found Sousa’s response to the incident inadequate. Sousa has said she disagrees with the HRC ruling and “decided to settle the dispute to avoid the time and expense of litigation,” the petition contends. “This is not only dismissive of the harm caused, but fails to accept any responsibility for the role the school district and leadership played in this matter,” the petition states.

Signees of the petition are mostly parents — and include residents of each of the district towns: Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Pittsfield, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading, Woodstock — but also notably include two MVSU current board members: Ryan Townsend from Bridgewater and Josh Linton from Pymouth, as well as two candidates for the board in Woodstock: Sarit Werner and Kelly Linton.

### Supporting Sousa, district efforts

In response, members of the district school communities including board members, teachers and other administrators have written letters of support for Sousa and her work within the district.

“As district employees, we were very concerned to see the petition calling for the removal or resignation of Superintendent Sherry Sousa,” begins a letter to the board signed by over 60 educators, (*see page 14 for this and other submitted letters of support*). “Confronting racism and swiftly addressing racist incidents are of the highest priority in our work. We believe this petition mischaracterizes the deep and ongoing commitment of our district, led by Sherry, to address these persistent and pervasive problems in our society and schools.”

Anna Sessa, a MVSU board member from Reading who’s also the mom of two sons in the school district, “one of whom also happens to be Black,” wrote an open letter to the community Feb. 10, which struck a balance of understanding the call for betterment while supporting Sousa and the current efforts underway throughout the district. Her letter was posted on many town listservs.

“Before I joined the board I had strong opinions (mostly negative) about the board’s work and its decisions. Now in my second term as a board member, I have realized neither the board nor the public will ever have all the information. My guesstimate: the public hears 50% of the story, the school board hears another 30% and 20% can not be shared due to privacy laws,” Sessa explained. “This situation was particularly difficult for me and I can also say it was handled with the utmost empathy and concern for the student’s well-being. Yes, there were things that could’ve been done quicker/better... While our district and people are not perfect, we have a progressive group that is willing to accept short-comings and work to improve them. This aspect is the most important when working toward racial justice and belonging,” Sessa wrote. “My own family has had repeated racial incidents on several different MVSD campuses,” she continued. “Make no mistake — racism is prevalent in our communities... Superintendent Sousa has repeatedly shown her motivation to create an antiracist district...At a time when equity, diversity and inclusion are under attack, it’s in our district, community and students’ best interest to keep our current leadership intact... Like most social justice endeavors, this is a work in progress and it needs fostering not firing.”



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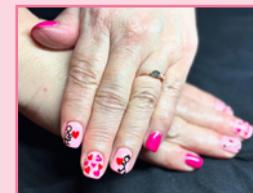
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Submitted

State Treasurer Michale Peciak (left) joined Rutland Mayor Mike Doenges to celebrate returning unclaimed money to Rutland area businesses.

← **Unclaimed \$:** .....  
from page 2

proactive in their efforts in returning this money to Rutland. I'm grateful for their ongoing commitment to supporting our community."

Unclaimed property includes forgotten assets like uncashed checks, security deposits, investments, insurance proceeds, and other financial property. Financial institutions annually report these properties and turn them over to the state. The Treasurer's Office safeguards assets until claimed by rightful owners or heirs.

Unclaimed property can belong to individuals, businesses, nonprofits, local media organizations, government entities, and more. Since the start of FY25 (July 1, 2024), the Treasurer's Office has returned over \$6 million to Vermonters—more than double the average amount typically returned by this time of year. While the office is returning more funds than ever, the amount of unclaimed property held by the state continues to rise, with over \$1.5 million added to the state's holdings since the start of the fiscal year.

All Vermonters are encouraged to visit [missingmoney.com](http://missingmoney.com) to check for unclaimed property.

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← **Mayor race:** .....  
from page 1

in public office may sway the race as much as their campaign objectives.

**Unions take a stand**

On Tuesday, the union representing 130 Rutland City municipal and school department workers — the American Federation of State, City and Municipal Employees (AFSCME) Council 91 Local 1201 — went public with a grievance and an unfair labor practice charge the union filed against Heck in 2022 and 2023, towards the end of his 14 years serving as city clerk. And just hours before Wednesday's debate, the presidents of three of Rutland City's labor unions — including the police union, the fire department union and the AFSCME Local 1201 — gathered to proclaim their support for Doenges' bid for re-election.

The AFSCME Local 1201 reached out to both Doenges and Heck to participate in the endorsement process, but only Doenges completed the candidate survey, according to the AFSCME Local 1201's president Tom Franzoni.

Heck said in an interview Thursday that he did not complete the survey because one of the questions asked about previous conflicts with unions. Heck said that he didn't want to disclose details of "a personnel issue that was involved with a union member" during his time as city clerk in 2023, and so he could not "fully fill out" the questionnaire.

Heck characterized the disclosure of previous complaints as a "smear campaign" and questioned the timing of the release of the complaints as the election nears.

All three union presidents said that the endorsement of Doenges was decided through votes by their union's membership, and was informed by Doenges' financial support of their departments, bargaining in good faith, and positive day-to-day interactions with their fellow workers.

"We stand with those who stand with us, and Mayor Doenges has been a steadfast advocate for public safety, not just for firefighters, but for our police officers, public works employees and for all those who dedicate their lives protecting and serving Rutland," said Kyle Robillard, the president of Rutland firefighters union, the International Association of Firefighters Local 2323.

**'Anti-union bias'**

The unfair labor practice complaint, submitted to the Vermont Labor Relations Board in 2023, described Heck questioning AFSCME Local 1201 members for their endorsement of Doenges' bid against the then incumbent mayor, David Allaire, and using derogatory language against the union's president.

According to the charge filed by

AFSCME, Heck also questioned a female municipal employee, saying that he considered her his "work wife" and that she "cheated on him" through her involvement in the union.

The female municipal employee "felt intimidated by these remarks and certainly did not welcome these remarks," according to the charge, and ultimately resigned from her position as union chair due to fear that her job would be in jeopardy if she continued to affiliate with the union.

The grievance filed against the city administration led by then Mayor Allaire and City Clerk Heck, cited "anti-Union bias," describing a union member that "suffered an 8 day suspension without Just Cause" in September of 2022.

The AFSCME grievance contends that the union member was suspended because Heck took issue with her entering his office to photocopy a draft memo that she shared with the union. The memo was "neither secret nor confidential" and the union member "did not break any City rules, personnel policies, nor Contract provisions," according to the grievance.

Last week, Heck also faced criticism from the Rutland City police officials for breaching confidentiality by commenting on ongoing police union negotiations in a Facebook Live video. The police union, the Fraternal Order of the Police Lodge 410, subsequently filed an unfair labor practice charge and ethics complaint against him, according to union president Tim Rice.

**Heck responds**

Heck said that he received a document from the city's attorney in November of 2024 that discussed an investigation into "potentially unlawful harassment" by an appointed City Hall official.

The document read that the investi-

gation was closed because even if union members' accounts were accurate, the "conduct they described would not constitute a violation of the standards," according to Heck.

Heck said he was not certain whether the document referred to the grievance or unfair labor practices charge filed while he was city clerk, or even if the investigation was regarding his alleged conduct. Heck said he believed the accusations against him had been proven false.

But David Van Deusen, the Vermont coordinator for the AFSCME, said in an interview that the local union withdrew the unfair labor practices charge against Heck once he was not reappointed to City Hall.

"After the sea change took place and after it became clear that Henry Heck would no longer be in a position of authority over our women members, we considered the issue resolved," said Van Deusen.

Doenges said that he could not discuss why he did not reappoint his challenger Heck as city clerk when he took office as mayor in 2023, but that he interviewed all municipal employees who wanted to keep their jobs, and he chose to reappoint those who shared a similar vision on how to steer Rutland into the future.

In Heck's closing statement during the mayoral forum, he acknowledged the onslaught of accusations he has faced of late, but said that he would like to focus on the issues.

"There's been a lot of things out there lately with me in the press," Heck said. "I've had to answer for those things, which I have done unwavering as far as that goes, but there comes a point in time where, you know, I would really like to just get back to campaigning and not have to worry about all the allegations all of a sudden before Election Day."



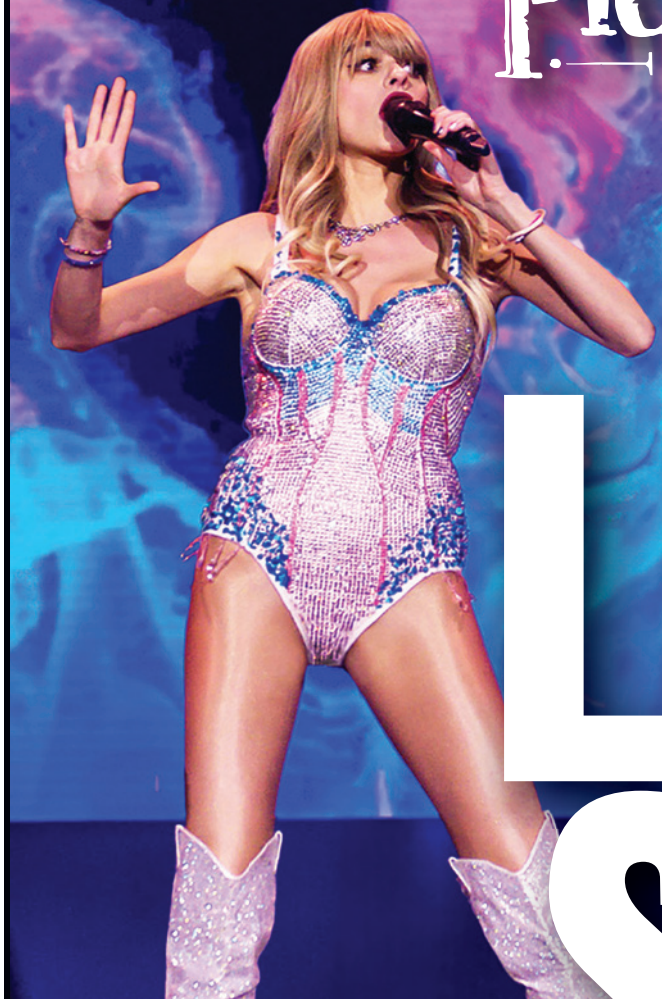
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Henry Heck (left) and Mike Doenges (right) hope to be elected Rutland City mayor for the next two-year term at Town Meeting Day, March 4.

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**TICKETS**



# Candidates for Killington Select Board answer questions

Tuesday night, Feb. 18, the Killington Pico Area Association (KPAA) held a forum for the four candidates vying for two seats on the Killington Select Board. One seat is for a 3-year term; the other a 1-year term. Incumbent Chris Karr will face a challenge from Patrick Cushing for the 3-year seat. Karr is the owner of the Karr Group which operates half a dozen restaurants and businesses in Killington. Cushing is a senior consultant with Deloitte Risk & Financial Advisory. He works in intelligence and investigation field supporting government clients.

Incumbent Rob Hecker will face a challenge from Ricky Bowen for the 1-year seat. This seat was vacated by Steve Finneron and Hecker was appointed by the Select Board to fill it May 13, 2024, until voters could elect a replacement this Town Meeting Day. Hecker worked over two decades with ADP in New Jersey before moving to Killington in 2021. He's since started a small construction company called Peak Construction, LLC. Ricky Bowen was the foreman for the town of Killington highways and facilities for 36 years

until May 15, 2024, when he resigned.

Each candidate was given the following eight questions in advance of the forum. The answers below were provided to the Mountain Times in advance (short form questions provided for reference). *Note: Bowen was not able to complete the Q&A before deadline so requested to be included in the next edition. Please look for his answers there, as well as online at Mountain-Times.info where a link to the forum will also be posted.*

**1) Why are you running for the Killington Select Board and what do you think makes you most qualified to represent the citizens of Killington?**

**2) Are there specific problems or concerns that are motivating you to run in this election?**

**3) The municipal budget on the Town Meeting Day ballot is \$7,912,875 which is an increase of 12.5% over last year's budget. Do you support this budget, why or why not??**

**4) How do you feel about the Town's initiative "Killington Forward?" Please touch upon the follow areas: The reconstruction of Killington Road, the creation of a new munic-**

**ipal water system, building workforce housing, support of the Killington Village?**

**5) Conflict of interest has been a topic locally as well as statewide most recently. The Town has created a new Code of Ethics and Enforcement ordinance. Do you have any current conflicts of interest with matters relative to the town? If so, what are they? How will you handle those, or others that may arise, if elected to the board?**

**6) The last article on Killington's ballot (Article 6) asks voters if the Select Board should grow to five members instead of its current three. Do you support this measure? Why or why not?**

**7) The Town's Recreation Dept and Library are two important assets for this community. As Selectman how will you support and help these departments grow, continue to serve the community?**

**8) What are the biggest obstacles and/or opportunities you see facing Killington's progress that you plan to address in this next first term?**

## Q&A with Patrick Cushing, for 3-year term

### Why are you running?

Last Year Steve Finneron stepped down from the Select Board after a long term where he made an incredible impact. However, his leaving created an imbalance of viewpoints. The current Select Board are businessmen, which is important to running the town, but the representation of the non-businessman resident is underrepresented. I want to offer the town's people the choice to fill this void.

### Do you have specific concerns motivating your run in this election?

Increased tax rate on residents with fixed income is one concern to me as it's an existential threat to the town by means of losing the community of Killington. Having the most beautiful and full-service town, means very little when there is no community to hold it together. We are bigger than just a ski town.

### Do you support the \$7,912,875 budget?

This year the budget is in a hard place. About a third of this increase is due to overspending in 2024, \$375,000. So, if the budget was an 8% increase, this would be easier to swallow as we are in a growing phase, though closer to inflation is more ideal. This overspend is generally related to the restructuring of the fire department and staffing increase in the department of public works. With the planned Grand List increases this may be curbed in future years, but there appears to be no short-term relief. I would be interested in looking at what a short-term reinstatement of 1% options tax on sales would look like, until such time as the village is developed and Grand List increases.

### Do you support "Killington Forward?"

I feel like we are too far in to second guess at this point. The town has voted to pass the TIF and go to a hybrid fire department. If we go back now the tax payers are going to eat costs which in future years are planned to be covered by the increase in the Grand List.

The reconstruction of Killington Road: I look at this as a bonus as it's a project which would have to happen in the next decade anyway. So, if it's rolled into the TIF great.

The creation of a new municipal water



Submitted

Patrick Cushing helped verify voters at a past election with son, Bear.

system: I also support this as there are water issues on the access road with PFAS and this will also increase the availability of vertical development of the access road which hopefully will include workforce housing.

Building workforce housing: This is necessary for the town to survive in the form we know. Community is an item I touched on prior. The workforce has always been the heart of the community, there is definitely a second home community, too, but years ago when Killington had very little summer activity, the summer community events (4th of July, Trike Race, Building of Kids Kingdom, etc.) was held up by the workforce (service industry and carpenters). We don't want Killington to be a commuter town, where community happens in the border towns and Killington is just a revenue machine.

Support of the Killington Village: The village is a business decision by Killington Mountain, Great Gulf, and local investors. It can be a bonus to the town with increasing the Grand List but needs the balance of retaining community. Like stated above this means keeping options available for the workforce to also live in town. Possible avenues to achieve this are things like S.100 or if that fails a more aggressive Inclusionary

Cushing → 9

## Q&A with Chris Karr, for 3-year term

### Why are you running?

To continue the progress we've been able to make on the board these past three years. The reason I'm running is I want to give back to the community. This community has given me so much since I first came here in the early '80s. I've worked on a number of different boards within the town over the years. I was a member of the volunteer fire department for years, I was served on the planning commission, I've served on the fire district, and now the Select Board, so I have a good understanding of the processes, how we need to operate and have great respect for all the different departments.

### Do you have specific concerns motivating your run in this election?

I know that the budget has been a lightning rod and I understand it. I don't want to see our taxes go up, but costs keep rising.

The community has also grown a lot since Covid and so the services in the town have seen incredible pressure. If you look at the number of calls received by the police department or the fire department, it's all grown. And so those costs have gone up... We need to provide the services to protect residential and infrastructure assets for our town and its residents.

### Do you support the \$7,912,875 budget?

We put a lot of pressure this year on the budget. We made cuts in certain places, but we also realized we could see some more income and pushed in that direction as well. I do support the budget that we put through, but it's something we present to the voters that they get to vote on and ultimately approve.

We're putting more money into paving, because we know there's a lot of roads that are going to need repair. West Hill Road, for example, is in tough shape. We need to make sure the funding is there so that we take care of the assets that we have.

We're doing the very best we can to manage our funding within the town, having cost controls, but still allowing for us to stock money away for future items like recreation and the replacement of the pool, so that we don't have to go out and borrow a



Submitted

Chris Karr

ton of money to finish up projects.

### Do you support "Killington Forward?"

Yes. It's going to allow us to build out something that was started back in the '70s. And we desperately need a lot of things that this village will afford us. While other ski areas have developed and moved forward, we've stayed pretty stagnant for a number of years. So I'm supportive of the initiative for us to move forward. I think it'll allow us to continue to build a roadway that will have biking and walking paths that we desperately need more of. Outdoor recreation is growing. Look at the number of biking trails we're building now. We need to connect the dots.

It's a shame about the [federal pause on the] \$25 million RAISE grant, but I don't think it's dead. We've been told just to wait. I'm hopeful that we can get that back, but until we have a green light, I do believe we need to hit the pause button on actually rebuilding the road.

The water system is desperately needed in this town. I personally was affected by it at one of my properties, and I think that a lot of properties right now are struggling with water. First is the quantity issue, we have a major hotel right now that trucks water on a daily basis because they have zero water, not a little bit of water: zero. We also have

Karr → 9



## Q&A with Robert Hecker, for 1-year term

### Why are you running?

I thought I would use this time to tell everyone a little bit about myself since I continue to be the newer guy in town. My family and I made the official move to Killington in late 2021. My wife of 23 years Tiffany and our 4 children. Tiffany works at WES [Woodstock Elementary School] as the school admin and is also active in town on the recreation board. My oldest two children Jake and Brooke are off at college now. Luke is my 16-year-old and is a sophomore at Woodstock. Quinn is my 12-year-old and is in 6th grade at KES [Killington Elementary School]. As for me personally when we moved up to Killington I left my 26 year corporate career behind and started a local construction company. I now continue to operate that company on the side as I have very recently have been recruited to re-enter corporate life. One more thing about me is that I do have an MBA. I put myself through school for 10 years at night. I received my associates degree, a bachelors in finance and ultimately my MBA over that 10 year period.

Initially I got involved in public service in order to fire up my brain again. I had gone from a dynamic, collaborative corporate setting to working on my own most of the time



Submitted  
Robert Hecker

and missed the mental stimulation. I joined the planning commission in late 2023 and subsequently put my hat in the ring for the Select Board role upon Steve's departure. It was intended to scratch the itch of getting some mental activity going. As I have done more of it I have grown to enjoy it. I've also learned so much in my first year I'm excited to put that learning into action going forward. As far as my qualification goes I consider myself complementary to the current board members. We have great knowledge of industry and the inner workings of the town on the board today. As well as a wealth of knowledge around the history. I do not have that [historical] background, yet I am the only one that comes to the table with an extended and successful corporate leadership background and that I have found to add significant value over my time on the board. So.... complementary.

### Do you have specific concerns motivating your run in this election?

After a year on the board there are a couple areas I know I can chip in to help drive improvement. The first is regarding the Town Manager. Of course, the selection process is critically important, which we are currently close to finalizing.

Equally, if not more important, is a solid mentoring/coaching/support focused model in which we ensure that individual is successful. We do not want to be in a selection process for a town manager again anytime soon so we need to ensure we invest in that area appropriately. The second item on my mind is the budgeting process. I've shared this with Chris and Jim that I really did not like the process and would be very interested in separating strategy/planning from budgeting. Today they are the same so at the same time you sit down to talk budget is the first time you are hearing what the department heads want to do the next year. We need to move that portion up in the cycle so we can formalize a plan prior to budget time so the budgeting sessions are really just a check to make sure the budget aligns to the plan.

### Do you support the \$7,912,875 budget?

As a current board member I think I have to say yes to this one...especially since I was involved in creating it. Last year we carried a \$375K deficit forward which is ~40% of the YoY [year over year] expense increase. Abbie [Sherman, director of public works] did a really nice job laying out a systematic plan to help us stay on top of our current infrastructure maintenance which was an additional \$300K. TIF administrative needs, right sizing the town manager salary to meet current market expectations, insurance costs and some expenses associated with the new town hall that gets us all the way to the expense increase. All necessary elements that

Hecker → 10

### ← Cushing:

from page 8

Zoning Ordinance.

### Conflicts of Interest: Do you have any? How will you handle them?

I recently wrote a letter published in The Mountain Times on this issue. First, I think the ethics ordinance is a good start, however, it is missing some of the spirit of the Act 171 changes. It is important to have a documented standard operating procedure (SOP) on how to handle ethics investigation, but we also need to identify an ethics liaison who is separate from the investigations process (maybe a town librarian, I trust librarians). The ls only. This is explained by Christina Sivret, executive director of Vermont Ethics Commission in interview she did with Pat McDonald on her "Vote for Vermont" show. Sivret explains that these tasks are intended to be separate, so that local findings are separate from reporting to the independent third party Commission. If the local investigations are in line with recommendation of the State Ethics Commission great! but if the buck stops at the local level, having this wonderful independent sounding board becomes moot.

My conflicts in town are the property, which my mom owns (where I live), and that I sometime cover shifts at Mountain Meadows. So, anything having to do with those two properties is a no-go for me. I have no other vested interests in town, and have experience turning down gifts, or perceived gifts, as I used to work as a police officer and needed to be vigilant on public perception (gifts such as tickets to the World Cup and/or comped meals). If it isn't a town function or duty of the position, I will respectfully decline anything that is not offered to the average town resident. Perception is paramount to trust.

### Should Select Board grow to five?

I think if the town wants to continue to grow it needs to increase the Select Board size to capture more diversified viewpoints. This may minimally slow down process or make meetings longer, but it goes hand in hand (in my opinion) with the Killington Forward initiative.

### Recreation Dept and Library: how to help grow and continue to serve the community?

Community, this is community. I will support these by listening to their respective boards. They know better than me what their capabilities are and where they can better support the community. I grew up going to the pool, reading at the library, going to Camp Loads of Fun. My son now goes to story time at the library in the room, which my mom painted the mural on the wall. I previously stated I trust librarians and would love for one of them to be the towns ethics liaison. I also trust that they know best for their area of expertise.

### Obstacles/opportunities?

Biggest issue is instilling trust from our community to act in their best interest. All of them, the voting public, the second homeowners, the business, workforce, etc. The job of selectman is to make big decisions after listening to experts in their related fields for all these people/entities. Not everyone will be happy all the time, but being transparent and empathetic to each group's plight goes a long way in maintaining trust and having community support. I am looking to occupy this Select Board seat only if the town's people feel I can best represent these views, and not my own.

### ← Karr:

from page 8

the quality issue with [contaminants including] PFOAs. And there's another big one, that no one's really touched on and that's fire protection. It would be great for the fire department to be able to connect to more hydrants, and also more buildings could become sprinklered — especially hotels, it's a life saving matter there.

### Conflicts of Interest: Do you have any? How will you handle them?

I think everything we do, we have to operate ethically. We're voted in with the support of the voters to operate in an ethical manner. We take an oath for that. I believe that we need to continue in that direction and follow the state's statutes. Anything that we might have that would be a conflict of interest, we immediately need to recuse ourselves. Having a five person Select Board gives us the ability to allow people to recuse themselves when there is a conflict of interest.

### Should Select Board grow to five?

I support a five person board, if that is the wish to the voters. There's parts of it that make life a lot easier. Currently, every time we need get together to work on stuff with Great Gulf, we have to warn a meeting, and then go into executive session. With a five member board, two Select Board members can get together and have a working session on something, we wouldn't need to warn it. We can't make a decision with just two, but we can make a lot of progress, so I think it becomes a lot easier in that regard.

There's also such a large workload right now, it would be really nice to disperse it a bit. The time commitment is far greater right now for Selectmen than it ever has been. We're trying to figure out this water system, the roadway... we're meeting constantly because there are big municipal infrastructure projects in the works. I love the idea of working with more people that are driven to see the town becoming a better place.

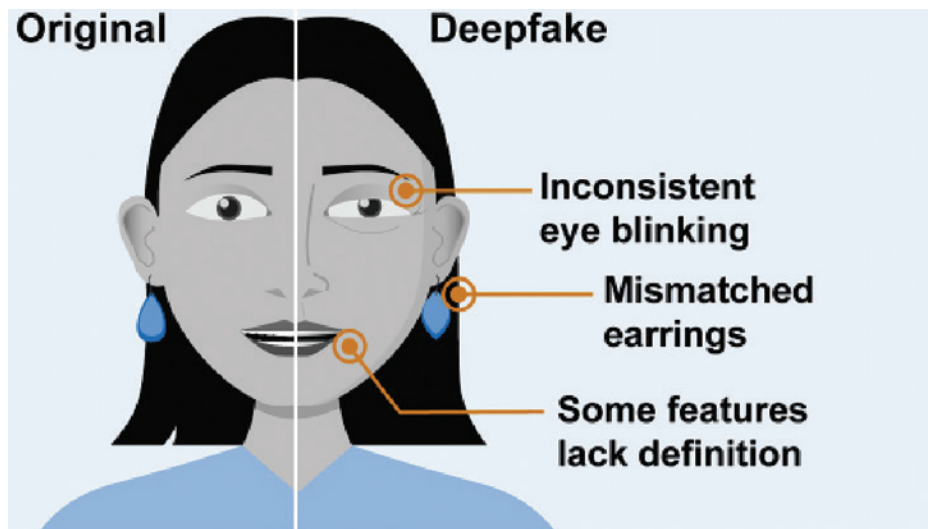
### Recreation Dept and Library: how to help grow and continue to serve the community?

Ultimately, what I'm trying to achieve here, personally, is that we build a town and a community where our children want to come back and raise their kids. So I really push to see those programs grow. And I think there are people that come here in the summertime because of the accessibility of our recreation and what the department offers, including the camps. I think that they [summer camps] desperately need shelter, and so when the opportunity came up for us to purchase the post office building, I immediately thought to make the old town offices our youth and Senior Center. What's better than to bring our seniors and our youth together under one roof, and work together bettering our community.

The library is also an incredibly strong asset for us. They're a very well run organization. Whether it's the concert series down there or the different events that they host — they're certainly helping to build a well-rounded community that our kids will return to.

### Obstacles/opportunities?

This current board is moving forward, and we're addressing the needs of the town — current needs as well as preparing for the future — I want to see this continue. Right now, our the relationship between the town and the resort is the best it's ever been. We're building partnerships with them, like the workforce housing property that we acquired. I think things are really looking up for this community as a whole and I just want to see it continue.



Courtesy U.S. Government Accountability Office

A graphic from the U.S. Government Accountability Office illustrates common features of deepfake imagery.

## Vermont would take 'first logical step' with new AI bill, says secretary of state

By Noah Diedrich, Community News Service

*Editor's note: The Community News Service is a program in which University of Vermont students work with professional editors to provide content for local news outlets at no cost.*

Can Vermont legislators distinguish an AI-generated portrait from a real one? That was the question facing the Senate government operations committee last week as members watched pictures from a New York Times quiz designed to test just that.

As each face flicked by, the senators took turns guessing whether or not it was made by artificial intelligence.

In five attempts, they only managed to get one correct.

The Feb. 4 committee meeting was convened to hear testimony on S.23, a bill that would require political campaigns in Vermont to disclose uses of "synthetic media" — an image, video or audio recording that creates a realistic yet false representation of another candidate. Failing to do so would come with a fine based on the severity of the violation.

The bill, introduced by Sen. Ruth Hardy, D-Addison, seeks to regulate the use of deepfakes, a type of AI-generated media that alters what a person said or did in a conversation with the intent of deceiving viewers.

The threat of AI in elections is something that has long been a conversation among state election officials across the country, said Vermont Secretary of State Sarah Copeland Hanzas. For her, S.23 is a "first logical step" in AI regulation for Vermont.

"We're really in uncharted territory in terms of the newness of this technology," she said. "We don't have any court precedents saying, 'This is how you can limit this type of speech,' or, 'This is how you can't limit this kind of speech.' So disclosure seems to be the safest way

AI bill → 16

## Record year for wildlife tracking

VTF&W Scat and Tracks program enrolls over 3,000

A record of just over 3,000 elementary and middle school students learned to find and identify signs of bobcat, raccoon, snowshoe hare and white-tailed deer this winter.

This success marks the fifth year of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Dept's Scat and Tracks program. Scat and Tracks is a hybrid outdoor education curriculum that got its start in 2021 during the peak of Covid-19 school closures. Today, the program reaches K-9 classes as well as home school groups in all 14 Vermont counties.

Scat and Tracks grew to this year's record enrollment of over 3,000 students—including 271 home schoolers—and 218 participating educators from just 390 students and 63 participating educators in its first year. Many teachers return year after year and recommend the program to their colleagues.

"We started Scat and Tracks back in 2021 as a way to help teachers get their students outside during the pandemic," said Corey Hart, an education specialist with the department. "We never expected it to take off and keep running like it has done."

Scat and Tracks is designed around a series of wildlife identification

Tracking → 16



Courtesy VTF&W

Eastern cottontail rabbit (top) and gray fox (bottom) tracks are some of the wildlife signs that students in the Scat and Tracks program learn to recognize. Both species are common in rural parts of the state as well as in towns and cities.

### Hecker: from page 8

help us move the town forward.

- \$375K carry over
- \$300K roads and maintenance
- \$280K town manager, TIF admin, insurance and new town hall

Makes up the entire increase.

#### Do you support "Killington Forward?"

I like how well the first phase of the bottom portion of the road project was completed. I know they [the contractors] have some open items to finalize in the spring, but I really like the fact that the primary elements were completed prior to the winter and are generally on track.

We all know the need for municipal water is a high priority and a dependency for both the village and the workforce housing. I'm sure our current residents are excited to receive it as well. Once again I feel good about the progress there.

Workforce housing planning is also on the right track. It is a lot of work to coordinate the purchase of land for this intention as well as broker an agreement between Great Gulf and the mountain [resort] in order to chip in for the mutual benefit of all. We are primed for this to take greater shape in

the upcoming year.

I'm in full support of the Village project. Not much more to say about that.

#### Conflicts of Interest: Do you have any? How will you handle them?

Since there was so much detail around the investment in the mountain connected to ethics this feels like a direct question so I will treat it as such. Yes, I am an investor in the mountain. I do not see it as a conflict, but I am more than happy to recuse myself from matters affecting the mountain if that is desired. If there are ever any questions of me regarding anything that has a perception of conflict, please simply let me know. E-mail, call...anytime. I will talk through any questions the public may have.

#### Should Select Board grow to five?

I fully support it. It would be great for the board to have additional perspectives as it looks to make future decisions. It would also be great to be able to talk shop with another board member outside of the meetings. Today we cannot, as two members is a quorum. The only other comment I would make here is to the women in town. Hopefully we can get

some interest for some of them to raise their hands should this Article pass. That would be a welcome addition to the board.

#### Recreation Dept and Library: how to help grow and continue to serve the community?

I will start with the Recreation Dept. First of all, my wife Tiffany is on the recreation board and is very active in her support of all things rec. I know that is not me directly but I should get a little credit for that! When it comes to the Library I outsource that help to my youngest daughter who uses the facility after almost every school day and chips in to assist.

Strictly from a board perspective both groups showed up very well in their budgeting sessions and we were all extremely supportive of them financially.

#### Obstacles/opportunities?

I'll recap:

- Town manager selection and retention plan.
- Planning sessions for all departments to streamline budgeting season.
- There are other planning opportunities that could use some focus – Golf Course is one example.



TOWN OF  
**KILLINGTON**  
VERMONT

**2025 TOWN-WIDE REAPPRAISAL  
DATA COLLECTION CARDS HAVE BEEN MAILED OUT!!**

As mentioned in the Reappraisal Informational Meeting, the Town of Killington will be sending out Data Mailers to verify the data for your property. The mailers will be sent to the mailing address that we have on file. The Board of Listers is asking each and every property owner to review their data card and return it within 10 days. Changes cannot be made by telephone as a signed form is required for our records. Cards may be returned by mail, fax, email or in person at the town office.

**Sample Data Card  
Data Card - Category Definitions**

If you need assistance in reviewing your card, please contact the listers office at [listers@killingtontown.com](mailto:listers@killingtontown.com) or (802) 422-3241, x5

To Schedule a Q&A Session, contact Merisa Sherman at [merisa@killingtontown.com](mailto:merisa@killingtontown.com)



TOWN OF  
**KILLINGTON**  
VERMONT

**WARNING**

**PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING: MARCH 3, 2025  
&  
BOND VOTE: MARCH 4, 2025**

Pursuant to 17 VSA 2680, the legal voters of the Town of Killington, County of Rutland, State of Vermont are hereby warned and notified that a Public Informational Hearing will be held on Monday, March 3, 2025, commencing at seven o'clock (7:00) in the evening (p.m.) to be held at the Killington Public Safety Building at 800 Killington Road, Killington, Vermont and via electronic means. The object and purpose of this hearing is to consider indebtedness for the purpose of improvements for the Town, consisting of the planning, design, acquisition, construction and installation and equipping of water system improvements for the Town. The estimated cost of the improvement is \$11,200,000; the amount of bonds proposed to be issued is \$11,200,000.

The article as it will appear on the Annual Town Meeting Warning is as follows:

Article 4. Shall the bonds of the Town of Killington in an amount not to exceed ELEVEN MILLION TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$11,200,000), subject to reduction through the receipt of any other sources of funding, be issued for the purpose of the planning, design, acquisition, construction and installation and equipping of water system improvements for the Town of Killington?

The above article will be voted by Australian ballot at the Killington Town Office at 2706 River Road in Killington on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M.

Information for attending the Public Informational Hearing via electronic means will be posted in the Agenda on the Town website: [Killingtontown.com/calendar](http://Killingtontown.com/calendar)



TOWN OF  
**KILLINGTON**  
VERMONT

**WARNING:  
PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING:  
March 3, 2025  
&  
ANNUAL TOWN MEETING:  
March 4, 2025**

The legal voters of the Town of Killington, County of Rutland, State of Vermont are hereby warned and notified to meet at the Killington Town Office at 2706 River Road in Killington on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, from 7:00 A.M. to 7:00 P.M. to vote by Australian ballot on the following Articles.

Legal voters are further warned that a public informational hearing will take place at the Killington Public Safety Building at 800 Killington Road in Killington and via electronic means on Monday, March 3, 2025, at 7:00 P.M. For information on how to participate in this public informational hearing, please see the Public Informational Hearing Notice and Agenda posted herewith.

**Article 1.** To elect the following town officers:

- A moderator for a term of one year;
- A selectboard member for a term of one year;
- A selectboard member for a term of three years;
- A town clerk for a term of one year;
- A town treasurer for a term of three years;
- A lister for a term of three years;
- A cemetery commissioner for a term of three years;
- A library trustee for a term of five years;

**Article 2.** Shall property taxes be paid in three installments: the first due August 15, 2025, and the overdue subject to interest after August 25, 2025; the second due November 15, 2025, and overdue subject to interest after November 25, 2025; and the third due February 15, 2026, with the total tax delinquent after February 25, 2026?

**Article 3.** Shall the voters approve total general fund expenditures of \$7,912,875 of which an estimated \$5,422,325 shall be raised by property taxes, and \$2,490,550 in estimated non-property tax revenue for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2025?

**Article 4.** Shall the bonds of the Town of Killington in an amount not to exceed ELEVEN MILLION TWO HUNDRED THOUSAND DOLLARS (\$11,200,000), subject to reduction through the receipt of any other sources of funding, be issued for the purpose of the planning, design, acquisition, construction and installation and equipping of water system improvements for the Town of Killington?

**Article 5.** Shall general obligation bonds or notes of the Town of Killington, in an amount not to exceed Four Hundred Ninety Thousand Dollars (\$490,000), subject to reduction from available state and federal grants in aid and the application of available reserves, to be financed for a term not to exceed 15 years be issued for the purpose of completing renovations of the new Town Hall at 2046 US Route 4 in Killington?

**Article 6.** Shall the Town of Killington elect two (2) additional Selectboard members for terms of two years each pursuant to 17 V.S.A. §2650(b) whose terms shall take effect June 1, 2025, with a Special Meeting to be warned to fill these additional positions in the event this Article passes?

Dated at Killington, Vermont this 27th day of January 2025.

  
Jim Hafl

  
Robert Hecker

  
Christopher Karr



# SUNDAY DRIVE

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#### THERAPEUTICS THURS.

### 20% OFF

### TOPICALS & TINCTURES.



#### FRIDAY FLIGHT

### GET SELECT FOUR EIGHTHS FOR ONLY \$120 + TAX.



#### SHOPPING SUNDAY

### 10% OFF ONLINE ORDERS

WITH CODE "SUNDAY"



SCAN ME TO



SEE OUR MENU



FOR OUR NEWSLETTER & MORE:  
[VTSUNDAYDRIVE.COM](http://VTSUNDAYDRIVE.COM)



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Submitted

Members of the UVM national champion soccer team were honored with a standing ovation and resolution in the House Chamber on Friday, Feb. 7.

## One-third of the way?

This past Friday was the final day for the first group of legislative pages. Always nice to see the recognition the eighth graders receive for their service with their families present at the State House. Pages serve for six weeks, with three groups comprising the scheduled 18-week session. The Legislature would normally be one-third of the way done at this point.



By Rep. Jim Harrison

However, plans for a major overhaul of school governance and financing could derail the normal flow of business for the 2025 session. Both the governor and legislative leaders have agreed up to this point that education changes are the No. 1 priority. Increasing property taxes were a major factor in the change of the political makeup of the Vermont Legislature last November.

With more details coming forth on the administration's education proposal, the criticisms are increasing from various groups, including superintendents, the NEA, school boards, principals and others. Senate leader Phil Baruth, D-Chittenden-Central, has already declared his opposition to the governor's proposal to allow a limited amount of school choice in all school districts. He has even hinted that education changes could wait and just work on the financing issue this session.

House Speaker Krowinski, while also not a fan of expanding school choice options, continues to believe we need to make transformational changes to our education system, and not just tinker with the financing.

Others argue that without reducing the costs of K-12 education, already one of the highest in the country, financing costs will continue to grow. Reshuffling the deck chairs alone will not get us where we need to go to improve outcomes and lower taxes. Given the complexities and lack of consensus on how to transform the education system, there is a very good chance the session could go into overtime.

### Other issues of interest:

- The House and Senate Appropriation Committees held the first of two public hearings on the FY26 state budget last Thursday. Individuals and groups requested over \$70 million in additional spending over the governor's

recommended budget plan. Any increase in spending could jeopardize money set aside for short-term property tax relief.

- The Vermont Supreme Court dismissed a challenge to the governor's authority to reappoint Secretary of Education Zoie Saunders after the Senate failed to confirm her initial appointment last year. The challenge was brought by state Sen. Tanya Vyhovsky, P/D-Chittenden-Central and former Sen. Dick McCormick, D-Windsor.
- The Senate Committee on Appropriations has delayed advancing its version of the annual Budget Adjustment Act (H.141) to this week after failing to reach agreement with the governor. The bill was approved in the House by party lines over disagreement of additional spending and proposal for an extension of the hotel voucher program winter rules into early summer.
- A proposal to call for a constitutional convention to address topics like federal Congressional term limits and federal deficit spending, ran into a cool reception in the House Government Operations Committee last week. Under Article V of the U.S. Constitution, Congress would have to convene a constitutional convention if 34 states called for one.
- The Senate natural resources committee is expected to advance legislation aimed at reducing the use of salt on Vermont roadways during the winter.

The page recognition at the conclusion of their six weeks always reminds me of when our son, Ben, served in that capacity some years ago. That was also one of those rare sessions that went into overtime. While Ben was happy because he was able to extend his six weeks away from school, I am certainly hoping we can find a way to get the work done before June!

The Legislature is currently scheduled and budgeted to conclude on May 16. Extending the session could result in the need for additional appropriation.

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

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## GUEST EDITORIAL

## Vt's future is a choice between scarcity and abundance

By Kevin Chu

*Editor's note: Kevin Chu is the executive director of the Vermont Futures Project, an independent non-partisan organization pursuing answers to their mission question: How can we use data to support the evolution of Vermont's economy towards a thriving future full of opportunity for all?*

Personal growth is universally celebrated. We encourage people to pursue education, seek professional development, and advance in their endeavors. We applaud entrepreneurs who take risks, innovate, and build successful enterprises. We praise people who overcome adversity and become more resilient in the process.

Yet, when it comes to Vermont's communities, there is hesitation to embrace the same idea of growth, with some even calling for degrowth. Population growth and new housing developments are treated as threats that need to be protected against. Protection of what and for whom? What if the real danger is not growing?

We celebrate growth on an individual level — let's extend that sentiment to our state as a whole.

### What if we don't?

The challenges Vermont faces today — workforce shortages, the housing crisis, rising costs for healthcare and education, and a growing tax burden — are symptoms of stagnation. The root causes are lack of sufficient growth in our working-age population and new housing over several decades.

In doing nothing, Vermont risks either increasing cost of living or uncomfortable reductions in programs, services, and infrastructure that Vermonters rely on. There's already evidence of this from double-digit property tax increases to cuts in transportation, proposed reductions in hospital services,

and school consolidation. These are the options if Vermont doesn't grow; these are the impacts of choosing scarcity.

Don't like these options? Many Vermonters agree with you. More Vermonters support population growth and increased housing than oppose it.

### What's the alternative?

Choose abundance.

We can make Vermont more affordable *and* maintain critical services with growth. A larger working-age population strengthens the workforce. This supports business success and can lead to higher wages. Growing the population also means more taxpayers rather than more taxes. Increased housing improves affordability and accessibility for current and future Vermonters. Growth ensures that our communities remain viable places for people to build their futures while fostering greater sustainability and resilience. In depopulated areas, growth can lead to revitalization and the utilization of existing resources.

These are the potential benefits of abundance.

Scarcity or abundance → 36

So, China? Would you be interested in quite a bit of oil? Lot's and lots of water? Tons of lumber? And we'd throw in a few bottles of maple syrup to sweeten the deal...



China Deal by Terry Mosher, The Montreal Gazette

## LETTERS

### Defending Vermont's public schools

Dear Editor,

The most alarming thing about Governor Scott's education transformation proposal is that it follows the playbook of conservative billionaires who are funding a coordinated effort to dismantle public education. Americans for Prosperity, a political advocacy group founded by the Koch Brothers, recently confirmed this when they singled out and praised Governor Scott's efforts. Under the false promise of school choice, the governor wants to expand tuition payments to private schools. This will further drain dollars from the state budget and our public education system to fund unaccountable private schools.

Part of the strategy of these conservative billionaires is to politicize and dismantle trust in our public schools. They try pitting parents against public schools and teachers, thus dividing communities. These efforts to vilify educa-

Public schools → 18

### MVSD School Board Chair defends Sousa

Dear Editor,

I write this letter as a parent and grandparent, a retired French and Spanish teacher with 44 years of experience, and a current school board chair. After receiving a letter requesting the dismissal of superintendent Sherry Sousa due to a lawsuit settled a year ago, I have engaged with community members, spoken with board members, and done some research regarding

Harassment, hazing, and bullying are societal problems.

the lawsuit. I have read the complaint that was made to the Human Rights Commission and the response from the school district. Harassment, hazing, and bullying are societal problems. It is unacceptable and must be taken seriously when it occurs in our schools.

MVSD chair → 18

### School leaders support Superintendent Sherry Sousa

Dear Editor,

We are writing to the Mountain Views Supervisory Union Board and the communities it serves, to express our support for Sherry Sousa as superintendent of the Mountain Views Supervisory Union (MVSU). As principals and directors within the MVSU, we have worked closely with Sherry towards our goal of creating and maintaining a positive and inclusive learning environment where all students, especially those who are currently or historically marginalized, feel safe, included, welcomed, and accepted, and experience a sense of belonging and academic success in a safe and caring learning environment.

Throughout her career within the MVSU as a special educator, director, and now superintendent, Sherry has shown an unwavering commitment to serving the needs of all students. We believe that Sherry is the best person to continue leading

MVSU leaders → 18

### MVSU educators support Sousa

Dear Editor,

*Editor's note: This letter was originally addressed to the Mountain Views Supervisory Union Board and the communities it serves and is shared by request.*

As district employees, we were very concerned to see the petition calling for the removal or resignation of Superintendent Sherry Sousa. Confronting racism and swiftly addressing racist incidents are of the highest priority in our work. We believe this petition mischaracterizes the deep and ongoing commitment of our district, led by Sherry, to address these persistent and pervasive problems in our society and schools.

Our community is engaged in several challenging and important conversations. This includes debates over how to prioritize limited resources and how to most effectively realize the outcomes we want for our students. It also includes difficult discussions on issues of race, gender, and

MVSU educators → 18

## CAPITOL QUOTES

### Ending the war in Ukraine

On Feb. 24, 2022, Russia invaded Ukraine. In the three years since the start of the war, estimates range between 43,000-80,000 Ukraine military deaths, more than 12,500 civilian deaths, and potentially anywhere from 90,000-200,000 Russian and Pro-Russian fighters killed. The Trump administration is actively working with Russia and Ukraine to end the nearly three-year conflict. Indications that the Trump administration policy would exclude its European allies from the negotiation table sparked concern from both sides that dismissing Europe from negotiations could lead to a destabilizing precedent. The Trump administration also appeared willing to bargain away Ukraine's territory to Russia in order to bring an end to the war.

**“An absolutely abhorrent surrender and a betrayal of Ukraine,”**

said Sen. **Richard Blumenthal** on the emerging proposal.

**“We should have moral clarity who started this war, who is bombing cities indiscriminately, and who our real friend here is. There are consequences of rewarding the invader even if its leader foolishly led over 700,000 of its citizens to slaughter,”**

said Nebraska Representative **Don Bacon**.

**“If Hegseth thinks it’s helpful to Ukrainian security to make proactive concessions like this on their behalf, I hope he’ll go back and read ‘The Art of the Deal,’ because this is no way to negotiate with or for a close partner and ally,”**

said Senator **Chris Coons**, in response to Secretary of Defense Hegseth’s approach towards negotiating a peace settlement between Russia and Ukraine.

**“I never intended to yield to Russia’s ultimatums, and I don’t intend to now,”**

said **Ukraine Zelenskyy** regarding any peace negotiations between Russia and the U.S. that does not involve Ukraine.

## COMMENTARY

# In support of landlords

If the state of Vermont is fully committed to confronting the current housing crisis head-on, its most powerful move would be to partner with landlords and look for ways to support them.

One-third of all Vermont households rent their homes. Of those homes, the vast majority are owned by mom-and-pop landlords, who, on average, own less than two housing units.

Then why does the state direct 80% of its housing funding and resources to those public agencies that create and manage 20% of its rental housing stock? This is the equivalent of turning gold into straw.

It is also an example of the Pareto Principle, which states that 80% of the desired outcome typically comes from 20% of the effort.

Last year, I housed 15 adults and 19 children out of the local motels. As a low-barrier landlord, I housed tenants with no rental history, current employment, credit score, or references. The one common denominator was that they all had a social service organization supporting them.

At least they did until the rental agreement was signed.

The rude awakening for me was that of the 22 housing agencies and authorities I work with, their commitment to the landlord-tenant-agency relationship was limited to supporting the tenant, not in a sustainable win-win-win strategy.

Theoretically, strategies exist to support tenants and work with landlords to ensure a successful relationship between them.

For example, the state has seven landlord

liaisons, who are funded by the Office of Economic Opportunity, but without oversight, the results are uneven or non-existent.

In addition, programs like the Landlord Relief Program are designed to soften the financial blow when a tenant vacates an apartment, leaving unpaid rent and damages. However, when the process is more cumbersome than the potential reward of \$5,000, one has to ask: Is the program committed to the process or the outcome?

Another program is the Eviction Prevention Program, which will intervene in an eviction once there

is a court docket number, paying the back rent for the tenant on the condition that the landlord agrees not to evict the tenant in the future for several months equal to the back rent.

The bulk of the state’s efforts to get and keep tenants housed is on the back end, not on preparing tenants for successful tenancies.

The City of Tacoma, Washington (population 222K), has a landlord liaison program that begins with training and education for potential tenants and continues with support and resources for landlords, including a 24-hour hotline.

Yet, here in Vermont, it is my experience that the state’s agencies’ and organizations’ efforts are focused on reacting to issues rather than preventing them. An exception is the Champlain Valley Office of Economic Opportunity’s Tenant Skills workshop, which I now ask all rental applicants to complete. However, if the agency supporting the tenant doesn’t stay with the tenant, it’s of little value.

Supporting landlords → 53



**The Accidental Activist**  
By Stephen Box

## LETTER

### Keep Doenges as Mayor of Rutland City

Dear Editor,

Mike Doenges has been doing a very good job as mayor and deserves a second term.

I have known Mike since he was a teenager; he came to our house to help Art and me with our computer.

He was an industrious worker then and continues to be.

He is outstanding in the following areas —going to Montpelier on behalf of our city, keeping the downtown vibrant, and having a vision for the future.

Mike wants more housing. He has traveled to Montpelier to get Rutland City recognized and to get state money.

In fact, the city has

received \$8,000,000 in low-interest state loans for developers. And, in the two months following, the city received \$6,500,000 in applications from developers. Tied in with housing is his desire to increase Rutland’s population. More people mean lower taxes.

The downtown has attracted new businesses and restaurants during his time in office. Center Street is alive and well with The Paramount Theatre and shops and restaurants. In addition, events such as The Halloween Parade, The Whoopie Pie Contest, and Winterfest attract people to downtown.

Mike has a vision for

the future: a city of 30,000, more money coming from Montpelier, listening to city residents at City Hall (his office, on the first floor), excellent police and fire protection, road and sidewalk improvements, more events to listen to the public and their concerns, a movie theater, and a hotel downtown.

In only two years, Mike has accomplished a great deal. He is respected by many of us for his work ethic and desire to have our city stay vibrant.

Please vote to re-elect Doenges for mayor so he will have two more years to accomplish his goals.

*Mary Crowley, Rutland*

## OPED

## Resist the billionaire playbook: What the oligarchs want

By U.S. Sen. Bernie Sanders

I do not often find myself in the habit of thanking Elon Musk, but he has done an exceptional job of demonstrating a point that we have made for years — and that is the fact we live in an oligarchic society in which billionaires dominate, not only our politics and the information we consume but our government and economic lives as well.

That has never been more clear than it is

today. But given the news and attention Mr. Musk has been getting over the last few weeks as he illegally and unconstitutionally dismantles government agencies, I thought it was an appropriate time to ask the question that the media and most poli-

The three wealthiest men in America have become \$215 billion richer since Election Day.

is their endgame?

In my opinion, what Musk and those around him are aggressively striving for is not novel; it is not complicated, and it is not new.

ticians don't seem to be asking: What do he and other multi-billionaires really want? What

It is what ruling classes throughout history have always wanted and have believed is theirs by right: more power, more control, more wealth. And they don't want ordinary people and democracy getting in their way.

Elon Musk and his fellow oligarchs believe government and laws are simply an impediment to their interests and what they

Oligarchs → 54

### ← Scarcity or abundance: ..... from page 14

#### How do we get there from here?

The first step is to move beyond endless debates about how we got here or whose fault it is and start focusing on collaborating to do something about it. We need solutions, not scapegoats.

Then we must make a choice. Do we accept scarcity and adapt to rising costs or declining services, or do we choose a future of abundance where strategic growth makes Vermont more affordable?

If we choose affordability and abundance, the Vermont Futures Project Economic Action Plan lays out a data-informed roadmap for making this vision a reality.

Let's embrace a collective growth mindset. Our future depends on it.

We need solutions, not scapegoats.

### ← Tracking: ..... from page 12

videos that participating teachers can share with their classes. Each episode highlights one of 16 Vermont species and describes its habitat needs and life cycle, conservation status, and of course how to find the species' scat, tracks and other signs.

"We have found there is a lot of appetite just for learning about the species who share our state, from both students and their teachers and families," said Hart. "That's true even for fairly common wildlife like beavers and foxes. A recent survey we ran found less than half of Vermonters would say they are moderately or very knowledgeable about a surprising number of species."

After every video lesson, teachers take their students outside looking for scat, tracks and other wildlife signs near their schools or homes. To help teachers who are new to leading nature walks, Hart provides a video masterclass on mentoring

students in skills like making field observations and using a nature journal. Once field trips are complete, students and teachers can join Hart and department biologists in a group video call to share wildlife observations and bring questions directly to the experts.

"There is a lot of appetite just for learning about the species who share our state," said Hart.

"This year we had our deer biologist, our small mammal biologist, and many others join big group video calls to answer questions from students after their field trips," said

Hart. "The biologists were able to go into real depth about many Vermont species with the students, and to talk about what a career in conservation is like as well. It turned out to be an incredible hit for both the students and our scientists."

Scat and Tracks has wrapped up for 2025 but will be offered again next year. Open registration for January 2026 will be announced in November 2025.

### ← AI bill: ..... from page 12

to go."

Ilana Beller, a lobbyist for national consumer advocacy group Public Citizen, testified last Tuesday in support of the new bill. She was the one who had brought the quiz to the committee to prove the ability of deepfake tech to confuse and befuddle.

"Whether you're talking about audio deepfakes, images, videos — the technology has gotten to a really good place in terms of being effective at tricking people," Beller said. "We've reached a place where pretty much anyone on the internet can create a deepfake within a couple of minutes, and it costs like five bucks."

Beller said the quality of this technology is rapidly improving and that deepfake use saw an increase in recent election cycles around the world, including in the U. S., India, Turkey and Slovakia.

The impetus for S.23 was a robo-call this past year that attempted to bamboozle voters in New Hampshire during the 2024 presidential primary by playing an AI-generated recording of former President Joe Biden, Hardy said.

Phone messages mimicking the voice of the then-president told Granite State Democrats to save their vote for the general election in November, spreading the false notion that they had only the one vote to cast for both

contests.

The effects of AI could be detrimental for public trust in the long run, let alone creating confusion during election cycles, Beller said in her testimony.

"If a large percentage of the content or information that's being circulated is realistic-looking video or images that are fraudulent, then it will serve to erode the trust of the general public," she said.

A version of S.23 has been introduced in 49 state legislatures, with 21 states having already passed it with broad bipartisan support. Vermont's version has tripartisan support, Hardy said.

"One of the things that's great about this issue is I don't think it's a partisan issue," Copeland Hanzas said. "It's really just to make sure that elections are honest and accurate and fair."

Like many of its sister bills, S.23 requires a disclosure of synthetic media instead of an outright ban out of caution for violating the First Amendment. On the question of a complete ban or disclosure for AI use in Vermont elections, Copeland Hanzas said she opts for the latter.

"We have not demonstrated a high

enough bar of potential damage to justify a ban," she said. "It is likely there would be a lawsuit if we were to attempt to ban the use of AI."

But the implications of AI in elections could pose questions for matters of free speech.

"Deciding where along the spectrum of acceptable free speech, versus something that is dangerous or damaging and should be restricted, is

Can Vermont legislators distinguish an AI-generated portrait from a real one? That was the question facing the Senate government operations committee last week ... In five attempts, they only managed to get one correct.

just completely uncharted here in the AI realm," the secretary of state said. "It was never possible to make such a convincing fabrication of what another person might say."

Despite the risks deepfakes could pose to election integrity, Copeland Hanzas said AI may help leverage the playing field in certain contests.

"It helps a candidate who maybe doesn't have staff or doesn't have the funds to hire a bunch of people to help them write ad copy," she said. "They could, in theory, use AI to form the basis of their campaign materials."

### ← It's the people: ..... from page 4

Today, business schools teach about leaders from a variety of socio-economic groups.

However, I worry about the long-term implications of the bias that experience is the only qualification for leadership. After all, who will be more invested in Vermont's long-term health and prosperity than its young leaders? Who is thinking more about the future, not just next year, but a decade from now? As the popular book *Who Moved My Cheese* illustrates, clinging to the past can lead to stagnation. In today's rapidly changing world, adaptability is essential.

While experience is important, the word itself is transitional, subject to the vicissitudes of time and place. Now more than ever, the qualities of leadership that should matter the most are empathy, engagement, enthusiasm and positive energy.

My Carmel experience taught me this valuable lesson: Despite the allure of magnificent scenery and marvelous weather, a place is nothing without the right people to share it with. Over the past two months of almost unbearable icy weather in New Jersey as well as Vermont, I felt more engaged, safe, and secure, simply because I reconnected in person with people I care about the most.

For centuries, philosophers have taught us that building and maintaining meaningful relationships and community is supremely important. For countless friends and lovers, perhaps it's Streisand who expresses that sentiment best: "People who need people are the luckiest people in the world."

Empathetic, engaged and enthusiastic leaders who foster innovation, and who welcome feedback, need our support. We are lucky to have them, as they are the very heartbeat of Vermont.

*Liz DiMarco Weinmann, MBA, is a strategic growth specialist, nonprofit leader, business educator, and author. Her L3C consulting firm works exclusively with charities and educational institutions, on strategic planning, organizational development, and fundraising: lizdimarcoweinmann.com.*



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 E V I R F N T M A L L E F G M R E P C T  
 E H B F E A E A Y L S L R R P C S B I G  
 L E O O C C M G M A P E M O D U O A M M  
 C M D H N V I C I D U E G U I R D A E Z  
 T B Y O A E K P S T L I C P F K K H S Y  
 Y K C E R Y K F K B N E K I T N D N O L  
 P U F L U B E G I I L A U N V D H E M Y  
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 B S G O S Y A N S I L I P O A H H B U C  
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 O G U M M N O I S U F S N A R T R T V P  
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|-----------|------------|------------|------------|----------|-------------|
| ALLELE    | BANK       | COMPATIBLE | GENE       | PHERESIS | THERAPY     |
| ANTIBODY  | BLOOD      | DONOR      | GROUPING   | PLASMA   | TRANSFUSION |
| ANTIGEN   | CELLS      | DOSE       | MANAGEMENT | RED      | TYPE        |
| ASSURANCE | CODOMINANT | ENZYMES    | MATCH      | TESTING  | VIAL        |

**SUDOKU**

Solutions → 40

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

Level: Intermediate

**CROSSWORD PUZZLE**

Solutions → 40

**CLUES ACROSS**

- 1. Tropical Asian plant
- 5. Yankees' slugger Judge
- 10. Helps to preserve food
- 12. Plant disease
- 14. One who predicts
- 16. Equally
- 18. Burundian franc
- 19. Pouch
- 20. Arizona city
- 22. Surround
- 23. Hard, heavy timber
- 25. Witnessed
- 26. They \_\_\_
- 27. French river
- 28. A way to drink
- 30. Small constellation
- 31. Peruse a written work
- 33. Type of hound
- 35. Plant of the goosefoot family
- 37. Evade or escape
- 38. A way to confine
- 40. Volcanic crater
- 41. Weekday
- 42. Women's service organization (abbr.)
- 44. Local area network

- 45. Sensory receptor
- 48. Posted
- 50. Tibetan pastry
- 52. Licensed for Wall Street
- 53. Very willing
- 55. Golf score
- 56. Consume
- 57. Touchdown
- 58. Tends to remind
- 63. In a way, smoothed
- 65. Poke holes in the ground
- 66. Herbaceous plants
- 67. Taiwanese river

**CLUES DOWN**

- 1. Body art
- 2. Boxing's GOAT
- 3. Film for posterity (abbr.)
- 4. Prayer
- 5. Calculating machine
- 6. Keyboard key
- 7. Outburst
- 8. Man-eating giants
- 9. New Hampshire
- 10. Type of sword
- 11. Counting
- 13. Pants style
- 15. Political action committee

		1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9			
								12				13		
		14					15					16	17	
18							19			20		21		
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48				49		50		51				52		
53					54		55					56		
57				58		59				60	61	62		
			63	64					65					
									67					

- 17. U.S. government legislative branch
- 18. Civil Rights Act component
- 21. Contractors take one
- 23. Spanish soldier
- 24. A person's brother or sister
- 27. Expressed pleasure
- 29. Song of praise
- 32. Shock treatment
- 34. Patti Hearst's captors
- 35. Counteract
- 36. Goes over again
- 39. Popular Dodge truck
- 40. Male adult
- 43. A part of a river where the current is very fast
- 44. Rope used to lasso
- 46. Become less intense
- 47. Subway rodent
- 49. Lead alloy
- 51. Japanese honorific title
- 54. Advise someone
- 59. Famous NYC museum
- 60. Ocean
- 61. Cathode-ray tube
- 62. Cologne
- 64. It starts with these two

**GUESS WHO?**

I am a singer born in Canada on February 16, 1990. I began to gain a following after anonymously uploading my songs to YouTube. I went on to release a mixtape, which was met with acclaim. I have since won multiple Grammy awards.

Answer: The Weeknd

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## ← Public schools: from page 14

tors are simply attempts to justify diverting taxpayer dollars away from public education.

Public education is a cornerstone of our nation's democracy, and public schools are essential to providing youth with the skills and knowledge to be engaged participants in our society. Two hundred fifty years ago, Vermont's founders knew that a well-educated population was the only way to ensure Vermont's

Public education is a cornerstone of our nation's democracy.

future and protect us from autocrats and tyranny. This is highlighted by the fact that education is the only government service mentioned in the Vermont Constitution. The framers knew precisely what they were doing with the education clause, the common benefit clause, and the compelled

support clause of the Vermont Constitution.

Public education's importance in preserving our democracy is as important today as it was 250 ago. We will need to find common ground as we look for solutions to our problems. I would like to suggest that the Legislature ignore the conservative billionaires and stay grounded in Vermont's Constitutional history.

*Greg Hughes, Bethel*

## ← MVSD chair: from page 14

In recent years, schools have worked hard to address the harm that harassment, hazing, and bullying do to kids, particularly to students of color and those who are gender-nonconforming. The MVSU School Board initiated an HHB (hazing, harassment, and bullying) policy in 2021. The board reviewed and passed it in 2022 (available on the MVSU website under policies) with significant collaboration from two Vermont Law School students.

Under the leadership of Superintendent Sherry Sousa, the staff began an intense focus on racism, implicit bias, and how to

the professional development days at the start of the school year this fall, Big Hartman, executive director of the Vermont Human Rights Commission, came to further educate the administration, teachers, and staff as to how they can protect students being bullied, combat racism, and other forms of harassment. I also went to the training and learned from it. There is always work to be done, areas to grow, and the need to continuously improve.

In response to the three requests in the letter, my response is:

Superintendent Sousa has been the most proactive

Superintendent Sousa has been the most proactive superintendent regarding protecting students marginalized in our community I have ever seen... This district takes hazing, harassment, and bullying seriously.

address these issues in the classroom. Professional development was offered monthly with Dr. Luvelle Brown from Ithaca, New York, a black superintendent who worked hard to transform his school district into an anti-racist school. He was a consultant to the incident that resulted in the lawsuit and suggested various pathways to move forward. Teachers and staff participated in book studies and opportunities to build curriculum and met with Dr. Brown. During

superintendent regarding protecting students marginalized in our community I have ever seen. Her 40 years in education have been spent working with special education students and as superintendent, promoting equity, diversity, and inclusion for all students.

The school district has engaged with the Human Rights Commission to provide professional development and has policies, procedures, and practices in place to protect all students. Many of the incidents cited

in the lawsuit happened via cell phones and social media outside of school.

The school board performs an evaluation of the superintendent every year, along with the school directors. It is anonymous and is shared with Ms. Sousa. An annual survey is given to faculty and staff to assess her performance based on the Vermont Standards for School Administrators. In addition, parents, faculty, and staff contribute to the Quaglia Culture Survey. This will be our third year offering this survey at the end of February.

I support Superintendent Sousa as our district leader. This district takes hazing, harassment, and bullying seriously. Completing a thorough investigation while supporting the students involved, as well as adhering to timelines, presents challenges and opportunities to improve and grow.

We all need to do the work to understand our biases and our worldviews and diligently teach our children about the harm that they can do with words and actions that are cruel, mean, and ignorant. I believe that Mountain View School District is working conscientiously to address these issues through professional education, honest dialogue with the students, and confronting prejudicial and racially based actions.

*Kerilyn Bristow, Woodstock, MVSD School Board Chair*

## ← MVSU leaders: from page 14

us as we engage in the challenging and difficult work ahead of us.

Schools are a reflection of their local communities and society as a whole. Unfortunately, our community and society have elements that are racist, sexist, homophobic, transphobic, anti-semitic, or bigoted in some other way.

In the fall of 2024, two individuals took down the Pride Flag at The Prosper Valley School and burned it in the road in front of the school building. Our schools respond to acts such as these and strive to create positive and inclusive learning environments where all students thrive. We are committed to this work and cannot do it alone.

Within the MVSU, we have many components in place to move our district forward. In 2021, we partnered with Dr. Luvelle Brown, superintendent

of the Ithaca City School District. Over the years that followed, Dr. Brown worked with MVSU students, educators, and administrators to engage in meaningful and challenging conversations around equity, inclusion, and diversity. In 2022, the School Board adopted an Equity, Inclusion, and Diversity (EID) in Education Policy that clearly articulates our overarching goals and outlines steps that will help achieve these goals. Over the past three years, educators have spent time building their knowledge around equity, inclusion, and diversity during our Late Start Wednesdays. Sherry played an instrumental role in each of these initiatives.

However, this work is not enough. Striving for equity is not something that can be checked off a list;

it is something that must be done continuously and relentlessly with reflection and humility. Perhaps most importantly, it is something that must be done in part-

Striving for equity is not something that can be checked off a list;

nership with students, their families, local communities, educators, administrators, staff, and school board members. With meaningful partnerships and Sherry as Superintendent, we can continue making our schools more equitable and inclusive. Respectfully,

*Raphael Adamek, Lori Beland, Aaron Cinquemani, Tom Emery, James Fenn, Mary Guggenberger, Brandon Hill, Shayna Kalnitsky, Maggie Mills, Jennifer Settle, Devyn Workman, Melissa Zoerheide*

## ← MVSU educators: from page 14

sexuality, among many others, at a politically volatile moment in time.

Publicly maligning our superintendent in such a divisive manner does not help to advance these critical conversations. It is inaccurate and damaging to suggest that Sherry has failed to lead on issues of diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging when, in reality, she has been a dedicated and passionate champion of these efforts for years.

As a long-time special educator, Sherry spent decades supporting and advocating for some of our district's most vulnerable and marginalized students. As an administrator, she has pushed our district to prioritize diversity, equity, inclusion, and belonging in its work. This has included funding robust professional development for teachers and valuable learning opportunities for students.

Every educator in this district will tell you there is still important work to do. We want you to know that we share a deep commit-

ment to continue engaging in difficult conversations, asking hard questions, learning from each other and our students, and implementing trauma-informed practices aimed at ensuring that every student feels safe, included, and valued. Sherry continues to play an essential role in advancing this work.

Lastly, we find ourselves at a precarious moment for public schools in Vermont. Governor Scott's recent education proposals pose serious threats to this school district.

We need a strong and established advocate working to ensure the future viability of our schools, state aid for school construction, and the funding and decision-making authority needed to maintain the programs this community values and our students deserve.

We would be greatly disadvantaged to lose Sherry's deep knowledge of local needs, her network of professional connections across the state and in the legislature, and her advo-

cacy on behalf of MVSU students and schools.

Respectfully,

*Ryan Becker, Julie Burtscher Brown, Margaret Fothergill, Melanie Ann Norton, Stephen Stuntz, Vali Stuntz, Janis Boulbol, Matthew McCormick, Hector Kent, Liza Dionne, Melissa Fellows, Marie Anderson, Erin Hanrahan, Lisa Kaija, Nate Clifford, Kathleen Robbins, Jessica-VanDriesen, Sofia Bertocci, Barbara Drufovka, Sarah Hagge, Lisa Laird, Abbie Castriotta, Amanda Rank, Patty Topliffe, Anne Lessard, DeVeau Sleeper, Luis Bango, Holly Getty, Sally, Denbeaux Kelly Jean, Britney Bowley, Jodi Schneider, Jenny Hewitt, Julie Dupont, Erin Bucher, Elaine Leibly, Jay Mumford, Todd Uva, Sarah Allen, Dena Whitehead, Heather Vonada, Martha Perkins, Bonnie Underwood, Jessica Hathorn, Jennifer Mayo, Beth Ann Hughes, Peggy Boylan, Jo MacMaster, Stu Hawes, Joe Rigoli, Rayna Bishop, Jennifer Conrad, Sarah Walker, Kelsey Coyle, Tara Mumford, Betsy Frates*



## MOUNTAIN VIEWS SUPERVISORY UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT BUDGET REPORT

The voters residing in each member district will cast their ballots on **Tuesday, March 4, 2025** in the polling places designated for their town as follows:

Barnard Town Hall located at 115 North Road, Barnard, VT

**10:00AM- 7:00PM**

Bridgewater Town Clerk's Office located at 45 Southgate Loop, Bridgewater, VT

**8:00AM-7:00PM**

Killington Town Hall located at 2706 River Road, Killington, VT

**7:00AM-7:00PM**

Plymouth Municipal Building located at 68 Town Office Road, Plymouth, VT

**10:00AM-7:00PM**

Pomfret Town Office located at 5218 Pomfret Road, North Pomfret, VT

**8:00AM-7:00PM**

Reading Town Hall located at 799 VT-106, Reading, VT

**7:00AM-7:00PM**

Woodstock Town Hall located at 31 the Green, Woodstock VT

**7:00AM- 7:00PM**

**Mountain Views Supervisory Union**  
Windsor Central Unified Union School District  
(a.k.a. Mountain Views School District)

### **FY26 BUDGET:**

Budget financial details will be posted on our website as documents become available.

Visit: [MVSU website > About > Budget](#)

### **AUDIT STATEMENT:**

The financial records are being audited by RHR Smith & Company for the year ending June 30, 2024. Copies of the completed audit, when available, may be requested by calling the Director of Finance and Operations at 802-457-1213, ext. 1089, or

Visit: [MVSU website > About > District Finances](#)

[mtnviews.org](http://mtnviews.org)

## WARNING FOR ANNUAL MEETING OF THE WINDSOR CENTRAL UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT a.k.a. MOUNTAIN VIEWS SCHOOL DISTRICT MARCH 4, 2025

The legal voters of Windsor Central Unified Union School District, a.k.a. Mountain Views School District, comprising the voters of the Towns of Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading, and Woodstock, are hereby **WARNED** and **NOTIFIED** to **VOTE** by **AUSTRALIAN BALLOT** either via mail as provided by their respective Town Clerk or at their respective Town polling places hereinafter named for the above-referenced towns on **Tuesday, March 4, 2025**, during the polling hours noted below.

### **ARTICLES TO BE VOTED ON BY AUSTRALIAN BALLOT- MARCH 4, 2025**

**ARTICLE 1:** The legal voters of the specified towns designated within this itemized Article shall elect the following:

- Barnard: one school director to assume office upon election and serve a term of three years or until their successor is elected and qualified
- Bridgewater: one school director to assume office upon election and serve a term of three years or until their successor is elected and qualified
- Plymouth: one school director to assume office upon election and serve a term of three years or until their successor is elected and qualified
- Reading: one school director to assume office upon election and serve a term of three years or until their successor is elected and qualified
- Woodstock: two school directors to assume office upon election and serve a term of three years or until their successor is elected and qualified

**ARTICLE 2:** Shall the voters of the Windsor Central Unified Union School District, a.k.a. Mountain Views School District, approve the school board to expend \$30,773,078, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?

The Windsor Central Unified Union School District, a.k.a. Mountain Views School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in a Long Term Weighted (LTW) per pupil education spending of \$17,230, which is 1.03% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year.

Upon closing of the polls, pursuant to 16 V.S.A. §741(b)(2), the ballots will be counted by representatives of the Boards of Civil Authority of the Towns of Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading, and Woodstock.

The legal voters of the Windsor Central Unified Union School District, a.k.a. Mountain Views School District, are further notified that voter qualification and registration relative to said meeting shall be as provided in Section 706(u) of Title 16, and Chapters 43, 51 and 55 of Title 17, Vermont Statutes Annotated.

### **ANNUAL DISTRICT MEETING - MARCH 4, 2025**

The legal voters of the Windsor Central Unified Union District, a.k.a. Mountain Views School District, are further **WARNED** and **NOTIFIED** to **VOTE** at the Woodstock High School/Middle School Teagle Library, located in Woodstock, Vermont, on Tuesday, March 4, 2025, at 6:30 P.M. for business not involving voting by Australian ballot.

**ARTICLE 3:** To elect a Moderator who shall assume office upon election and shall serve for a term of one year or until their successor is elected and qualified.

**ARTICLE 4:** To elect a Clerk who shall enter upon their duties on July 1 following their election and shall serve a term of one year or until their successor is elected and qualified.

**ARTICLE 5:** To elect a Treasurer who shall enter upon their duties on July 1 following their election and shall serve a term of one year or until their successor is elected and qualified.

**ARTICLE 6:** To fix the salary for District Treasurer in the amount of \$7,500.00 for 2025-2026.

**ARTICLE 7:** Shall the Windsor Central Unified Union School District, a.k.a. Mountain Views School District, vote on all public questions by Australian ballot?

*Dated the 6th day of January 2025, in Woodstock, Vermont.*



## MVSU Board of Directors

The MVSU Board is comprised of all 18 members of the MVSD Board, plus one Pittsfield School Board member, currently assigned to Ray Rice. Each of the seven district towns elects its own representative to the school district board. Each town has two representatives, except for Woodstock which has six [due to its population per the terms of incorporation.] Representatives serves three-year terms.

Below are the current board members with the year their current term expires. For the six board seats that up for election on Town Meeting Day 2025 the names of those seeking those seats are also listed in italics.

### Barnard Representatives

- Carin Ewing Park (2025); carin.park@mtnviews.org  
*Running unopposed*
- Heather Lawler (2027); heather.lawler@mtnviews.org

### Bridgewater Representatives

- Lara Bowers (2025); lara.bowers@mtnviews.org  
*Running unopposed*
- Ryan Townsend (2027); ryan.townsend@mtnviews.org

### Killington Representatives

- Anne Karl (2026); anne.karl@mtnviews.org
- Katie Reed (2027); katie.reed@mtnviews.org

### Plymouth Representatives

- Elliot Rubin, MD (2025); elliot.rubin@mtnviews.org  
*Running unopposed*
- Josh Linton (2026); josh.linton@mtnviews.org

### Pomfret Representatives

- Lydia Locke (2026); lydia.locke@mtnviews.org
- Bob Crean (2027); bob.crean@mtnviews.org

### Reading Representatives

- Adam Ameele (2025); adam.ameele@mtnviews.org  
*Not running, no candidate as of Jan. 28 filing deadline*
- Anna Sessa (2026); anna.sessa@mtnviews.org

### Woodstock Representatives

- Ben Ford, V.Chair/Clerk (2025); ben.ford@mtnviews.org  
*Not running*
- Matt Stout (2025); matthew.stout@mtnviews.org  
*Running for re-election as are Sarit Werner and Kelly Linton; 3 candidates for 2 seats.*
- Sam DiNatale (2026); samantha.dinatale@mtnviews.org
- John Williams (2026); john.williams@mtnviews.org
- Ernie Fernandez (2027); ernie.fernandez@mtnviews.org
- Keri Bristow, Chair (2027); keri.bristow@mtnviews.org

## WINDSOR CENTRAL UNIFIED UNION SCHOOL DISTRICT a.k.a. MOUNTAIN VIEWS SCHOOL DISTRICT PUBLIC INFORMATIONAL HEARING WARNING, NOTICE, and AGENDA FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025

The legal voters of the Windsor Central Unified Union School District, a.k.a. Mountain Views School District, comprising the voters of the Towns of Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading, and Woodstock, are hereby **WARNED** and **NOTIFIED** that an **INFORMATIONAL HEARING** will be held at the **Woodstock Union Middle and High School library, located in the Town of Woodstock, Vermont, on Thursday February 27, 2025, commencing at 6:30PM** to discuss the Australian ballot articles of the 2025 Annual Unified Union District Meeting Warning. Additionally, the Public Informational Hearing will be accessible through electronic means (online meeting).

### Information on how to access the remote hearing:

**Topic: WCUUSD/MVSD Informational Hearing**  
**Time: February 27, 2025, 06:30 PM Eastern Time (US and Canada)**  
**Meeting ID: 861 3007 6068**  
**Passcode: 316883**

#### ► By computer: Join Zoom meeting at

<https://wcsu-net.zoom.us/j/86130076068?pwd=qGQ6HgviTeXGvSrZaz0j8HtPWUgwTL.1>

You may have to create a free account or sign into your existing account. Select the option to join meeting and enter the meeting ID if prompted: **861 3007 6068** and passcode: **316883** if prompted.

► **By smartphone, tablet, or other device:** Download and open the Zoom app. You may have to create a free account or sign into your existing account. Select the option to join meeting and enter the meeting ID: **861 3007 6068** and passcode: **316883** if prompted.

► **By telephone:** Dial: **+1 929 205 6099 US (New York) or +1 301 715 8592 US (Washington DC)**

Enter the meeting ID: **861 3007 6068** and passcode: **316883** if prompted.

### AGENDA FOR THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 27, 2025

- 6:30PM: Call to Order
- 6:35PM: Additions or deletions to the agenda  
Public comment
- 6:40PM: To hear the reports of the School District Board of Directors  
Public comment
- 6:45PM Review and Discuss: **Article 2:** Shall the voters of the Windsor Central Unified Union School District, a.k.a. Mountain Views School District, approve the school board to expend \$30,773,078, which is the amount the school board has determined to be necessary for the ensuing fiscal year?  
The Windsor Central Unified Union School District, a.k.a. Mountain Views School District estimates that this proposed budget, if approved, will result in a Long Term Weighted (LTW) per pupil education spending of \$17,230, which is 1.03% higher than per pupil education spending for the current year.  
Public comment
- 7:30PM: Discussion of other non-binding business (if applicable)
- 7:35PM: Entertain motion to adjourn hearing.

*Dated this 6th day of January 2025, in Woodstock, Vermont.*

# School Board Chairs' Report

By Keri Bristow, MVSU Board Chair and Ben Ford MVSU Vice Chair

This year's School Board activities provided opportunities for introspection and recommitment to the School District's values. Strategic goal setting was completed to improve school climates for each building following a Quaglia Climate Survey. Also, an assessment by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges resulted in the Woodstock Union High School and Middle School receiving additional recommendations. These came with commendations for meeting or exceeding all educational standards while recognizing the challenges presented by the condition of the facility.

From these and other recommendations, the Policy Committee began working on a new Teaching and Learning Policy for the District. The Committee is also evaluating a phone-free school environment to improve student engagement and to avoid mental health impacts of social media. The Board's Negotiations Committee completed a new Collective Bargaining Agreement with the Teacher's Union, aligning teacher pay and benefits to incentivize our educators and to remain competitive with neighboring school districts.

Financially, the Board faced two significant challenges this year. First, after District voters opted not to pass the school bond for a new facility in March, the Board listened to the considerable voter feedback it received both supporting and opposing the project. It also considered new alternatives for addressing the facility issues with the Middle and High School building. Due to changes in law making the project unaffordable to taxpayers, the project has been tabled until further information and details about the renewed Vermont School Construction Aid Program are provided.

Second, following changes to state education finance laws to address spiking tax rates, the Board faced a challenging budget process to enable our students' success. As part of resulting budget reductions, the Board authorized an early separation option for District employees, along with eliminating several unfilled positions. Another incentive for staff to opt out of the district health plan was also offered. These and other initiatives resulted in approximately \$2M in budgetary reductions from this year to next, which are projected to result in tax reductions for homeowners in most of our member towns. The Board considered further cuts, including to the Unified Arts program and to current pre-K offerings, but after listening to resounding support from community members advocating for these programs, voted to preserve these important programs. The Board stands behind this budget and hopes our voters will support it at the polls in March.

As we approach the formation of a new School Board, the future of our Board and School District are uncertain due to the Governor's plans to overhaul how Vermont's public education system is structured and financed. The composition of the board will also shift, as two of our long-tenured members, Adam Ameele and Ben Ford will complete their terms. Both will be greatly missed as they each brought areas of expertise to our board discussions. Ben, in particular, has been instrumental in his knowledge of school finance and creative strategies, as well as serving as Vice Chair.

We thank the Mountain Views school community for your engagement, interest, and support of our schools, staff and administration. We also thank our Superintendent, administrators, directors, faculty, and staff across our schools and the Central Office who work diligently on behalf of our students to provide an excellent education to all.

# MVSU Superintendent Report

By Superintendent Sherry Sousa

The challenge of funding public education in Vermont is everywhere in the news and is often a topic of conversation in our towns. The schools of Mountain Views Supervisory Union are also wrestling with how to offer a quality education at a rate that is fair to the citizens of our seven towns.

Our Board, administration, educators, and school families have offered their perspectives on how to control costs and continue to offer diverse and rigorous learning experiences. I have heard the passionate testimonies of individuals as to the impact of proposed reductions and the desire for finding a path to move forward.

As we negotiate these impactful decisions, it is also important to celebrate the experiences and growth we have seen in our students.

A significant focus of the district over the last years has been to address the rate of proficiency in Reading and Math. Our goal is that 90% of our students will be proficient by third grade, and that they maintain that level of skill. This fall 65% of students in grades 3 - 10 were proficient in the STAR Reading Assessment. This is the highest percentage of proficient students that we've ever seen and is an increase of 19% from the fall of 2023. In Mathematics, 52% of students in grades 3 - 10 were proficient in the Math Assessment, a 5% increase from the fall of 2023. Large gaps continue in performance between students eligible for free and reduced lunch and those who are not eligible. However, in both STAR Math and STAR Reading the gap decreased from the fall of 2023. Proficiency in Reading and Math is a responsibility of our schools and a right of all students.

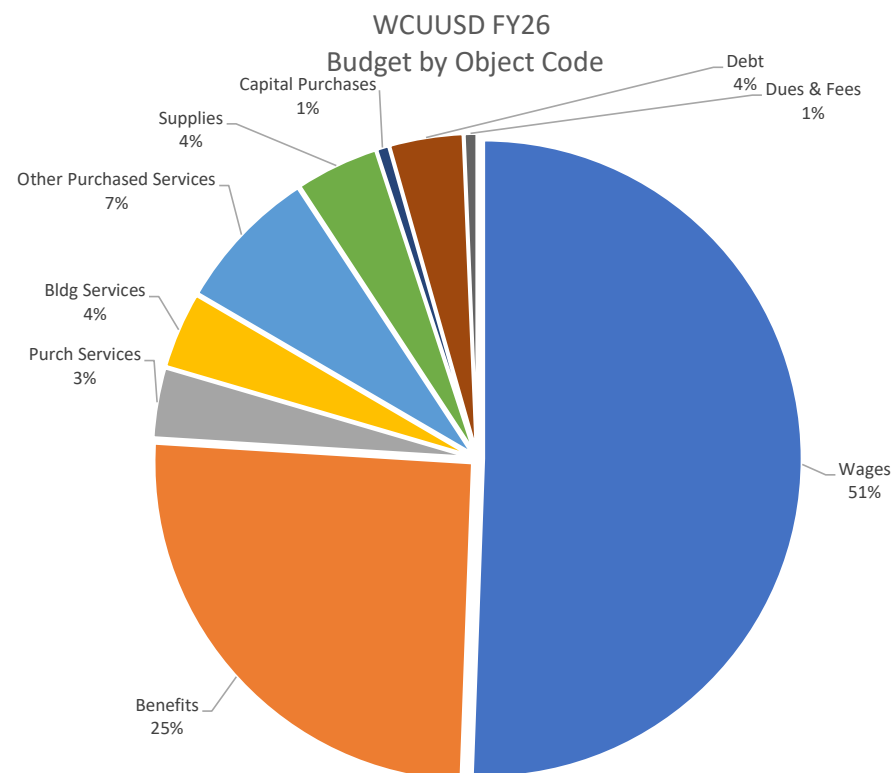
Individual schools also had opportunities to cheer. Woodstock Union Middle and



Superintendent Sherry Sousa

High Schools celebrated the receipt of the Advanced Placement Honor Roll as a Gold School and the Division III State Football Championship. Killington Elementary students experienced a Visiting Artist Series, and the KES Finding Our Stride team participated in the CHaD HERO 5k race. Reading Elementary students, families and faculty celebrated the completion of the RES Outdoor Classroom. The Prosper Valley 6th grade students held a Resisters Exhibit and a Water Symposium for families and classmates. Woodstock Elementary students published stories in their Elementary Times. Barnard Academy students performed "The Snow Queen" for their parents and teachers. These are just a few of the many events and celebrations that occur daily in our schools and classrooms.

Our students benefit from living in a community that values learning and thriving in our schools.



## WCUUSD FY25 budget by object code

- Wages - 51%
- Benefits - 25%
- Other Purchased Services- 7%
- Building Services- 4%
- Supplies- 4%
- Debt - 4%
- Purchased Services- 3%
- Capital Purchases - 1%
- Dues & Fees - 1%

	MVSU	MVSD	Total	Percent
100 Wages	\$3,357,460	\$12,204,524	\$15,561,984	51%
200 Benefits	\$1,979,076	\$5,841,620	\$7,820,696	25%
300 Purch Services	\$387,050	\$705,830	\$1,092,880	4%
400 Bldg Services	\$14,555	\$1,179,628	\$1,194,183	4%
500 Other Purchased	\$944,224	\$1,315,136	\$2,259,360	7%
600 Supplies	\$57,360	\$1,238,983	\$1,296,343	4%
700 Capital Purchase:	\$10,000	\$186,425	\$196,425	1%
800 Debt	\$16,250	\$1,134,957	\$1,151,207	4%
900 Dues & Fees	\$0	\$200,000	\$200,000	1%
	<b>\$6,765,975</b>	<b>\$24,007,103</b>	<b>\$30,773,078</b>	

## Windsor Central Unified Union School District FY2025 projected revenues

	FY23 Budgeted	FY23 Actual	FY24 Budgeted	FY24 Actual	FY25 Budgeted
<b>Local Revenue</b>					
Tuition From Other LEA's	\$1,787,500	\$1,565,064	\$1,588,335	\$1,640,398	\$1,762,995
Tuition by Parent/Patron - Pre-School	\$16,000	\$13,427	\$12,000	\$12,500	\$9,000
Interest Earned	\$18,500	\$47,709	\$17,000	\$68,955	\$23,000
Rental Income	\$45,000	\$5,618	\$50,000	\$10,582	\$7,500
Miscellaneous Local Revenues	\$6,500	\$52,663	\$6,500	\$25,760	\$6,500
SU Services to Others	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Prior Year Surplus Applied	\$350,000	\$0	\$300,000	\$0	\$0
Food Service Program	\$18,750	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Local Revenue</b>	<b>\$2,272,250</b>	<b>\$1,714,482</b>	<b>\$2,003,835</b>	<b>\$1,788,194</b>	<b>\$1,838,995</b>
<b>State and Federal Revenue</b>					
Education Spending Grant	\$18,258,064	\$18,890,726	\$19,599,186	\$21,685,257	\$25,189,058
Small Schools Grant	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
State Transportation Reimb	\$266,978	\$266,978	\$266,978	\$255,197	\$255,197
State Pre-K Subsidy	\$0	\$713	\$0	\$0	\$0
Ed Fund Payment to Tech Center	\$147,557	\$148,732	\$165,000	\$142,476	\$148,000
Driver's Education Reimbursement	\$6,000	\$4,254	\$6,000	\$3,006	\$4,000
Vocational Ed Transportation	\$35,000	\$36,060	\$35,000	\$37,300	\$36,000
High School Completion Grant	\$0	\$12,190	\$0	\$9,034	\$0
State Reim - Unenrolled Res	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$979	\$0
<b>Total State and Federal Revenue</b>	<b>\$18,713,599</b>	<b>\$19,359,653</b>	<b>\$20,072,164</b>	<b>\$22,133,248</b>	<b>\$25,632,255</b>
<b>Special Education</b>					
Special Ed Excess Cost Revenue	\$218,500	\$155,129	\$218,500	\$259,043	\$155,000
Special Ed Block Grant	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
Special Ed Act 173 Block Grant	\$1,617,647	\$1,617,647	\$1,803,408	\$1,824,675	\$2,007,133
SPED Reimbursement - Extraordinary	\$0	\$95,795	\$0	\$698,460	\$0
SPED Reimbursement - EEE Block Grant	\$76,067	\$76,067	\$76,067	\$108,685	\$114,291
SPED Reimbursement - State Placed	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$7,569	\$0
SPED Coord charges to Pittsfield	\$0	\$0	\$9,000	\$0	\$9,000
Special Ed Expenditures Reimbursement	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0	\$0
<b>Total Special Education</b>	<b>\$1,912,214</b>	<b>\$1,944,638</b>	<b>\$2,106,975</b>	<b>\$2,898,432</b>	<b>\$2,285,424</b>
<b>Total Revenues</b>	<b>\$22,898,063</b>	<b>\$23,018,773</b>	<b>\$24,182,974</b>	<b>\$26,819,874</b>	<b>\$29,756,674</b>

### FY25 final tax rates vs FY26 projected tax rates

Final FY25 Tax Rates Calculation							
	<u>Barnard</u>	<u>Bridgewater</u>	<u>Killington</u>	<u>Plymouth</u>	<u>Pomfret</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Woodstock</u>
FY25 Equalized Tax Rate	\$1.6742	\$1.6742	\$1.6742	\$1.6742	\$1.6742	\$1.6742	\$1.6742
CLA	1.0457	1.1949	0.5235	0.6225	1.0053	1.0061	0.6365
Homestead Property Tax Rate	\$1.6010	\$1.4011	\$3.1981	\$2.6895	\$1.6654	\$1.6640	\$2.6303
FY24 Homestead Prop Tax Rate	\$1.9933	\$1.8759	\$2.4713	\$1.9765	\$1.4632	\$1.8425	\$2.0198
Increase(Decrease) from FY24	(\$0.3923)	(\$0.4748)	\$0.7268	\$0.7130	\$0.2022	(\$0.1785)	\$0.6105
Percentage Change from FY24	-19.68%	-25.31%	29.41%	36.07%	13.82%	-9.69%	30.23%

Projected FY26 Tax Rates Calculation							
	<u>Barnard</u>	<u>Bridgewater</u>	<u>Killington</u>	<u>Plymouth</u>	<u>Pomfret</u>	<u>Reading</u>	<u>Woodstock</u>
FY26 Est Equalized Tax Rate	\$2.0145	\$2.0145	\$2.0145	\$2.0145	\$2.0145	\$2.0145	\$2.0145
CLA	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000	\$0.0000
Homestead Property Tax Rate	<b>\$2.0145</b>	<b>\$2.0145</b>	<b>\$2.0145</b>	<b>\$2.0145</b>	<b>\$2.0145</b>	<b>\$2.0145</b>	<b>\$2.0145</b>
FY25 Homestead Prop Tax Rate	1.3900	1.4900	0.6300	0.6800	1.2700	1.3600	0.7900
Increase(Decrease) from FY25	\$1.4493	\$1.3520	\$3.1976	\$2.9625	\$1.5862	\$1.4812	\$2.5500
Percentage Change from FY25	\$1.6010	\$1.4011	\$3.1981	\$2.6895	\$1.6654	\$1.6640	\$2.6303
	(\$0.1518)	(\$0.0491)	(\$0.0005)	\$0.2730	(\$0.0792)	(\$0.1828)	(\$0.0804)
	-9.48%	-3.51%	-0.02%	10.15%	-4.75%	-10.99%	-3.05%

# Mountain Views Supervision Union Proposed Budget FY - 2026 Function code summary

	FY25 MVSD Adopted Budget	FY25 MVSU Adopted Budget	FY25 Proposed Budget	FY26 MVSD Adopted Budget	FY26 MVSU Adopted Budget	FY26 Proposed Budget	Change Increase/ (Decrease)	% Change
1100 Regular Instruction Program	\$11,515,988.00	\$0.00	\$11,515,988.00	\$12,003,671.00	\$0.00	\$12,003,671.00	\$487,683.00	4.235%
1200 Special Education	\$0.00	\$3,635,378.00	\$3,635,378.00	\$0.00	\$4,083,856.00	\$4,083,856.00	\$448,478.00	12.336%
1300 Vocational Tuition Local	\$285,000.00	\$0.00	\$285,000.00	\$275,000.00	\$0.00	\$275,000.00	(\$10,000.00)	-3.509%
1400/1500 Co-Curricular Programs	\$550,383.00	\$0.00	\$550,383.00	\$526,222.00	\$0.00	\$526,222.00	(\$24,161.00)	-4.390%
2100 Student Support Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	#DIV/0!
2120 Guidance Services	\$1,201,597.00	\$0.00	\$1,201,597.00	\$1,380,652.00	\$0.00	\$1,380,652.00	\$179,055.00	14.901%
2130 School Nurse Services	\$502,299.00	\$0.00	\$502,299.00	\$562,066.00	\$0.00	\$562,066.00	\$59,767.00	11.899%
2140 Psychological Services	\$0.00	\$218,447.00	\$218,447.00	\$0.00	\$245,623.00	\$245,623.00	\$27,176.00	12.441%
2150 Speech and Other Therapy Services	\$0.00	\$374,971.00	\$374,971.00	\$0.00	\$440,036.00	\$440,036.00	\$65,065.00	17.352%
2160 Occupational Therapy, Physical Therapy and Visions Services	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	#DIV/0!
2190 Other Student Services	\$4,500.00	\$20,232.00	\$24,732.00	\$3,300.00	\$22,048.00	\$25,348.00	\$616.00	2.491%
2212 Curriculum Development	\$0.00	\$173,586.00	\$173,586.00	\$0.00	\$191,293.00	\$191,293.00	\$17,707.00	10.201%
2213 School Leadership	\$617,074.00	\$22,000.00	\$639,074.00	\$640,873.00	\$21,000.00	\$661,873.00	\$22,799.00	3.568%
2215 Teaching & Learning	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	#DIV/0!
2220 Library Services	\$248,509.00	\$0.00	\$248,509.00	\$252,299.00	\$0.00	\$252,299.00	\$3,790.00	1.525%
2230/2580 Technology Services	\$559,659.00	\$157,955.00	\$717,614.00	\$563,243.00	\$150,569.00	\$713,812.00	(\$3,802.00)	-0.530%
2311 School Board	\$35,400.00	\$31,188.00	\$66,588.00	\$38,641.00	\$16,903.00	\$55,544.00	(\$11,044.00)	-16.586%
2314 Audit Services	\$0.00	\$47,500.00	\$47,500.00	\$0.00	\$48,500.00	\$48,500.00	\$1,000.00	2.105%
2315 Legal Services	\$11,000.00	\$32,000.00	\$43,000.00	\$12,000.00	\$40,000.00	\$52,000.00	\$9,000.00	20.930%
2320 Superintendent's Office	\$0.00	\$397,928.00	\$397,928.00	\$0.00	\$413,514.00	\$413,514.00	\$15,586.00	3.917%
2410 School Administration	\$2,092,231.00	\$0.00	\$2,092,231.00	\$2,176,338.00	\$0.00	\$2,176,338.00	\$84,107.00	4.020%
2490 Director of Instructional Support Services	\$0.00	\$320,190.00	\$320,190.00	\$0.00	\$391,337.00	\$391,337.00	\$71,147.00	22.220%
2495 Grant Writing	\$0.00	\$58,966.00	\$58,966.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$58,966.00)	100.000%
2510 Fiscal Services	\$101,500.00	\$0.00	\$101,500.00	\$1,087,600.00	\$0.00	\$1,087,600.00	\$986,100.00	971.527%
2520 Director of Finance and Operations	\$0.00	\$525,461.00	\$525,461.00	\$0.00	\$468,424.00	\$468,424.00	(\$57,037.00)	-10.855%
2540 Planning, Research, Development	\$4,000.00	\$0.00	\$4,000.00	\$4,095.00	\$0.00	\$4,095.00	\$95.00	2.375%
2570 Human Resources	\$0.00	\$125,666.00	\$125,666.00	\$0.00	\$137,298.00	\$137,298.00	\$11,632.00	100.000%
2600 Building and Grounds	\$3,227,763.00	\$41,725.00	\$3,269,488.00	\$3,161,395.00	\$35,800.00	\$3,197,195.00	(\$72,293.00)	-2.211%
2700 Transportation	\$787,391.00	\$100,365.00	\$887,756.00	\$744,708.00	\$59,774.00	\$804,482.00	(\$83,274.00)	-9.380%
3100 Transfer to Food Services	\$200,000.00	\$0.00	\$200,000.00	\$200,000.00	\$0.00	\$200,000.00	\$0.00	0.000%
4700 Building Improvements	\$450,000.00	\$0.00	\$450,000.00	\$375,000.00	\$0.00	\$375,000.00	(\$75,000.00)	-16.667%
5000 Debt Services	\$1,078,822.00	\$0.00	\$1,078,822.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	(\$1,078,822.00)	-100.000%
5500 Sub-Grants	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00	#DIV/0!
<b>Total Expenses</b>	<b>\$23,473,116.00</b>	<b>\$6,283,558.00</b>	<b>\$ 29,756,674.00</b>	<b>\$ 24,007,103.00</b>	<b>\$6,765,975.00</b>	<b>\$ 30,773,078.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,016,404.00</b>	<b>3.416%</b>

# Woodstock Middle School, High School Principal's Report

By Principal Aaron J. Cinquemani

As we reflect on the past year, I am honored to share the accomplishments and milestones of our vibrant school community, serving 442 students in grades 7 through 12. Despite the challenges of balancing a fiscal budget that meets the needs of our students while being mindful of our taxpayers, we have persevered and continued to provide outstanding educational opportunities for all.

Our student body reflects the diverse talents and aspirations of young learners, and we are proud to support them with a wide range of academic and extracurricular opportunities. This year, 18 different Advanced Placement (AP) courses were offered, with approximately 170 students enrolling in a total of 389 AP classes. These courses prepare students not only for college but also for future careers by equipping them with critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

The past year has been filled with notable achievements and moments of pride. Our Varsity Football team brought home the state championship, a testament to their dedication and teamwork. We also celebrate Victor Ambros, a graduate of Woodstock

Union High School, for receiving the Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine for his groundbreaking discovery of microRNA. Within our own faculty, Ms. Vanessa Cramer was named Vermont Outstanding Educator for 2024, and Leanne Tapley earned the title of Vermont Coach of the Year for her exceptional leadership as coach of the Varsity Field Hockey team.

Innovative learning experiences continue to thrive at Woodstock Union. Our CRAFT program (Community and Climate Resilience through Agriculture, Forestry, and Technology) has blossomed with a growing partnership at King Farm, a historic 154-acre property in Woodstock. This unique collaboration provides students with hands-on learning opportunities in agriculture, environmental stewardship, and cultural education. Similarly, our Visual Arts Program flourishes, with hallways adorned with student artwork reflecting their creativity and growth. Interactive experiences, including trips to the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, further enrich students' appreciation of the arts.

We are also proud of our continued partnership with NuVu, a globally connected studio-based learning model

originating in the greater Boston area. NuVu's hands-on, problem-based approach empowers students to build creative and technical skills, from concept development to project prototyping, fostering critical thinking and effective problem-solving.

Our collaboration with the Hartford Area Career and Technology Center (HACTC) remains a cornerstone of career preparation, offering programs in Mechanics, Auto Body, Cosmetology, Building Trades, IT, STEM, and more. These pathways provide invaluable experience and set students on trajectories for success in higher education and the workforce.

This year brought the joyful revival of our chorus program, led by Joshua Pauly, infusing our school with music and energy. Additionally, our international exchange program welcomed a dozen students from France, deepening cultural connections and global awareness within our community.

I extend my heartfelt gratitude to our families, faculty, and community members for your steadfast support. Your contributions ensure that our students continue to grow, succeed, and thrive. Thank you for being an integral part of our journey.

# The Prosper Valley School Report

By Interim Principal Devyn Workman

The 2023-2024 school year kicked off with great energy at our annual back to school night where we welcomed 34 new 5th grade students to join the Prosper Valley Community. TPVS had 79 students last year that embraced challenges, celebrated achievements, and deepened their understanding of the world around them. This annual report highlights the milestones, learning experiences, and partnerships that enriched our curriculum and reinforced our commitment to fostering well-rounded individuals.

Thanks to support from The Prosper Valley Trust, team-building activities at the Hulbert Outdoor Center strengthened collaboration and communication skills. Students tackled challenges that encouraged trust and mutual support on the high ropes course on their campus. But the engagement with high ropes didn't stop there, last year was the first year that students and staff got to engage with our very own High 5 Challenge Course on the TPVS campus. This challenge course consists of four low elements located in our woods and five high elements in our gym. On the high elements, students are in a harness and on belay while tackling cargo nets, giant's ladders, and bean poles 30 feet into the air! The high ropes course tested students' courage and determination. By overcoming physical and mental challenges, they built resilience and self-confidence.

The first annual Water Symposium showcased student research and creativity, exploring the vital role water plays in our lives and ecosystems. Immersing themselves in the local ecosystem, students snorkeled in the White River, observing aquatic life and gaining firsthand experience of biodiversity and water quality. Finally, students nurtured trout from eggs to release in the Barnard Brook out back of our school, gaining insight into aquatic ecosystems and the importance of species conservation.

An educational walk highlighted Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) certified buildings, inspiring students to consider innovative solutions for sustainable living. Students then explored sustainable architecture and environmental stewardship at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS). This hands-on celebration of learning encouraged them to think critically about green building practices and they concluded the unit with designing and creating their own green building from only recycled materials.

Guided by expert instructors, students delved into the wonders of the night sky through astrophotography right here at TPVS in our very own observatory. They captured stunning images while learning about constellations, planets, and the universe.

Then Visiting Cobb Hill, students engaged with sustainable farming practices and explored the intersection of agriculture, community, and environmental responsibility. A trip to the Woodstock Historical Center brought history to life as students examined artifacts, explored exhibits, and connected with local heritage.

The annual sugaring unit allowed students to experience the traditional New England process of making maple syrup, blending science, culture, and hands-on learning. A visit to New England Falconry introduced students to the ancient art of falconry. They learned about birds of prey, conservation efforts, and the delicate balance of nature.

Here's to another year of growth, discovery, and shared accomplishments!

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

## MVSU enrollment report

Mountain Views Supervisory Union									
Enrollment Report as of September 30, 2024									
Elementary School Enrollment	On-Site PreK	K	Grade 1	Grade 2	Grade 3	Grade 4	Grade 5	Grade 6	Total PreK-6
Barnard Academy	5	7	8	7	3	9	13	5	57
Killington Elementary School	24	11	12	11	14	9	21	13	115
Reading Elementary School	12	5	4	8	4	5			38
The Prosper Valley School							54	36	90
Woodstock Elementary School	51	38	59	25	39	47			259
<b>TOTAL ELEMENTARY</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>83</b>	<b>51</b>	<b>60</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>88</b>	<b>54</b>	<b>559</b>
Secondary School Enrollment -WUHSMS									
Grade 7	69	<b>MS TOTAL</b>							
Grade 8	63	<b>132</b>		<b>WCUUSD resident students = 897</b>					
Grade 9	75			<b>Tuition students from sending towns = 103</b>					
Grade 10	87	<b>HS TOTAL</b>		<b>Act 129 VT High School Choice = 6</b>					
Grade 11	77	<b>310</b>							
Grade 12	71								
<b>TOTAL SECONDARY</b>	<b>442</b>			<b>TOTAL WCSU ENROLLMENT 1001</b>					



## Woodstock Elementary Report

By Principal Maggie Mills

During the 2023-2024 school year, there were 254 PreK-4 students enrolled at Woodstock Elementary School. Of note in this enrollment was our largest kindergarten cohort in recent memory of 54 students. We are happy to serve the children of Bridgewater, Plymouth, Pomfret and Woodstock as well as those attending via school choice from Barnard and Reading. Our teacher retention over the past year has been very strong, and our staff remains dedicated to our mission to provide a strong foundation and foster perseverance and belonging.

Here are some programmatic highlights for the 2023-2024 school year:

In the fall of 2023, the state of Vermont recognized WES as a PBIS School of Distinction. This designation recognizes schools that successfully use positive behavioral systems to build a safe and supportive learning environment for its students. Certainly the joy and engagement of WES students and staff contributed to this recognition.

This year, all district elementary schools adopted The EL program for teaching English Language Arts. In addition to an emphasis on reading rich texts, students have engaged in rigorous writing, speaking, and listening tasks throughout the year. EL also integrates citizenship, community building, science, and social studies into the units. Students had opportunities to extend the curriculum to learning opportunities with Billings Farm (exploring the use of tools), The Montshire (space unit), and VINS (animal defense mechanisms).

Additional highlights included a December kindness themed spirit week featuring guest readers, a march for kindness, and a food drive that donated over 270 pounds of food to the Woodstock Food Shelf. Thanks to the generosity of our PTO, WES was able to offer VINS programming for 6 weeks during the winter workshop season for those students not participating in Ski Runners, Skate Runners, or Art Runners. 75 students also attended a magic show by retired principal turned magician Blaine Goad, sponsored by WUHS alumnus Dennis Wright. 4th grade students at WES had the opportunity to participate in a leadership club called the Wildcat Club. Activities included reading to younger grades and mentoring PreK students with plans to expand the program the next year to include further community service. Our fourth grade students rounded out their time at WES shining as members of a Shakespeare company performing Macbeth through Northern Stage's BridgeUp theater in schools program. We are grateful for community partners such as Artistree, Barnarts, Billings Farm, Yoh Theater, and Pentangle Arts who graciously invite us to their programming, and more broadly we are thankful for our community's ongoing engagement with and support of our school. We are proud to be a part of this community.

## Killington Elementary School Report

By Principal Mary Guggenberger

The 2023-2024 school year was reflective of a growth mindset for students, faculty and school leadership. Aiming to target skills in the Mountain Views School District Profile of a Graduate, students are engaging in active learning strategies, such as problem-based learning, hands-on experiments, group discussions, and real-world applications, creating more dynamic and enjoyable learning experiences. Students are encouraged to actively engage with content rather than passively absorbing information, making learning feel more like an authentic process.

Current enrollment for grades Prekindergarten through grade six is 115 with students coming from within the school district and from Pittsfield.

Parents and Educators Aligned for Killington Students (PEAKS)'s mission to build and improve the Yeti

Students are encouraged to actively engage with content.

Kingdom Playground continued with the installation of two concrete Four Square courts that were completed during the summer of 2024. PEAKS is commended for their tireless efforts in supporting a safe play place for all students at KES.

KES faculty are committed to staying informed about new pedagogical strategies, research findings, and technological innovations in mathematics, literacy, science and social studies education ensuring that teaching practices remain effective and up to date. Faculty also continues to place emphasis on collaboration with colleagues to share strategies, resources, and experiences that can lead to more innovative approaches to teaching and learning.

KES continues to support educational opportunities for learning including: Instrumental Music Lessons and Band for students in grades 4-6, Four Winds Nature Program, Student Leadership, Starbase, Trailblazers Ski Program, and writing and art contests. KES partners with the Town of Killington to offer a state-licensed afterschool program available to PreK-6 students Monday through Friday, 3-5:30 p.m., allowing qualifying families to apply for subsidized payments for the program.

KES values community partners, including the Town of Killington, Killington Resort, Killington Rotary, Greater Killington Women's Club, The Little White Church, Killington World Cup Foundation, and Ted Arbo's Holiday Toy Party for their dedication and support of our school and students. Please visit our website at: [tinyurl.com/y7nbck27](http://tinyurl.com/y7nbck27) to find photos and newsletters to learn more about our school community.

## Barnard Academy Report

By Principal Melissa Zoerheide

Barnard Academy is recognized for being a supportive, community-oriented school that offers a personalized and enriching educational experience to its students. Barnard Academy serves elementary level students from preschool through sixth grade. The school has 60 students in five multi-grade classrooms that deliver high-quality instruction with experienced educators. At Barnard Academy, we value being part of a close-knit community where students, families, and staff actively engage in academic, social, and emotional growth. We offer a variety of opportunities for outdoor experiences and learning that promote personal development alongside academic achievement.

This fall, students participated in a performance of "The Snow Queen," an engaging show designed to highlight the talents of our singers and dancers across all grade levels. Our STEM program continues to inspire creativity and hands-on learning through activities like building, programming, and experimenting. Physical education classes remain varied, with students exploring gymnastics, circus performance skills, skateboarding, skating, and traditional sports.

We also cherish experiential learning and offered this past year Walk-to-School days, field trips to Washington DC, Nature's Classroom, the Vermont Institute of Natural Science, Montshire Museum, Pentangle Arts, and local hikes to Marsh-Billings National Park. Other activities included visits to the Bethel Fish Hatchery, Fire Safety Day, Band Concerts, our annual Field Day and end of school year celebration at the Plymouth State Park.

Social-emotional learning has become a core focus alongside academic development. Our teachers continue to participate professional development in best practices for literacy and math instruction. Additionally, we embed social-emotional growth into our curriculum, offering programs and activities that help students develop critical skills in self-awareness, emotional regulation, relationship building, and responsible decision-making. We are proud of our commitment to a multi-tiered system of support, offering intervention services to meet the academic needs of all students. Our social-emotional learning (SEL) teacher works closely with students, families, and faculty to create a supportive environment where every child can thrive emotionally as well as academically.

The Barnard Academy benefits from the continued family and community involvement to support the collective success of our students. The Barnard Educational Endeavor Society (BEES) and the Barnard Education Fund play vital roles in making our innovative and exceptional learning experiences possible. Thank you for your ongoing support!

## Reading Elementary School Report

By Principal Brandon Hill

The Reading Elementary School students experienced a full year of learning that included enrichment opportunities for both students and staff in the 2023-2024 school year. Current enrollment for grades Pre Kindergarten through fourth is 37, with students coming from multiple towns within the MVSU district and Weathersfield.

Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, the faculty and staff at RES continued to take part in professional development opportunities to further enrich their skills. These learning sessions are instrumental in providing RES students with high quality instruction and exposure to diverse content. All RES educators participated in learning ranging from OGAP, LETRS, and the Math Pact training.

At Reading, we strive to offer additional learning experi-

ences that connect our students with surrounding historical landmarks and places that all students look forward to. During the school year, students continued their annual trip of visiting Saint Gaudens National Historical Park, as well as visited Sculpture Fest in Woodstock. Other trips included students hiking the land at Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller, interacting with the exhibits at VINS, learning at the Rock of Ages Granite Quarry, and a hands-on learning experience at the Montshire Science Museum. New Inca Son, a Peruvian and Bolivian band, visited RES in the spring and educated students about the Andean Culture, focusing on old-age music traditions. This day was capped off with a performance that left a lasting impression with everyone in attendance.

We value our strong connections within the community, in-

cluding the Hall Art Foundation and the Reading PTO. The PTO continues to be extremely generous with their support of our staff and students. The experiences listed above would not have been possible without their contributions. We look forward to continuing these relationships and building new ones as well.

Another strong partnership we greatly appreciate and are grateful for is with our parents. Your support of our school and staff continues to strengthen our connection, and together contribute towards a welcoming environment for all. Please visit our website to learn more about the RES school community.

Finally, we are grateful to parents and the larger community for their support of our students. Together, as a team, we create a safe, welcoming environment that allows all students to prosper.

**WED**  
2/19

### S.E.A.T. Exercises

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

### Puzzle and Games Camp

9 a.m.-3 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Young artists ages 5-12 can explore creativity and problem-solving through puzzle and game design. Campers will craft their own jigsaw puzzles, board games, and playing pieces while learning drawing, painting, and crafting techniques. Afternoons include indoor and outdoor play, plus classic group games in the Hayloft. artistreevt.org.

### Stick & Puck

9:30-11:30 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

### Guided Snowshoe Hike

10 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Park Forest Center, Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Woodstock. Free. Join a Park Naturalist for a snowshoe hike to explore winter trails and nature's wonders. All skill levels welcome. Pre-registration required. Equipment rentals available at Woodstock Nordic Center. nps.gov/mabi/events.

### Michelob ULTRA Ski Bum Race Series

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

### Active Seniors Lunch

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

### Gentle & Restorative Yoga

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

### Discover the World of Mosaics

Noon-4 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$115. A three-day workshop for ages 6-12 with instructor Karen Wurster, introducing campers to paper and glass mosaics, including freestyle abstract and color-block design. Pre-registration required. chaffeeartcenter.org.

### Diabetes Support Group

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

### Public Skating

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

### PJs at the Paramount: Free Screening of 'Smallfoot'

2-4 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. Free. Enjoy a special Winterfest presentation of "Smallfoot," presented by Heritage Family Credit Union. Attendees are encouraged to wear their comfiest pajamas. Seating is first come, first served. No tickets required. paramountvt.org.

### Cribbage for Adults

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

### Public Skate

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

### Bone Builders at the Chaffee

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

### Diabetes Support Group

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

### Speakeasy After Dark: Silent Book Club

5:30-8 p.m. Speakeasy Café, 31 Center St., Rutland. Free. A no-pressure book club where participants bring their own book, grab a drink, and enjoy uninterrupted reading time. Phoenix Books will have a pop-up with a selection of books for sale. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. for mingling, with quiet reading from 6-8 p.m. phoenixbooks.biz.

### Rutland County Pride 55+ Seniors Group Meeting

6-7 p.m. Rutland County Pride Center, 106 West St., Rutland. Free. The first gathering for LGBTQ+ community members aged 55+ to connect, share ideas, and help shape future programming. Attendees can provide input on creating a welcoming and supportive space for regular meetups. RSVP encouraged. rcpride.org.

### Oil Painting Workshop

6-8 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$35. Instructor Spencer Pelkey teaches the Alla Prima Oil technique, a wet-on-wet painting method done in one sitting. Participants will create their own interpretation of an image and leave with a finished painting. All supplies included. Pre-registration required. chaffeeartcenter.org.

**THURS**  
2/20

### Puzzle and Games Camp

9 a.m.-3 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Young artists ages 5-12 can explore creativity and problem-solving through puzzle and game design. Campers will craft their own jigsaw puzzles, board games, and playing pieces while learning drawing, painting, and crafting techniques. Afternoons include indoor and outdoor play, plus classic group games in the Hayloft. artistreevt.org.

### Intermediate Line Dance

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

### Stick & Puck

9:30-11:30 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

### Survivors Support Group

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

### Bone Builders

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

### Public Skate

11:45 a.m.-1:15 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

### Chaffee: Artery

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

### Discover the World of Mosaics

Noon-4 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$115. A three-day workshop for ages 6-12 with instructor Karen Wurster, introducing campers to paper and glass mosaics, including freestyle abstract and color-block design. Pre-registration required. chaffeeartcenter.org.

### Ukelele Group

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

### Michelob ULTRA Race World

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

### Stick & Puck

1:30-3:30 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

### Play Bridge!

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

### Watercolor Painting Party

3-5 p.m. The Spa at The Woods, 53 Woods Road, Killington. \$45. Enjoy a fun, no-pressure watercolor painting session with all materials provided—no experience needed! Pre-registration required. 802-422-3105. spaatthewoods.com.

### Tubing Night Presented by Bubly

4-6 p.m. Killington Tubing Park, 228 E. Mountain Rd., Killington. Ticket purchase required. Enjoy a family-friendly night of tubing with free samples of Bubly seltzer, giveaways, and s'mores while supplies last. Participants must be at least 36" tall. Warm up at the Clubhouse Grill with pub-style entrées and drinks. killington.com.

### Fly Tying Night

6-7 p.m. Woodstock Inn Nordic Center, 76 South St., Woodstock. Free. Join fellow fishing enthusiasts for an evening of fly tying, storytelling, and camaraderie. Beginners welcome—vises, materials, and guidance provided. Drinks and snacks available. woodstockinn.com.

### Pour Painting Workshop

6-8 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$40. Instructor Lorrie Amerio Manieri teaches the pour painting technique, guiding participants through the process to create a finished painting. All supplies included. Pre-registration required. For details, visit chaffeeartcenter.org.

### Backyard Sugaring

6:30 p.m. Abbott Memorial Library, 15 Library Road, South Pomfret. Free. Learn the basics of small-scale maple sugaring with lifelong Pomfret resident and experienced maple producer Vern Clifford. Discover tips, see equipment, and gain insight into tapping your own trees. abbottmemorallibrary.org.

### FOLA and CTA Present Ski Film Night

6:30 p.m. Heald Auditorium, Town Hall, 37 S. Depot St., Ludlow. Free. An evening of ski films featuring "40 Years on the Trail" and "Variable," followed by a Q&A with filmmaker Jamie Kennard. A raffle will be held before the screening with prizes from local sponsors. Donations appreciated to support FOLA and CTA. catamounttrail.org/fola-cta-ski-film-night.

### Stick & Puck

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



**LOVED ONES AND LITTLE ONES WINTER-DANCE**

SATURDAY @ 4-6 P.M.

← **Calendar:** Email events@mountaintimes.info.....  
from page 26

**FRI**  
2/21

**Pico Hiko Splitfest 2025 – Splitboard Demo & Festival**

8:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Pico Mountain Ski Resort, 73 Alpine Dr., Mendon. (Note: This event is listed as SOLD OUT) A full-day splitboarding event featuring top industry brands, guided adventure laps, an avalanche safety scavenger hunt, and a fundraiser raffle benefiting Vermont Adaptive Sports. Includes a free raffle ticket and a Lawson's Finest Liquids beverage for registered attendees. A Killington/Pico Uphill Travel Pass is required. picomountain.com.

**Stick & Puck**

9:30-11:30 a.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

**Intro to Improv Dance**

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

**Bone Builders**

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

**Connections & Interconnections of Life Weekly Group**

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

**Discover the World of Mosaics**

Noon-4 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$115. A three-day workshop for ages 6-12 with instructor Karen Wurster, introducing campers to paper and glass mosaics, including freestyle abstract and color-block design. Pre-registration required. chaffeeartcenter.org.

**Stick & Puck**

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

**West Coast Swing Dance Classes**

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

**Adult Trans, Non-Binary, and Gender Non-Conforming Affinity Space**

6-7 p.m. Rutland County Pride Center, 106 West St., Suite 1, Rutland. Free. A monthly in-person gathering for individuals 18+ who identify as transgender, non-binary, or gender non-conforming. Facilitated by Morgan Grant and Akbar Abidi. mgrant@leavesofchangecounseling.com or aabidi@rutlandrestorativejustice.org.

**DJ Skate Night**

6:30-8:30, Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5-8. Skate rentals \$5. Enjoy a night of music and skating with Sunset Entertainment. rutlandrec.com.

**Michael Arnowitt: A Piano Tribute to the African-American Experience**

7-8:30 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road., South Pomfret. \$25. Pianist Michael Arnowitt performs a program of classical and jazz pieces celebrating the African-American experience, featuring works by George Walker, Leslie Adams, Joshua Uzogwe, and William Grant Still. The evening closes with Arnowitt's original jazz composition "Chicago Avenue and Afro Blue," the 1959 classic by Mongo Santamaria. artistreevt.org.

**Pointe Noir Cajun Band – Mardi Gras Celebration**

7-9 p.m. Seven Stars Arts Center, 5126 VT Route 14, Sharon. \$20 + fee in advance, \$25 at the door, free for children under 12. Celebrate Mardi Gras with the lively sounds of Pointe Noir Cajun Band, featuring seasoned musicians with deep roots in Louisiana's Cajun and Zydeco traditions. Brocklebank Beer will be available. sevenstarsarts.org.

**SAT**  
2/22

**Film Screening: 'A Complete Unknown'**

7:30-10 p.m. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green, Woodstock. \$8-\$10. Presented by Pentangle Arts, this Oscar-nominated film tells the story of Bob Dylan's early rise to fame. Vermont-inspired food, wine, and beer available starting at 7 p.m. pentanglearts.org.

**Rabies Vaccination & Microchip Clinic**

9-11 a.m. Lucy Mackenzie Humane Society, 4832 Route 44, West Windsor. \$20 per rabies vaccination, \$20 per microchip. First-come, first-served clinic for dogs and cats—no appointment necessary. Dogs must be leashed, and cats must be crated. Animals must be at least 3 months old and have had their last rabies shot at least 10 months ago. Bring a prior rabies certificate to qualify for a three-year certificate; otherwise, a one-year certificate will be issued. info@lucymac.org or call 802-484-5829.

**Vermont Winter Farmers Market**

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Vermont Farmers Food Center, 251 West St., Rutland. Free. Tour around the world tasting event as part of Rutland Winterfest. Shop local produce, crafts, and goods every Saturday through May 10, 2025. vtfarmersmarket.org.

**Pour Painting Workshop**

11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. \$30. Ages 6+. Instructor Lorrie Amerio Maniery teaches the pour painting technique, guiding participants through the process to create a finished painting. All supplies included. Pre-registration required. chaffeeartcenter.org.

**Learn to Knit – Part 2**

11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Green Mountain Yarn & Fiber, 217 Woodstock Ave., Suite E, Rutland. \$30. Expand your knitting skills by learning circular knitting and combining knit and purl stitches to create the Barley worsted hat. Class fee includes the pattern; materials list provided after registration. greenmountainfibers.com.

**Rutland Railway Association & Model Club**

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

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

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

**Made in Poultney Talk**

1-2 p.m. Poultney Public Library, 205 Main St., Poultney. Free. Historian Ennis Duling and Librarian Rebecca Cook discuss the history of manufacturing in Poultney, from industrial equipment to musical instruments and apparel. Includes a slideshow and a display of Gray Foundry iron novelties from the Poultney Historical Society collection. 802-287-5556.

**Fixing Mistakes in Your Knitting**

1:30-3 p.m. Green Mountain Yarn & Fiber, 217 Woodstock Ave., Suite E, Rutland. \$30. Learn essential techniques for correcting common knitting mistakes, including picking up dropped stitches, inserting lifelines, and fixing knit-purl errors. Participants should bring a prepared swatch and required materials. greenmountainfibers.com.

**Film Screening: 'Songs of Earth'**

3-5 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road., Woodstock. \$12-\$15. This documentary follows an 85-year-old father's year-long journey through Oldendalen, Norway, filmed by his daughter, Margreth Olin. The film captures the beauty of living in balance with nature against the backdrop of Norway's dramatic landscapes. billingsfarm.org.

**Loved Ones and Little Ones Winter Dance**

4-6 p.m. ONE Church, (Williams) St., Rutland. \$15 per couple (one adult, one child). This family-friendly event features dancing, light refreshments, and entertainment by DJ Brett Myhre. wonderfeetkidsmuseum.org.

**Public Skate**

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



**SUN**  
2/23

**Game Night & Ice Cream Social**

6-8 p.m. West Rutland Town Hall, 35 Marble St., West Rutland. Free. Enjoy a fun-filled evening with board and card games for all ages, plus free ice cream. Pre-registration required. recreation@westrutlandvt.org.

**FOLA Honors Mark Huntley**

7 p.m. Heald Auditorium, Town Hall, 37 Depot st., Ludlow. A live musical event featuring Gypsy Reel and Rick Redington & the LUV in tribute to Mark Huntley. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Donations appreciated. 802-228-3238.

**Teen Ice Skating**

7-9 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. Free. \$5 skate rentals. This event is for high school students only. rutlandwinterfest.com/events/teen-ice-skating.

**Film Screening: 'A Complete Unknown'**

7:30-10 p.m. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green, Woodstock. \$8-\$10. Presented by Pentangle Arts, this Oscar-nominated film tells the story of Bob Dylan's early rise to fame. Vermont-inspired food, wine, and beer available starting at 7 p.m. pentanglearts.org.

**Public Skate**

8:45-10:45 a.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. \$5 for city residents, \$8 for nonresidents, and \$5 skate rentals. rutlandrec.com/giorgetti.

**Working Woodlands Workshop: Living with Bears**

10-11:30 a.m. Marsh-Billings-Rockefeller National Historical Park, Woodstock. Free. USDA Wildlife Specialist Tom Gieder presents on mitigating human-wildlife conflicts, identifying wildlife attractants, and keeping bears wild. Best suited for adults. Meet at the Forest Center; parking available at Billings Farm & Museum. nps.gov/mabi.

**USASA Northern Vermont Series Halfpipe**

10 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Timberline Park, Killington Resort, 3861 Killington Road., Killington. \$65 registration, \$40 athlete lift tickets. One of Vermont's last halfpipe competitions, this event features a best-of-two-runs format in a modified hand-shaped halfpipe. Helmets required. Spectators must have a valid Killington lift ticket. usasa.org.

**Public Skating**

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

## Calendar:

from page 27

### Winter Guided Hike at Taconic Mountains Ramble State Park

2p.m. Taconic Mountains Ramble State Park, 321 St. John Road, Hubbardton. Free. Explore the park's scenic trails and zen garden on a guided hike. If conditions allow, sledding will also be available. The hike covers varied terrain, including steep and narrow trails, and is of moderate difficulty. Dress accordingly and bring water, hiking boots, and snowshoes if needed. [caitlin.s.gates@gmail.com](mailto:caitlin.s.gates@gmail.com).

### Film Screening: 'A Complete Unknown'

2:30-5 p.m. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green, Woodstock. \$8-\$10. Presented by Pentangle Arts, this Oscar-nominated film tells the story of Bob Dylan's early rise to fame. [pentanglearts.org](http://pentanglearts.org).

### Afternoon Trivia

3-5 p.m. Rutland Beer Works, 136 Granger st., Rutland. Spend an afternoon with beer on tap, and a fun trivia event with prizes. [rutlandbeerworks.com](http://rutlandbeerworks.com).

### Film Screening: 'Songs of Earth'

3-5 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road., Woodstock. \$12-\$15. This documentary follows an 85-year-old father's year-long journey through Oldendalen, Norway, filmed by his daughter, Margreth Olin. The film captures the beauty of living in balance with nature against the backdrop of Norway's dramatic landscapes. [billingsfarm.org](http://billingsfarm.org).

### Public Skate

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

**MON**  
2/24

### Bone Builders

10 a.m. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Weights are provided. [sherburnelibrary.org](http://sherburnelibrary.org) or 802-422-4323.

### Monday Movie

1 p.m. (Mondays) Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. This week's scheduled film is "The Substance." [sherburnelibrary.org/movie-monday](http://sherburnelibrary.org/movie-monday) or 802-422-9765.

### Public Skate

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

**TUES**  
2/25

### Lunch Time Skate

11:30 a.m.-1:00 p.m. Giorgetti Arena, 2 Oak St. Ext., Rutland. Discounted lunch rate and \$5 skate rentals. [rutlandrec.com/giorgetti](http://rutlandrec.com/giorgetti).

### Met Opera: 'Grounded' (Tesori)

1-3:30 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$20. Jeanine Tesori's "Grounded," based on George Brant's acclaimed play, explores the psychological toll of modern warfare through the story of a fighter pilot reassigned to operating a Reaper drone. Mezzo-soprano Emily D'Angelo stars in this Met Opera production, featuring a high-tech staging with LED visuals. [paramountvt.org](http://paramountvt.org).

### Handcraft Gathering

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

### Alzheimer's Support Group

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

### Line Dance Classes

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

### West Coast Swing Dance Classes

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

### Rutland Area Toastmasters

6-7:30 p.m. (1st and 3rd Tuesday) Courcelle Bldg, 16 North St. Ext., Rutland. Develop public speaking, listening, and leadership skills. Guests welcome. 802-775-6929. [toastmasters.org](http://toastmasters.org).

### Paint and Sip

6-8 p.m. Killington Welcome Center, 2319 U.S. 4, Killington. \$35. Enjoy a night of creativity while painting a snowy forest sunset. This BYOB event includes all materials needed for the two-hour class. [link/u/8PC7KqU3](http://link/u/8PC7KqU3).

## ONGOING

### 'Antigone'

Feb. 14-15 & 20-22, 7:30 p.m.; Feb. 16 & 23, 2 p.m. Barnard Town Hall, 115 N. Road, Barnard. \$15-\$20. BarnArts presents a reimagining of "Antigone," featuring Anne Carson's contemporary translation and a vibrant, music-filled staging. Directed by Erin Bennett, this production blends ancient tragedy with modern energy, performed by a talented cast of BarnArts regulars. [barnarts.org](http://barnarts.org).

### 'The Art of Life': Exhibition

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

### Cooking Classes at Mission Farm

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

### 'FACES in Harmony'

Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. Highlights include "artwork of faces," "The Peace Train," an annual photo contest, and a community wall. Through Feb. 28. [chaffeeartcenter.org](http://chaffeeartcenter.org).

### Magic of Maple

Feb. 15-23, 10 a.m.- 4 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. Celebrate Vermont's maple history with sugar on snow, crafts, children's stories, and interactive exhibits on sugaring traditions. Explore historic photographs, learn about maple tapping, and sample sweet treats. Public sleigh rides available Feb. 18, 20, and 22, weather permitting. Advance tickets recommended. [billingsfarm.org](http://billingsfarm.org).

### Okemo Innkeepers Race Series

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

### One Room Theatrics Presents: 'Private Peaceful'

Feb 20-23. 8 p.m. (Feb. 20-22) and 2 p.m. (Feb. 23). Brandon Town Hall Theatre, 1 Conant Sq., Brandon. \$20. One Room Theatrics presents Michael Morpurgo's "Private Peaceful," adapted by Simon Reade and directed by Mike Mitrano. This one-man show follows Pvt. Thomas "Tommo" Peaceful as he reflects on his life and experiences in the First World War. General admission. [oneroomtheatrics.com](http://oneroomtheatrics.com).

### Rutland Winterfest 2025

Feb. 14-22 Various locations, Rutland. Celebrate winter with over 30 free and low-cost events during nine days of frosty fun. Enjoy night sledding on Center Street, human foosball, snowshoeing, ice skating with Bigfoot, and more. Recognized as a Top Winter Event by the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, Winterfest brings the community together with classic and quirky cold-weather activities. See page 13 for a full list of activities. [rutlandwinterfest.com](http://rutlandwinterfest.com).

### Skating Lessons

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

### The Art of Grace Dorman

Through March 28. Main Street Museum, 58 Bridge st. White River Junction. Exhibit of artist Grace Dorman's art. [mainstreetmuseum.org](http://mainstreetmuseum.org).

### Winter Wonders Farm Camp

9 a.m.-4 p.m. Feb. 19 - 21. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Rd., Woodstock. A three-day camp for ages 8-11 featuring hands-on farm activities, animal care, cooking, and outdoor adventures. Campers will collect eggs, feed cows, learn about horse gear, and explore the uses of wool from Southdown sheep. Winter-themed crafts include homemade crayons, wool projects, and creating winter landscapes. Registration required. [billingsfarm.org/winter-wonders-camp](http://billingsfarm.org/winter-wonders-camp).


### Women's Nordic Ski Skate Clinics

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

## UPCOMING

### Feb. 28 The Fab Four – The Ultimate Beatles Tribute

7:30 p.m. The Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$39-\$59. The Emmy Award-winning Fab Four delivers note-for-note renditions of Beatles classics with stunning accuracy, featuring three costume changes to represent different eras of the band's career. [paramountvt.org](http://paramountvt.org).



**CHOICES**  
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# [MUSIC Scene]

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

**WED**  
2/19

**KILLINGTON**

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Alex Shier  
6 p.m. Killington Cafe & Wine Bar – Open Mic hosted by Liz Reedy  
6 p.m. Rivershed – Rhys Chalmers  
6 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter  
7 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Badfish

**LUDLOW**

2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Chuck and John  
6 p.m. Off the Rails – Learn to Line Dance

**POULTNEY**

7 p.m. Poultney Pub – Open Mic hosted by Lobo

**QUECHEE**

6 p.m. The Public House – Kim Wilcox

**RUTLAND**

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

**THUR**  
2/20

**BARNARD**

7:30 p.m. Town Hall – Antigone

**BRANDON**

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

**BRIDGEWATER**

**CORNERS**  
5 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Liz Reedy

**CHESTER**

6 p.m. The Pizza Stone VT – Nate Martel

**KILLINGTON**

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto  
2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Daniel Brown  
2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Duane Carleton  
6 p.m. Liquid Art – Open Mic hosted by Grateful Gary  
6 p.m. North Star Lodge Star Lounge – Nick Bredice  
6 p.m. Rivershed – Jeremiah Strauss  
6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Allie and Adam  
6 p.m. The Foundry – Live Music

6:30 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Let's Sing Taylor

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

**LONDONDERRY**

3 p.m. Black Line Tavern at Magic Mountain – On Tone Music

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

**LUDLOW**

2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Sammy B  
6:30 p.m. The Killarney – Irish Sessions with Gypsy Reel

**QUECHEE**

6 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – "Stirred Not Shaken" Singer-Songwriter in the Round Series with Jim Yeager

6 p.m. Public House Pub – Name That Tune Bingo with DJ Dave: Valentine's Edition

**RUTLAND**

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

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

**SOUTH POMFRET**

6:30 p.m. Artistree – Acoustic Jam Session hosted by Kerry Rosenthal  
**WOODSTOCK**  
6:30 p.m. Ottawaquechee Yacht Club – Nat & Em

**FRI**  
2/21

**BARNARD**

7:30 p.m. Town Hall – Antigone

**CASTLETON**

6 p.m. Blue Cat Bistro – Brothman

**KILLINGTON**

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Duane Carleton  
2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Chris Pallutto and Daniel Brown  
2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Alex Shier  
2 p.m. Snowshed's Long Trail Pub – Rhys Chalmers  
4 p.m. The Foundry – Just Jamie  
5:30 p.m. Killington Cafe & Wine Bar – Rick Webb  
6 p.m. Rivershed – King Margo  
7 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Nick Bredice

7:30 p.m. The Foundry – Daniel Brown

8 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Never in Vegas

9 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Just Jamie

9 p.m. Wobbly Barn – The Gab Cinque

**LUDLOW**

11 a.m. Jackson Gore Courtyard – Ski Tunes with DJ Dave

2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Liz Reedy

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

**POULTNEY**

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – George Nostrand

**QUECHEE**

5 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music: Jazz Duo Featuring Rev Leon Dunkley and Stephen Stuntz

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Krishna Guthrie

**RANDOLPH**

7:30 p.m. The Underground Listening Room – Bird Boombox with Fly-By Ride

**RUTLAND**

6 p.m. Stonehedge Indoor Golf – Duane Carleton

6:30 p.m. Giorgetti Ice Arena – DJ Skate Night

9 p.m. Centert Street Alley – Last Chair Band

**SOUTH POMFRET**

7 p.m. Artistree – Pianist Michael Arnowitz

**SAT**  
2/22

**BARNARD**

7:30 p.m. Town Hall - Antigone

**BRIDGEWATER**

8 p.m. Woolen Mill Comedy Club – Comedy Show with Rob Cantrell

**CHESTER**

6:30 p.m. The Pizza Stone VT – Zach Yak

**KILLINGTON**

1 p.m. Bear Mountain Base Lodge – Alex Shier  
2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – King Margo and Liz Reedy  
2 p.m. Pico's Last Run Lounge – Duane Carleton

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

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

4 p.m. The Foundry – Aaron Audet

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

6 p.m. Preston's at the Grand Hotel – Scott Forrest

6 p.m. Rivershed – Stevey Burke

6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Rhys Chalmers

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

7 p.m. The Foundry – Jenny Porter

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

8 p.m. North Star Lodge Star Lounge – All Request Dance Party with DJ Dave

9 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Never in Vegas

9 p.m. Wobbly Barn – The Gab Cinque

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

**LONDONDERRY**

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

**LUDLOW**

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

2 p.m. Okemo's Jackson Gore Courtyard – Apres Afternoon with The Gully Boys

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

**PITTSFORD**

7 p.m. Hilltop Tavern – Karaoke with Sunset Entertainment

**POULTNEY**

Noon. Poultney Pub – Vinyl with Ken

**QUECHEE**

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Arthur James

6 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music with Chicky Stoltz

**STOCKBRIDGE**

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

**WOODSTOCK**

6:30 p.m. Ottawaquechee Yacht Club – Fjord Pinto

**SUN**  
2/23

**BARNARD**

2 p.m. Town Hall – Antigone

**BRIDGEWATER**

**CORNERS**  
3 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Nick Bredice

**KILLINGTON**

Noon. Rivershed – Brunch with Stevey Burke

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

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Sammy B

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

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

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tboneicus Jones

6 p.m. Rivershed – Trivia

6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Open Mic Night hosted by Indigenous Entertainment

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

7 p.m. Pickle Barrel – Hayley Jane

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

**LUDLOW**

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

2 p.m. Okemo's The Bull – Okemo Pride Day: Karaoke with Lady Sabrina

**QUECHEE**

2 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music with Jim Yeager

**STOCKBRIDGE**

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

**MON**  
2/24

**KILLINGTON**

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Duane Carleton

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

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

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

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

**LUDLOW**

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

**RUTLAND**

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

**STOCKBRIDGE**

5 p.m. Wild Fern – Bow and River

**WOODSTOCK**

6:30 p.m. Ottawaquechee Yacht Club – Liz Reedy

**TUE**  
2/25

**KILLINGTON**

2 p.m. K1 Base Lodge – Nick Bredice

6 p.m. Rivershed – Sammy B

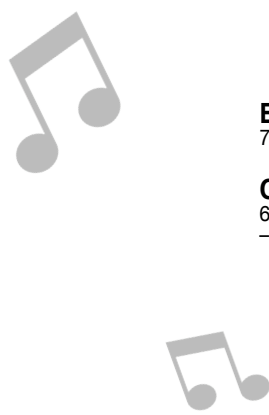
8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Taco Tuesday with Rick Webb

**POULTNEY**

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Bluegrass Jam

**RUTLAND**

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





By Brett Simison

The Sheehan lift takes a group of skiers up for a nighttime skiing experience at the Middlebury Snowbowl.

## Middlebury Snowbowl offers a rare night skiing experience in Vermont

As daylight fades over the Green Mountains, the Middlebury Snowbowl transforms into an illuminated winter wonderland. One of only two lift-serviced night skiing areas in Vermont, the Snowbowl invites skiers and snowboarders to experience the thrill of carving down the slopes under the stars with a unique atmosphere that blends adventure, community, and the charm of a classic Vermont ski area. (Bolton Valley, near Burlington, also offers night skiing.)

Last winter, the Snowbowl introduced night skiing, and it quickly became a popular feature. The Sheehan lift provides access to terrain suited for beginners, intermediates, and experts. The crisp night air, the soft glow of lights on fresh snow, and the quieter evening ambiance make night skiing a truly special experience. There's a certain magic in gliding over snow beneath a star-lit sky, where every turn feels like part of a dream.

### A community experience

Night skiing at Snowbowl isn't just about getting in extra runs—it's about making memories under the stars. Families gather to introduce their children to skiing under the lights while groups of friends take advantage of the quieter slopes. Whether you're a seasoned skier seeking a fresh challenge or a first-timer testing the sport, the Snowbowl offers an inviting atmosphere. It's a place to enjoy family time and build forever memories.

As part of its commitment to making skiing accessible, the Snowbowl offers free skiing and riding for all children 5 and under, ensuring young skiers have a chance to develop a love for the sport early. The Snowbowl's carpet lift is also free for beginner skiers and riders of all ages, providing an ideal way for newcomers to gain confidence

in a comfortable setting. The carpet lift remains lighted during night skiing hours, allowing beginners to enjoy the experience alongside more advanced skiers.

### More than just skiing

The Snowbowl isn't just about the slopes—it's also about the experience off the mountain. Live entertainment is featured on select nights, adding to the festive atmosphere in the lodge.

The Snowbowl's dining operation is another highlight, offering high-quality yet affordable meals prepared with care by passionate chefs who take pride in crafting delicious food that warms both body and soul. After a night on the slopes, guests can cozy up next to our unique flagstone fireplace, a defining and central characteristic of our main base lodge, creating the perfect place to unwind and share stories of the day's adventures.

Guests can also take advantage of the full-service ski shop, which provides equipment rentals, tuning, and gear for all levels of skiers and snowboarders.

Whether you're looking to fine-tune your equipment or rent gear for the night, the knowledgeable staff is ready to assist.

### When to go

Night skiing at Snowbowl is available every Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday evening from 4 p.m. to 9 p.m., making it a perfect midweek escape or weekend warm-up.

Whether you're gliding down the Sheehan lift-serviced terrain, warming up in the lodge with great food and live entertainment, or introducing your little ones to skiing for the first time, Snowbowl's night skiing experience is not to be missed.

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

## Experience ski adventure films in Ludlow

Thursday, Feb. 20 at 6:30 p.m.—LUDLOW—The Friends of Ludlow Auditorium (FOLA) and the Catamount Trail Association (CTA) present an evening of ski films at Heald Auditorium, Ludlow Town Hall. The event features "40 Years on the Trail," a short CTA film by Climb High Productions, followed by "Variable," a documentary by filmmaker Jamie Kennard chronicling a 10-year journey to backcountry ski the Adirondack 46ers. Kennard will participate in a Q&A session after the screenings. A raffle will be held before the event with prizes from local sponsors. Admission is free, with donations appreciated to support FOLA and CTA. Doors open at 5:30 p.m.

"Variable" follows two brothers as they attempt to become the first to ski all 81 classic high peaks of the Adirondack and Catskill mountains. Their journey, faced with unpredictable weather, dangerous terrain, and personal loss, highlights the thrill and risks of backcountry skiing. The film also explores the growing impact of climate change on winter sports and the race against a disappearing snowpack. The evening offers a unique opportunity for ski enthusiasts and outdoor adventurers to engage with the filmmaker and learn more about the challenges of extreme skiing.

For more information, visit: [catamounttrail.org/fola-cta-ski-film-night](http://catamounttrail.org/fola-cta-ski-film-night).



Submitted



Courtesy CTA

"Variable" will be featured at the FOLA-CTA production on Thursday, Feb. 20, Heald Auditorium, Ludlow Town Hall.

# Film Review: 'Nickel Boys' tackles racial injustice and power dynamics through point-of-view storytelling

By Ellie Trinkle

It is easy for a film to get viewers to imagine what it would be like to be in a character's shoes, but it is rare for a movie to actually place us in their shoes. RaMell Ross' historical drama "Nickel Boys" accomplishes this and is easily one of the most poignant, gripping, and unusual films of the present day. "Nickel Boys" finds most of its success in employing point-of-view storytelling, diverting from traditional narrative film techniques.

The film, based on the Pulitzer Prize 2019 novel by Colson Whitehead, "The Nickel Boys," is inspired by the real Arthur G. Dozier School in Florida, a 111-year-old reform school exposed for abuse, forced labor, and unjust deaths. Director Ross brings these harrowing stories to life for his first narrative feature.

Ross's previous work in documentary films focused on the lives of Black Americans in the Deep South. His 2018 documentary "Hale County This Morning, This Evening" exposed the racial injustices in Hale County, Alabama, and the lasting impacts on the Black community. Ross's previous work earned him considerable recognition and praise, but "Nickel Boys" solidifies him as a risk taker and an exceptional filmmaker.

## A story of power dynamics and friendship

"Nickel Boys" follows Black teenager Elwood Curtis and his life in Tallahassee, Florida, during the Jim Crow period in the 1960s. Abandoned by his parents, Elwood lives with his grandmother, who encourages him to pursue higher education. Inspired by the ongoing Civil Rights Movement around him, Elwood finds community in speaking out against racial injustices. Elwood's intellect and drive secure him a promising scholarship to Melvin Griggs Technical School and the opportunity to become something bigger than himself.

But fate has another plan for Elwood. Having to hitchhike to get to school, he secures a ride from a friendly stranger to take him to his first day of classes. Before arriving at school, they are stopped by the police and convicted of stealing the car they are driving in. Elwood's academic career suddenly crumbles before his eyes when he is sentenced to the fictional Nickel

Academy for Boys—a segregated reform school that aims to rehabilitate delinquent youth. Elwood will soon learn there is something far more sinister at play.

During his first few days at Nickel, Elwood befriends Turner, who promises to help him navigate this new and confusing world. Elwood and Turner share polarizing views; Elwood, the optimist, believes he can "graduate" from Nickel early if he is obedient enough, while Turner knows that no matter how well-behaved one is, they will never be exempt from abuse.

As the film progresses, we learn that their white superiors sexually and physically abuse the Black boys at Nickel. This constant discrimination and abuse in the contained space of Nickel Academy paints a picture that is situated in a much larger context; the world around them is one deeply complicated in racial injustices.

## Seeing and being

What immediately sets the stylistic choices in "Nickel Boys" apart from other films is that the majority is shot in point-of-view, placing the viewer directly in line with Elwood and Turner. The first half of the film is strictly through Elwood's eyes, allowing small moments to become ones of extreme significance: Elwood's hands shaking when he is about to be arrested, the feeling of discomfort as he passes "the white side" of Nickel Academy upon arrival, and the sinister look on the superior's face right before Elwood is abused. We become immersed in this world and every uncomfortable space and moment that comes with it.

The first time the camera switches to Turner's point-of-view is in the Nickel cafeteria when the boys meet for the first time. The viewer sees the same scene play out again from Turner's perspective. While the switch in perspective is initially jarring, it seems to emphasize the physical space of Nickel's off-putting environment.

These point-of-view shots place the viewer directly in the scene, almost as if to say this is happening, pay attention, see it with your own eyes. It is a bold choice that ultimately enhances the storytelling and makes this film all the more

compelling.

## An imaginative and immersive experience

The film also switches between timelines, jumping from the boys' time at Nickel to adulthood, where the point-of-view style becomes omniscient. The viewer is no longer moving with Elwood and Turner but is instead placed behind the head of an adult, Elwood, who now lives in New York City. The viewer never sees adult Elwood's face, but we are with him as he reads news articles exposing some of the horrors of Nickel Academy. We are with him when he runs into a peer from Nickel at a bar, where we learn he is no longer in contact with Turner. We are with him, but always at a distance, suggesting how Elwood has become more closed off in his adulthood, unable to fully conceptualize his painful time at Nickel.

Archival footage is also incorporated into the film, notably "Apollo 8" and the 1958 film, "The Defiant Ones," creating texture between Elwood and Turner while connecting them to the larger socio-political context of the time. Ross reminds viewers that this story is only a small vignette representing greater systemic injustices through these devices.

## Reimagining history

"Nickel Boys" is a captivating depiction of an unjust history and the trauma, hardships, and friendship that arose from it. The film's powerful stylistic choices encourage viewers to sit with the uncomfortable moments and find compassion within them.

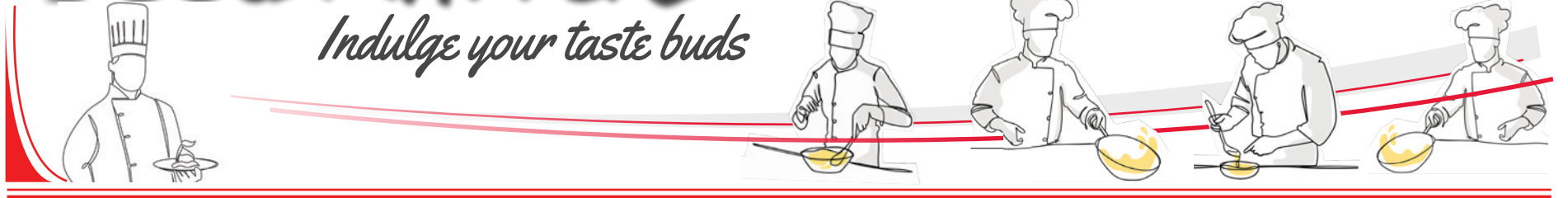
As Ross' film reminds us, empathy is our strongest quality. When the credits began to roll, and I walked out of the theatre, I thought a lot about the past and every hard truth that comes with it. I thought back to the mirror shot, the film's cover, which is coincidentally the only time we see Elwood and Turner in the same frame. Despite everything, they still manage to look up.

*Ellie Trinkle is a film and creative writing major attending Middlebury College.*



The "Nickel Boys" is available to watch in select theaters and on-demand

Courtesy Amazon MGM Studios



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



### Killington Market

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hand carved dinners, pizza, daily fresh hot panini, roast chicken, salad and specialty sandwiches. Vermont products, maple syrup, fresh meat and produce along with wine and beer are also for sale. [killingtonmarket.com](http://killingtonmarket.com) 802-422-7736 or 802-422-7594.



### Back Country Café

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kind. Just the right heat Bloody Marys, Mimosas, Bellini, VT Craft Brews. Coffee and hot chocolate drinks. Maple Syrup and VT products for sale. Check Facebook for daily specials. 802-422-4411.



### Inn at Long Trail

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### Liquid Art

Relax in the warm atmosphere at Liquid Art. Look for artfully served lattes from their La Marzocco espresso machine, or if you want something stronger, try their signature cocktails. Serving breakfast, lunch and dinner, they focus on healthy fare and provide you with a delicious meal different than anything else on the mountain. [liquidartvt.com](http://liquidartvt.com), (802) 422-2787.



### Mountain Top Inn

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### Vermont Craft

Vermont Craft is a lively bar and restaurant located in the Mountain Green Resort in Killington, serving locally sourced craft beer and a range of shareable, casual foods inspired by local farms [vermontcraft.net](http://vermontcraft.net) (802) 342-5469



### Choices

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### Sugar and Spice

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### Lookout Tavern

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### SouthSide SteakHouse

Southside provides a modern approach to a classic American steakhouse. Join us for an inviting, upbeat atmosphere featuring thoughtfully crafted food made with the highest quality steaks & chops, fresh seafood, and seasonal produce. We offer dinner and drink service in our dining room, bar & lounge, and on our seasonal patio, weather permitting. 802-772-7556 [southsidesteakhouse.com](http://southsidesteakhouse.com)



### The Grey Bonnet Inn

#### Bar & Restaurant

The Grey Bonnet Inn Bar & Restaurant offers a cozy, welcoming atmosphere with a delicious menu. Enjoy a variety of hearty dishes and refreshing drinks, perfect for casual dining or a relaxing evening out after a long week. (802) 772-7262 <https://greybonnetkillington.com/>

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# Claws

**You ever hear that saying... about trees and rivers?**

**Nope.... and I'm about to go slip into my R.E.M. state. You know... so I can drift out smiling like a kitten in a cool remnant of a dream.**

**But I suspect you're going to tell me anyway.**

**Before enlightenment, the trees and rivers were trees and rivers. During enlightenment, the trees and rivers were great spectacles of awe and wonder. After enlightenment, the trees and rivers were trees and rivers.**

**Confirmed....**

**Don't you see? Before enlightenment, things are just... there. But then, when we awaken to something deeper, we start to see things differently**

**It's like there's deeper meaning. It's always been there but now we see something more**

**Do you like the Cure, 'cause... Fascination Street?**

**My eyelids are rapidly overpowering my ability to keep them open**

**Then after enlightenment, when we go back to seeing the trees and rivers as trees and rivers, we're still aware of their beauty, but it's... simpler.**

**Oh, look! 3 aliens from space! WHOA! Hi aliens from space!**

**We don't speak Earthling**

**Hmmm - normally I would be amazed at this but I'm feeling so very enlightened.**

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## USASA Northern Vermont Series Halfpipe Doubleheader returns to Killington

Sunday, Feb. 23 at 10 a.m. — KILLINGTON — The USASA Northern Vermont Series is bringing its Halfpipe Doubleheader to Killington Resort's Timberline Park, offering one of the last remaining halfpipe competitions in Vermont. This event, a throwback to the early days of hand-shaped halfpipes, provides a unique opportunity for skiers and snowboarders to showcase their skills in a modified halfpipe.

Athletes will compete in a best-of-two-runs format across two back-to-back competitions. The top half of Timberline Park will be closed to the public during the event, though spectators can access the park via Header midway down the trail. Helmets are required for all participants, and all spectators must have a valid Killington lift ticket.

Competitor registration is \$65, with athlete lift tickets available for \$40. Check-in runs from 8:30-9:15 a.m. at Ramshead Lodge, followed by practice at 9:15 a.m. and a rider meeting at 9:50 a.m. The event starts at 10 a.m. and is expected to wrap up by 3:30 p.m. with an awards ceremony.

For registration and details, visit: [usasa.org](http://usasa.org).



## Oscar-nominated 'A Complete Unknown' screens at Woodstock Town Hall Theatre

Friday, Feb. 21-Sunday, Feb. 22—WOODSTOCK — Film lovers in the area have an opportunity to experience "A Complete Unknown," the Academy Award-nominated film about Bob Dylan's early rise to fame, on the big screen at the Woodstock Town Hall Theatre. The film will be shown for three screenings: Friday, Feb. 21, and Saturday, Feb. 22, at 7:30 p.m., and Sunday, Feb. 23, at 3 p.m.

Directed by James Mangold and starring Timothée Chalamet, Elle Fanning, and Edward Norton, A Complete Unknown follows a 19-year-old Dylan as he arrives in New York City's Greenwich Village in 1961. With his revolutionary talent, Dylan forges relationships with music legends and cements his place in folk history, culminating in a performance that would reverberate worldwide.

With few movie theaters in the region, this screening provides a unique chance for audiences to see the highly acclaimed film in a classic theater setting. Tickets are on sale now. The R-rated movie runs 2 hours and 20 minutes.

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



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# 'Sing Sing': When 'To be or not to be' turns into more than a question

## Director Greg Kwedar's film finds the humanity living within the souls of men who society has locked away

If you've heard of the film "Sing Sing," it's likely due to the critical attention placed on its two lead performances, Colman Domingo, playing the real-life "Divine G," and Clarence "Divine Eye" Maclin, portraying a version of himself in this true story of two incarcerated men in New York's Sing Sing prison. Both actors are sensational in the film. Maclin serves as co-writer of the movie, along with director Kwedar. It's those writing and directorial decisions that set this film apart from other prison dramas.

The true story of John "Divine G" Whitfield is he spent 25 years in prison for second-degree murder, a crime he did not commit. While the temptation to give Whitfield's harrowing story the standard biopic treatment is high, Kwedar and co-writer Maclin have different plans.

The injustice of being locked up for a quarter of a century for a crime you didn't commit is infuriating enough. The fact that Whitfield spent 10 of those years locked up, even when evidence came to light that he did not commit the murders, is the blunt reality of the American justice system that tends to look at those incarcerated as criminals one way or another.

Whitfield, a deejay and artist, saw first-hand how prison dehumanizes and made it his purpose to do something to help him and his fellow inmates. He helped found the Rehabilitation Through the Arts (RTA) program at Sing Sing. What amounts to a theater troupe for prisoners, the program gives those who wish to

join it a purpose beyond their sentence. Kwedar's movie centers on this part of the story, and it is a fascinating and enlightening endeavor that unearths the humanity behind these prisoners, who are more than their crimes.

The film focuses little on the reasons that put these men in Sing Sing, but we get to know these characters throughout the film's economic 1-hour, 47-minute runtime.

In another stroke of the film's genius, the majority of the actors in the movie are prisoners who were members of the RTA program, playing versions of themselves. We can sense their rawness as actors and their authenticity.

If anything, the other actors are so genuine that, at times, Domingo stands out because he has classical training the others do not. And this is not a detriment; there is an air of superiority in Domingo's "Divine G." He's a prisoner like everyone else, but he knows he's the better actor, which makes for some gripping drama when he recruits "Divine Eye" Maclin to the RTA. Maclin plays "Hamlet" in the mix-tape production of several genres the troupe agrees to perform. What starts as a rivalry between two very different men grows into a powerful friendship in two of the most outstanding acting performances of the year. Domingo, for his efforts, received an Oscar nomination for Best Actor. It's too bad there wasn't an additional slot available in the supporting category to include Maclin. His performance is a fiery revelation, and we hope to see more of him in future films.

It is of little surprise that "Hamlet" should play a critical role in the play.

Maclin and "Divine G" struggle with the weight of their sentences, the "what ifs" and the "what might never be." Is there a worthwhile

existence to be had in prison when the rest

of society thinks you are nothing? The film presents weighty matters, and the filmmaking excellence of the cast and crew shows they are up to the task of providing an answer. Ultimately, yes. No matter what someone has done in life to land them a life sentence, it is still life and a life worth living. The production gives these men a purpose beyond the cellblock, and you can feel the genuine importance the rehearsals play. If prison is meant to be a place of rehabilitation, programs like the RTA provide it.

There are too many moments to mention without spoiling the enjoyment of this movie, and I found myself welled up with emotion. These characters grew on me. I cared for them and was surprised at how much tension and drama could be built up over mounting a play production while in prison.

The stakes for these men go beyond an opening night performance. The film continually reminds us that these men deal with other matters, like parole and clemency hearings, when not working on rehearsals. In these things, freedom hangs in the elusive balance.

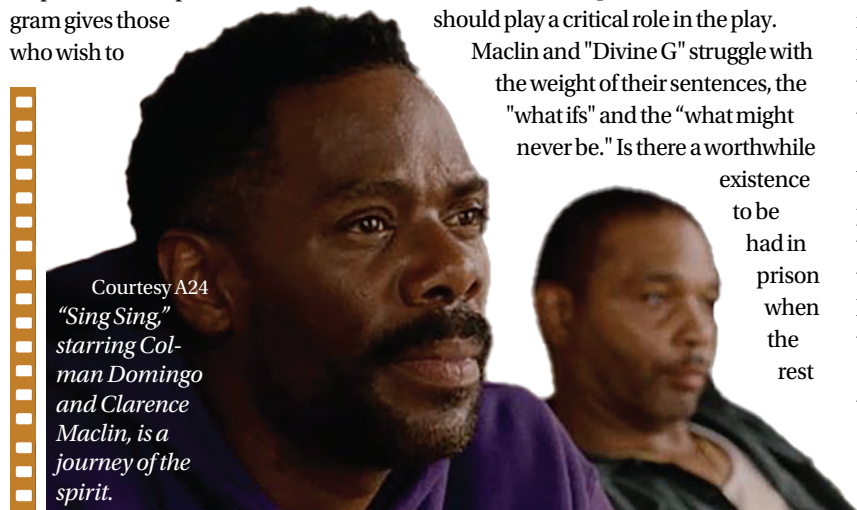
Cinematographer Pat Scola's use of 16mm film and tight 1.66:1 frame zooms in and out of shots often throughout the movie, elongating or closing up space, making us feel the claustrophobic tightness of the prison walls. Other shots in and around the prison provide a realism missing from other prison movies. It's mundane. Sing Sing sits along the Hudson River, and to the unobserved, one would not guess what occurs inside. It's a constant reminder that this waterside compound is a place many of its inhabitants will never leave.

There are heartbreaking moments in this movie that will anger you at the injustice that comes to some, be it due to their race or circumstance. However, the film raises the eternal question in "Divine Eye's" Hamlet character. "To be or not to be?" The movie posits two prisons at work for the men of Sing Sing: the bars they live behind and the ones they form in their minds. They do not have control over one, but through art, they can unlock the doors of the other. "To be" is most decidedly the way for these thespians.

James Kent is the publisher's assistant at the Mountain Times and the co-host of the "Stuff We've Seen" podcast at stuffweve-[veseen.com](http://www.stuffweve-<br/>veseen.com).



**Screens and Streams**  
By James Kent



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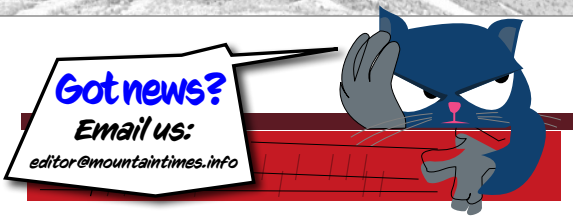
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# Snowbank Productions brings snow sculpting to Rutland's Winterfest 2025

RUTLAND—Snowbank Productions, led by community snow sculptor Matt Morris, were in Depot Park in Rutland this past Saturday, Feb. 15, preparing for the Snow Sculpting National Qualifier on Sunday, Feb. 16, a part of Rutland's Winterfest 2025 celebration.

Morris, who has been creating impressive snow sculptures for years in his hometown of Waterloo, Ontario, is known for crafting towering snow structures from non-packing (dry) snow, which he carves into beautiful and intricate art.

His project will be part of the event's celebration of winter fun.

Through Snowbank Productions, Morris shares his journey and passion for snow sculpting on his website, offering free resources, tutorials, and videos to inspire others to get creative with snow. Morris encourages people of all ages and skill levels to try their hand at snow sculpting. His online Snow Sculpting Club and step-by-step guides make it easy for anyone to get started with snow carving using basic tools like a plastic knife.

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

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By Pat Wise

Matt & Lorna Morris of Waterloo, Ontario of Snowbank productions with Dave Dothstein of Massachusetts teamed up for snow sculpturing at Rutland's Winterfest.

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# A classic rewind: PEGTV revives Rutland's history through rediscovered video archives

By James Kent

For nearly 30 years, PEGTV has served as Rutland County's public access television station, documenting local events, high school sports, and community life. Executive Director Tom Leypoldt, who has been with the station for most of its existence, recently led a project to digitize and preserve hundreds of long-lost videos—bringing a treasure trove of Rutland history back to life.

Leypoldt remembers when PEGTV operated from the basement of the local cable station, where Comcast/Xfinity is currently located on Route 7. In 1996, PEGTV moved to the Stafford building, but space constraints meant many archived recordings had to be stored elsewhere. Dozens of boxes were placed in the basement of the Longfellow School building, where they remained forgotten for over two decades.

A few years ago, occupants of the Longfellow building reached out to PEGTV, asking if they wanted to retrieve the boxes before discarding them. Unfortunately, a broken water pipe damaged several of the recordings. At first, Leypoldt assumed nothing was salvageable, but he found a few in pristine condition among the moldy, deteriorated tapes.

Curious about their contents, Leypoldt played the tapes on an old VCR and was surprised by how well some had held up. Among them were classic rivalry football games between Rutland High and MSJ—recordings he knew the community would want to see. The collection also included VHS, ¼-inch, and Hi-8 tapes, requiring specialized equipment to transfer them to digital format.

After careful planning, Leypoldt gathered

the necessary converters and equipment to begin the extensive digitization process. The first test was simple—uploading a single video to PEGTV's YouTube channel to gauge interest. The response was immediate. "I didn't realize this project would have this much of an impact," Leypoldt said. People were thrilled to see footage of past sporting events and eagerly requested more.

Over the past two years, Leypoldt and PEGTV Public/Education Coordinator Chelsea Vogel have worked tirelessly to digitize and upload over 1,000 videos to PEGTV's YouTube channel. Under the "PEGTV: Sports Rewind" playlist, viewers can watch historic high school games (some featuring commentary from legendary WSYB sports announcer Jack Healy), while the "PEGTV: Video Vault" offers a glimpse into Rutland's past, featuring footage of past Halloween parades and even a rare 16mm film capturing a WWI veterans' welcome-home clambake at the Rutland Fairgrounds.

For many, these videos are more than just entertainment—they're a connection to the past. One particularly moving example involved a 1985 interview with John Cioffredi from the Rutland Parks and Recreation Department. When his grandson, Dan, discovered the footage, he was deeply touched, as it was the only known video of his grandfather. "It makes it all worth it," Leypoldt said, reflecting on the emotional impact of the project.

PEGTV's archival project continues to grow, preserving Rutland's history for future generations. To explore the collection, visit [youtube.com/@PEGTV-Rutland](https://youtube.com/@PEGTV-Rutland).



By James Kent

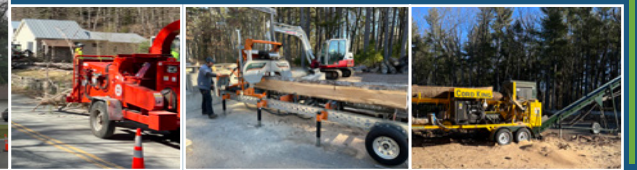
(Top) PEGTV Executive Director Tom Leypoldt demonstrated the video-to-digital transfer process of the historic tape project. (Bottom left) A stack of VHS tapes sat on a shelf at PegTV, waiting to undergo a digital transformation. (Bottom right) Footage of a CSJ basketball game underwent a digital transfer process at PEGTV on Friday, Feb. 14.

## Bill's Landscaping

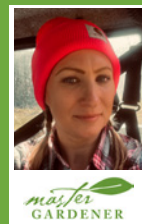
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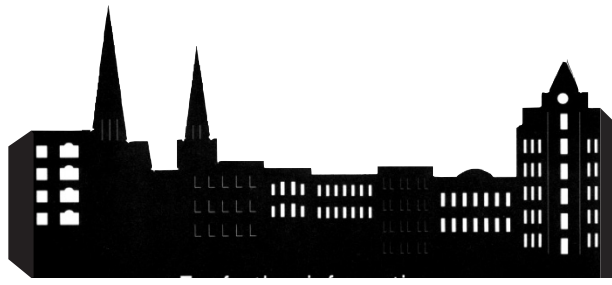
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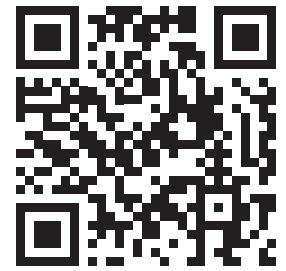
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Solutions From page 17

### Crossword

			T	A	R	O		A	A	R	O	N		
S	E	A	L	E	R			B	L	I	G	H	T	
A	N	T	I	C	I	P	A	T	O	R		A	S	
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H	E	M			C	O	C	U	S		S	E	E	N
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### Sudoku

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

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# Cosmic Catalogue



## Aries

March 21 - April 20

It's ok if you need to go into hibernation this week. It's been a trying couple of months to say the least. You've been grinding through despite progress being painfully slow. If you need a rest, then take it. It's important that you don't stop or throw in the towel. What has been hard for you recently will be your biggest blessing in the not-too-distant future. But for now, you've earned the right to rest up a little bit. You'll need it.



## Leo

July 21 - August 20

You've been challenged in the area of intimacy in recent years. This could be a commitment to a relationship, your finances, your own development, and your self-awareness. You don't have to know the outcome before you can have trust and faith that things will work out. One thing is for sure: unless you dive into oceans of the unknown, you'll have no idea what buried treasures within you may discover. Go in the direction that you fear the most. It will reward you.



## Sagittarius

November 21 - December 20

Your home life is going to take the bulk of your focus now. It's been a hard road the past couple of years regarding the domestic bliss you've longed for. For the most part, that is behind you now, and you need to consider what your family life will look like moving forward. A conversation can help you get back on track in a very overwhelming area. Do remain optimistic despite the challenges.



## Taurus

April 21 - May 20

If some friendships or groups and communities you are involved with have been teetering on the edge, this week could be an important turning point. You value loyalty and stability, and serious Saturn has been pressure-testing the meaning of friendship. You will soon discover who in your life is there for a reason, a season, or a lifetime. Consider making the breaks you need. Recommit to the ones you go the distance for you.



## Virgo

August 21 - September 20

There is no escaping the topic of relationships for you now, whether personal, professional, or both! The past two years have been a pressure cooker for you. However, you'll now move into a cycle of more clarity and commitment – if that is what you want. A big part of this is letting go of the ways you think love should be and double down on what it could be. Seek progress, not perfection.



## Capricorn

December 21 - January 20

A sore point within a key relationship will begin easing this week. However, you may have to do another round before things improve. The worst is over, though. If you can commit to gentle and open communication about how you feel this week, you'll be well-poised for wonderful blessings in a few months. What has been stuck or stagnant gets a cosmic green light. Keep moving forward.



## Gemini

May 21 - June 20

Having serious Saturn in your Career Zone has been a grind, to say the least. This week, Saturn goes further than he's been in the past two years. Thus, what has been slow and stagnant finally gets momentum. You just need to keep the faith and don't let the pressure or challenges from the recent past hold you back from the growth and success you desire. Keep pushing, and the results will come. Don't forget to keep the faith as well!



## Libra

September 21 - October 20

Very soon, your ruling planet, Venus, will go backward in your Relationship Zone. This may seem scary at first glance, but it really is about you leveling up your desire. What do you want? What don't you want? How can you express that in a functional way? Start giving this some thought. Not everything has to be dandy all of the time for love to be exactly how it's meant to be.



## Aquarius

January 21 - February 20

Every now and then, we go through phases where life feels like we have to double our efforts yet only reap half the result. If that has been the case for you so far in 2025, things will begin to shift. That said, don't take your efforts for granted. Hard work combined with confidence and self-belief is what it takes to achieve what it is that you want. Don't give in or give up now. The best is yet to come.



## Cancer

June 21 - July 20

It really is now time for you to dream a bigger dream than you've been dreaming. Your goals and aspirations to lead a larger life have recently felt harder or out of reach. In part, you've had to shed some of your self-sabotaging beliefs and work on your confidence. Keep moving towards the path that continues to call you. Living a life of meaning and purpose and committing to the path is what you need to do now. Make a wish and believe.



## Scorpio

October 21 - November 20

The most important task for you now is to commit to joy. This might be having more fun doing what you enjoy doing. It might be deciding to take a new relationship to the next level or realizing that a fun and flirty experience won't go the distance. You're going to see all that you haven't been able to see clearly with a whole lot more clarity. As such, choices need to be made. Be realistic yet hopeful.



## Pisces

February 21 - March 20

This week, start evaluating what is important to you. This could be your priorities, attitude to fun, joy, and happiness. It could also be an issue with a romantic situation or children. Define what your line is. What are you willing to compromise on, and what are you not? This isn't really your natural method of operation. That said, boundaries are the key to the happiness you want. Honor them now, and the blessings will come shortly!

## Building energy for change



Cosmic Catalogue  
By Cassandra Tyndall

It's safe to say that the New Year period is over. It's been a rather arduous start to 2025. While the calendar tells us we are close to the third month, the planets are still very much embedded in their previous cycles.

At first glance, this is frustrating and not very conducive to progress and productivity. When you look deeper into the energetics of things, there is a method in the madness.

You see, the sooner you fall behind, the longer it takes to catch up. Right now, planets are hovering in positions where they are garnering energy to shift and shake things up. Then are other planets who are entering territory they've yet to conquer.

To say the energy is palpable is an understatement. To say that we are on the cusp of significant and unprecedented change would be to state the obvious. No doubt, you're probably feeling weary but also curious about what could be.

This week, an extended exhale is required. An exhale of relief, but not complacency. Appreciate how far you've come, but know there is so much further to go. You haven't come this far to come this far.

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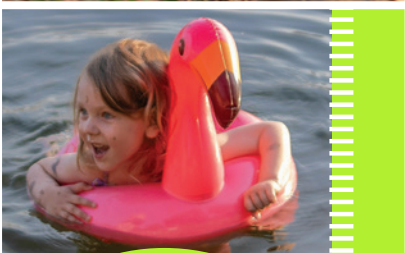
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# Summer Camp 2025

■ Your Guide to Summer Camps 2025

■ Discover Exciting Programs for Kids of All Ages

■ Find the Perfect Camp for Your Child!





Courtesy Billings Farm & Museum

## Billings Farm & Museum opens registration for summer camps

WOODSTOCK — Billings Farm & Museum invites young explorers to experience the excitement of farm life through its immersive summer day camps. These camps, designed for children ages 6-11, provide hands-on experiences in animal care, gardening, and food systems, offering an engaging way to learn about Vermont’s agricultural heritage.

Billings Bookworms Camp (Ages 6-8) is a half-day program for young farm enthusiasts who love storytelling and hands-on exploration. Campers will connect stories about farming, nature, and animals to interactive activities, including caring for chickens, goats, sheep, and cows. Daily themes introduce gardening, farm animals, and creative projects like exploring tractors and the Farmstead Gardens. Sessions run June 23-27 and July 21-25

from 9 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Junior Farmer Camp (Ages 8-11) offers a full-day immersive experience where campers will take on the role of a farmer, caring for cows, chickens, sheep, and goats while learning the daily responsibilities of farm life. Activities include egg collection, calf care, gardening, and creative projects such as tie-dyeing with plant-based dyes and weaving potholders. Campers will also participate in a pizza-making party featuring fresh ingredients from the farm. Sessions run July 7-11, July 14-18, July 28-Aug. 1, and Aug. 4-8 from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

For more details and registration, visit: [billingsfarm.org/billings-bookworms](http://billingsfarm.org/billings-bookworms) or [billingsfarm.org/junior-farmer-camp](http://billingsfarm.org/junior-farmer-camp).

**Weekday Sessions:**

- BEARS** (ages 7-8): June 23-27
- BOBCATS** (ages 9-11): June 30-July 11 **FULL!**
- WOLVES** (ages 12-16): July 21-Aug 1 **FULL!**

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[theaterinthewoodsvt.org](http://theaterinthewoodsvt.org) NOW AT 692 VERMONT RT. 140, TINMOUTH!

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# Theater in the Woods camp brings creativity to nature

TINMOUTH — Deep in the forests of Vermont, young performers craft their own original plays—not on a stage, but among the trees. Theater in the Woods camp offers a unique summer experience where children ages 7-16 collaborate to write, rehearse, and perform plays in an immersive natural setting.

Since its founding in 2016, Theater in the Woods Vermont Co. has welcomed children of all backgrounds, encouraging creativity and confidence whether or not they consider themselves “theater people.” Campers engage with the natural world, guided by trained counselors who foster a spirit of collaboration and inclusivity. The experience builds friendships, personal growth, and a deeper connection to nature—all while creating live theater in an unforgettable outdoor environment.

“The entire environment at Theater in the Woods is like no other,” one camper shared. “I was able to collaborate with others in a way I didn’t think possible. I was able to harness my inner actress, artist, musician, student, and friend.” Another camper echoed the sentiment, saying, “Two weeks isn’t long enough. Camp should be longer.”

This year, Theater in the Woods moves to a new location in Tinmouth, offering expanded opportunities in a setting that features woods, water, and a large barn for indoor activities. Hosted by one of the organization’s founders, Rainbow Squier, the new space will allow for year-round programming, including adult workshops and seasonal productions in the fall and spring.

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



Courtesy Theater in the Woods Vermont

Young performers at Theater in the Woods camp in Tinmouth, Vermont, collaborate to create original plays in a unique natural setting. The camp fosters creativity, confidence, and a deeper connection to nature for children ages 7-16.



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### SUMMER 2025

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June 8-9	Smirking Overnight	Age 6-12
June 15-20	All Levels Circus Camp	Age 8-16
June 22-July 4	All Levels Circus Camp	Age 8-16
July 6-18	Intermediate Camp	Age 12-18
July 6-August 9	Road Show	Age 12-18
July 20-August 8	Advanced Camp	Age 12-18

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# When is the right time to look into summer camp?

Summer camp provides children with weeks of entertainment, camaraderie, and opportunities to learn and grow. It also offers a welcome respite for parents and other caregivers from having to provide recreation for kids during summer vacation, especially if those kids will be attending a sleepaway camp.

Many children are emotionally ready to attend camp between ages 8 and 10, but many day camps provide services for as young as 4. Some children need a little more time to mature. Parents may think they have plenty of time to investigate camps. Chances are, if the weather has already warmed and summer vacation is on the horizon, it's already too late to get kids into most summer camps.

According to HealthyChildren.org, a division of the American Academy of Pediatrics, it is important to start researching summer camps as soon as possible. Many start booking as early as January of the current term year.

Furthermore, popular programs fill up quite fast. Even though summer weather may be furthest from one's mind in the middle of winter, this is the time when summer camp decisions must be made.

Start by asking for recommendations from others. This approach is difficult because many people are very protective of their camp choices, especially if the programs are particularly popular. They may not be inclined to give up the secrets to their favorites, especially if that means kids will have to compete for limited spots. Parents also should conduct an internet search of camps in the area and look at online reviews and ratings.

Find out if the American Camp Association accredits the camp. This will not guarantee a risk-free environment, but ACA accreditation is a better bet for providing a safe and nurturing camp.

Price also may be a factor in the camp decision. Camps are not all priced the same, so some math may be required to determine the best value. Location also can be a consideration. Having to drive a long distance away for camp can be a deterrent to some people.

Rest assured that families who are a little late to the game may be able to find summer camp accommodations. But they may have to make some concessions.

At the neighboring Killington Parks and Recreation, summer camp plans are beginning to take shape. Registration opens on Wednesday, March 5, for Killington residents, second homeowners, and KPAA business members. Registration for non-Killington residents will open on Monday, March 10.

## Slots are filling up fast

Although the calendar may show February, summer camp availability is already narrowing. Case in point: there is already a waitlist for summer day camps at Rutland Recreation and Parks.

"Our summer day camps are a very popular offering, and we consistently reach capacity each year, taking up to 150 kids. Given the high demand, this has become a predictable trend," said Rutland Rec's Brittany Malmgren.

Malmgren mentioned the Rutland area does have additional summer offerings for families, including programs through the Boys & Girls Club, Tapestry, and other surrounding recreation departments. And there are still openings with the Rutland Rec's Camp Maverick (ages 12-14.)

At the neighboring Killington Parks and Recreation, summer camp plans are beginning to take shape. Registration opens on Wednesday, March 5, for Killington residents, second homeowners, and Killington Pico Area Association (KPAA) business members.

Registration for non-Killington residents will open on Monday, March 10. Once registration fills up, parents may register their child(ren) for the waitlist, and the Killington Parks and Recreation Center will reach out if a spot becomes available.

Killington plans for two summer camp options for campers ages 4-13. Camp Loads of Fun will be for campers ages 4-10, featuring swim lessons, free swim, arts and crafts, field games, field trips, and participation in the Sherburne Memorial Library's summer reading program.

The Green Mountain Explorers will be for campers ages 10-13 and include excursions outside the Johnson Recreation Center and activities at the center.

While summer camp can be an engaging and fun experience for children, it's also essential to research options and register soon while spaces are still available.

*For additional information on Killington Parks and Recreation summer camps, visit: [killingtonrec.com](http://killingtonrec.com).*



Courtesy Metro Creative

*If you are planning on summer camp for your child, the time to start planning is now.*

# Artistree summer camp registration opens on March 1

SOUTH POMFRET — Artistree Community Arts Center is gearing up for another exciting season of summer camps, running from June 23 through Aug. 22. With a wide range of morning, afternoon, and full-day camp options, Artistree provides creative experiences for children of all ages.

Registration opens on Saturday, March 1, at 9 a.m., and camps tend to fill quickly. Families are encouraged to log in or create an account in advance at [artistreevt.org](http://artistreevt.org) to ensure a smooth registration process. A non-refundable deposit is required upon registration. Refunds, minus the deposit, are available up to 14 days before the camp start date.

For added flexibility, Artistree offers a payment plan that allows families to pay the remaining balance in three equal installments, due on April 1, May 1, and June 1. Payments are automatically charged to the card on file, with no additional fees for selecting the plan.

For full camp details, FAQs, and registration, visit: [artistreevt.org/summer-camps](http://artistreevt.org/summer-camps).



Submitted

Artistree Community Arts Center's summer camps run June 23-Aug. 22, with registration opening March 1.



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## SUMMER FARM CAMPS

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## Ice ice maybe: Are we due for a major ice storm?

The Northeast has experienced significant ice storms throughout history, and we may be due for another one. Though we see icing in many winter storms, including recent ones, major ice storms cause widespread damage to forests and infrastructure and occur in the Northeast every 15 to 25 years. Our most recent one was in 2008.

However, warming climate trends are increasing the frequency and intensity of ice storms and shifting the risk to different regions and seasons.

Ice storms occur when rain falls during subfreezing temperatures, freezing to surfaces on contact.

Ice accumulation can damage trees by causing branches to bend, crack, or break. The severity of the damage depends on the amount of ice, wind, and the storm's duration. Ice accumulation between 1/4 to 1/2 inch can cause small branches and weak limbs to break, while accumulations of 1/2 to 1 inch can cause larger branches to break.

Most tree damage from ice storms occurs in hardwood stands. Softwood trees are more adept at bending under the weight of the ice, while hardwood branches break more easily. In the Northeast, birch and maple sustain the most damage.

Damaged trees are susceptible to rot, which travels slowly from the damaged branches into the tree's stem. Once injured, trees also become more susceptible to secondary stressors such as insects and disease pathogens. Though physical damage is immediately apparent, these other stressors can take decades to kill the tree. A study at the Hubbard Brook Experimental Forest found changes in forest structure following an ice storm. Researchers found almost five times the number of branches fell to the ground than in a typical year. They also measured an increase in canopy openness, which let two to three times more light into

the forest.

The last major ice storm occurred in 2008 and affected southern New Hampshire, northern Massachusetts, Vermont, and parts of Maine. The storm resulted in ice accumulation up to 1 inch, damaging hundreds of thousands of acres of forests and causing power outages to over a

million homes and businesses. Ten years earlier, it was one of New England's most devastating ice storms; the 1998 ice storm caused an estimated \$1 billion in damage across the region, affecting over 17 million acres. Ice accumulation in most areas was over 1 1/2 inches, which caused widespread tree damage and massive power outages that lasted for weeks.

The 1998 storm had a significant impact on forests. Beech trees already weakened by beech bark disease were hit particularly hard. Sugarbushes in northern New York, where between 2 and 4 inches of ice had accumulated, suffered damage to trees and tubing lines. This decreased the output of maple syrup production the following year. According to the North American Maple Project, sugarbushes in Vermont were less severely affected than non-sugarbush maple stands with much smaller trees. Lower-elevation sugarbushes with larger but fewer sugar maple stems were also more resistant to the storm.

The storms of 1998 and 2008 were notable but not unusual. Early records show severe tree damage across New England from ice storms as early as 1886. The impact on infrastructure at this time was limited, however, due to sparse development and a lack of modern utilities. Significant regional damage also occurred in New England in 1921, with reports of road and rail disruptions. Only eight years later, in 1929, another storm hit Massachusetts, Vermont, and

Outside Story → 54



### The Outside Story

By Jen Weimer



## Neighborhood concept of the '50s and '60s

Young people in Rutland City experienced a true a "neighborhood concept" as they were growing up back in the '50s and '60s.

There were neighborhood schools, playgrounds, tennis courts and skating rinks.

Back in that time period, most families had only one car. For that reason children walked to school and to activities with their friends. Parents were fine with that since safety concerns found in today's world did not exist back then.

In Rutland City elementary schools were spread throughout the city. There was Dana School on East Center Street, Kingsley School on Pine Street, Longfellow on Church Street, and the following schools that were named for the street on which they were located, namely: Park, Lincoln, and Watkins. There were also three Catholic elementary schools: Christ the King, St. Peter and Immaculate Heart of Mary. Those three schools were spread throughout the city but were within walking distance for most students.

As we walked to school the number of students increased as we passed classmates' homes and they joined the group. We always arrived at school on time which meant we were probably told not to "dilly-dally" so we didn't!

When school was out for the summer children could go to neighborhood playgrounds that offered a variety of fun options. In 1950 there were actually 10 playgrounds in the city: Dana School, Deer Street, Rutland High School field, Kingsley School, Meadow Street, Meldon School, Park Street School, Rotary, Stratton Road and Watkins School.

What did kids do at the playgrounds? Their days were filled with arts and crafts, dog and cat shows, watermelon eating contests, costume parades, bike parades, doll

shows, scavenger hunts and many other fun events. At the end of the season a gigantic field day was held and the playgrounds competed against one another in various games.

For children who wanted to play tennis in the '50s and '60s there were two courts: one at the Rotary Field on North Street and another at White's playground at the end of

Avenue B. Children could take lessons as well as play on their own. Back in the middle '50s the Rotary Club donated six racquets for the children to use. By 1956, plans were being made for two tennis courts at White's playground. They were a reality by 1960. The Recreation Dept. offered free tennis lessons for children at both courts. Around 60 youngsters took advantage of them each summer. By the '70s the Meadow Street playground had tennis courts and children in that neighborhood could enjoy them.

Winter also had a role in neighborhood connections over the years. When I was a child back in the '50s the only skating rink was at Rotary on North Street. Other sections of Rutland wanted rinks closer to home. By the time I was in high school in the '60s there was a rink and warming hut at White's playground. It was near my cousin Betty's, home so my parents would bring me there and we would walk to the rink. Other neighborhood teens would join us for a fun time on the ice. By the '70s Meadow Street Park also had a skating rink and kids from that section of Rutland had a place to meet their friends and have fun skating. Giorgetti Park on Oak St. Extension also opened a rink in the late '70s extending the neighborhood concept to four parts of the city.

Keep in mind that "back in the day" kids walked to a lot more places than they do today. My walk to Christ the King School was about a mile. My walk to MSJ was close to 2 miles... but it was only uphill one way!



### Looking Back

By Mary Ellen Shaw





## A gift horse

My son made a claim recently that I disputed. It was something outrageous about how much money athletes were making playing basketball outside of the NBA. He cited a social media-driven league I had no knowledge of and then boasted that most of the players were making millions of dollars. When I questioned his primary sources for this information, he scoffed, suggesting I should just believe him at his word.

There's not a week that goes by where I don't say to my son, "You've got a supercomputer in your pocket. Use it!" And so, in this instance, I insisted he look up the league and find any official reference to how much the players were making. This, apparently, was too much trouble.

With the advent of AI models that can comprise the entirety of the internet, there's really no reason not to know everything. It took me minutes to substantiate what I had previously surmised, and when I went to my son with the information, he scoffed at me again. (There are only so many times you can pull the "I told you so" card with your kid before they simply stop listening.)

My smartphone is a great communication tool, but my true love for the device comes from the database of information that it gives me access to. I was trying to cobble together some old stereo equipment recently, and when the turntable would not function with the receiver, I simply asked ChatGPT what I needed to do to make it work. Within seconds, I had my answer.

Before the internet, that would have taken immense reading and research, and even then, you weren't guaranteed the correct answer. You weren't even assured success with a standard Google search since you had to rely on someone prior to you having the same unique issue. AI, however, can figure out complex issues even when there are no exact source materials based on that specific question.

But of all the functionality my smartphone offers, it's the calendar app I deem most valuable. Between my work and personal life, I have an immense number of activities and deadlines to meet. Without constant reminders and updates from my calendar, I would structurally fall apart.

This past week, my alerts for Valentine's Day began to go off. The first alert went off five days prior just to get me thinking about it. The second alert went off three days prior to help me remember that my window to react was closing. And the final alert went off the day before to remind me, "This is your last shot."

When the final alert went off, I was sitting

at my desk at work, engrossed in a project. I knew when the alert sounded that I had to react immediately, so I stood up, determined to head to the florist for an appropriate gift. As I approached the door to leave, a young man was entering, holding, ironically, a large bouquet of flowers. He asked me if I could sign for them, which I did. And then, I dutifully carried them to my coworker's office.

I opened my coworker's door and, with a big smile on my face, proclaimed, "Someone has a secret admirer!" Her reaction, however, was completely unexpected. She hesitantly reached into the bouquet, pulled out the card, read it, and then tossed it into the garbage. "Throw them away," she demanded.

I then learned she had an ex-boyfriend who was consistently harassing her. She had been spurning his advances since their breakup and was visibly shaken by his latest attempt.

I looked at the bouquet and, given the size and girth, assessed it to be a \$175 purchase. I then looked at my coworker and, with a hint of shame, offered to buy the flowers from her. She rebuked my offer and insisted that I just take them. I told her I couldn't do that; I had to reciprocate in some fashion. We finally came to an agreement that I would buy her breakfast from McDonald's the following day, which I dutifully did for less than \$10.

Needless to say, my wife awoke to a magnificent bouquet on Valentine's Day. She was thrilled but taken aback. "You usually give me a single rose," she stated while staring in awe at the abundance of flowers. "Sit down," I insisted. "I've got an interesting story to tell you."

My coworker's story, unfortunately, sounded a bit like this week's film, "It Ends with Us," where a once-promising relationship turns dark and distressing.

Blake Lively stars as a young woman who falls into a relationship with a seemingly perfect man. But when situations arise and mysteries are uncovered, that ideal man turns into the perfect enemy.

The story of a controlling partner is not a new one. Unfortunately, "It Ends with Us" does nothing to make the topic intriguing or dramatic. Instead, it simply hovers around odd and pathetic.

Don't bother with this one unless the current drama between the central star and director is something you're interested in.

An overbearing "C-" for "It Ends with Us" is now available to stream on Amazon Prime Video.

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



**The Movie Diary**  
By Dom Cioffi



## Braaping through the woods

It's completely rare, but we left Killington this past week. We went skiing—at another resort. We always joke that we all get this Beast365 with the Ikon attached, but rarely venture out of town to use it until our west coast vacation. I mean, there are several iKon resorts in Vermont, but you seldom hear of Killington folk making the journey.

So, while we did take a few runs at Stratton, it took us about 90 minutes to ride every open lift once. But it was just a pitstop on our much-anticipated adventure. We really went south to ride the V.A.S.T. trails maintained by the Shaftsbury SnowPilots & Woodford SnowBusters. Because snowmobiling is awesome!

*I love snowmobiling.* You've got two skis up front that carve like a dream. I ride dual carbide skis, so there are literally two metal edges grabbing the snow on each one. They carve better than any race ski I've ever been on; I don't care who tuned them. The carbides dig in, and you ride those rails around the turn with no hint of doing anything but rolling over. Those skis are not going to give.

Then, you can throw the tail around as hard or smoothly as you want to. You can whip that track around or dig it in deep for a sweet carve—just like a mountain bike tire but a whole lot wider. It depends on the texture of the snow and the tightness of the turn, but man, is it super fun when you get *braaping* through a tight section flying up a

mountain. That's my favorite—something we thankfully have plenty of in the Tweed River Snow Travelers jurisdiction (Pittsfield).

I ride snowmobiles more vigorously than I ski, which is funny. I like to be silly on my skis, but something about snowmobiles gets my fires burning. Maybe it's the sweet smell of two-stroke revving my own systems. Perhaps I was really supposed to be a snowmobiler who grew up skiing. It just feels right, and I am serious about business when I get that sled moving. We ride. And we ride hard.

I'm pretty sure I go faster in the turns than on the straightaways, but never faster than the 35 mph speed limit. I love manipulating that machine, throwing my body left and right to make the movements and keeping my thumb on the throttle. It's like skiing—without the chairlift breaks. Like single-track mountain biking, without having to work hard on the uphill. Like motorcycles, because it's got a motor and we can ride for 50-200 miles a day. But with snow!

My favorite part of snowmobiling is the adventure. We ride primarily at night because, well, you know, lift-served skiing and work get in the way. And you can see the light of any oncoming sleds through the woods. Let's be honest, a lot of those trails are skinny fun but not quite two sleds wide. You can get to the deepest woods

Living the Dream → 54



**Living the Dream**  
By Merisa Sherman



By Merisa J. Sherman

The BF checked the V.A.S.T. map during a break at the top of Glastenbury Mountain Trail, maintained by the Shaftsbury SnowPilots.



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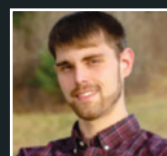
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← **Supporting landlords:**  
from page 15

There seems to be a great push to get the tenants housed, and then the housing agency, authority, or service provider disappears, leaving a landlord with few tools in the toolbox when things go bad.

That's when Vermont Legal Aid jumps in, kicking the can down the road in an unbridled effort to delay the inevitable.

State-administered programs aren't designed to ensure that tenancies go well; they are designed to soften the blow when they go bad. This situation is untenable, and anyone with an interest in the current housing crisis must confront the fact that the most valuable partner in providing housing in Vermont is being ignored. The result is reduced housing availability for those who need it the most.

If the State of Vermont expects landlords to provide low-barrier housing to Vermonters in need, the state will get busy supporting landlords upfront and throughout the relationship,

not just at the end with a parting gift to make amends for a damaged apartment.

To be clear, the most valuable partner in Vermont's rental housing arena is the mom-and-pop landlord, who owns an average of 1.7 housing units.

Mom-and-pop landlords provide 80% of the rental housing in Vermont. Mom-and-pop landlords receive 20% of the funds that the State of Vermont invests in housing. Mom-and-pop landlords face rising costs, including property taxes, insurance, utilities, and maintenance. As a result, half of the landlords report losses on their investments.

Again, one of the strongest strategies for housing Vermonters would be to support the landlords providing the housing throughout the relationship, not when the rental relationship is in court.

*Stephen Box is a "Houser" in Rutland County: VermontHouser@gmail.com.*

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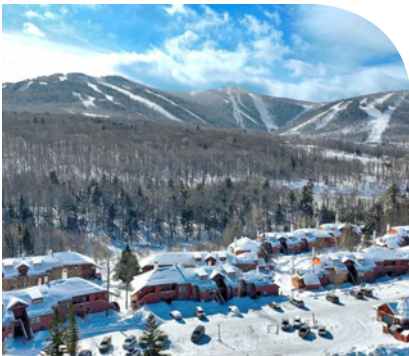
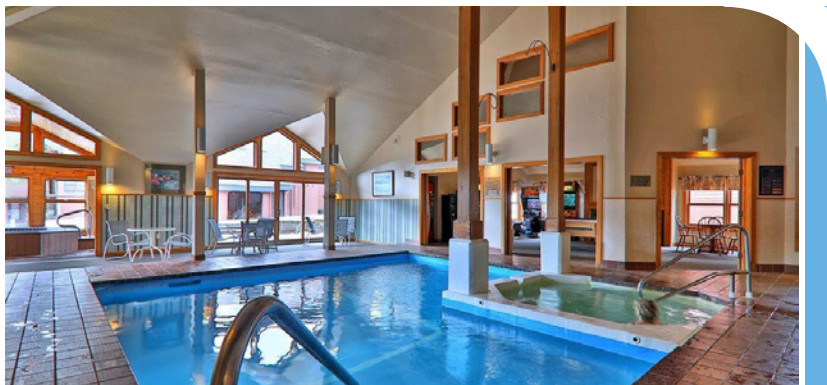
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## ← Living the Dream: from page 49

in the middle of nowhere. We've been so far deep in the woods that we can't see any light pollution at all—nothing. It's just the two of us on the top of a mountain like BloodRoot or Glastenbury.

I mean, it is kind of freaky being so far deep in the backcountry that if I were skiing, it would have taken me two or three days to get there. But on a sled, it only takes 2-3 hours, and you're braaping around the entire time. But you still see so much! All the nooks and crannies between the rolling hills that you cannot access with a car or truck—so much of Vermont is hidden in the mountains. And don't get me started on all the skiable terrain that we pass while roaring around.

I never imagined something with a motor could get me closer to nature, to these beautiful green mountains we call home. But it just feels right, rolling over and around them. Being truly *in* them. There's something special to the character of Vermont mountains that they work so perfectly well for snowmobile exploring. It's beyond anything I could ever have imagined Vermont could be.

Thank you so much to the 128 clubs that maintain the over 5,000 V.A.S.T. trails throughout the state. And thank you to our landowners who generously allow us to maintain trails on their properties. This sport is amazing. We haven't ridden every mile yet, but we still have plenty of time! Remember, if you haven't seen Vermont from the seat of a snowmobile, you haven't seen Vermont!

*Merisa Sherman is a long-time Killington resident, global real estate advisor, town official, and Coach PomPom. She can be reached at Merisa.Sherman@SothebysRealty.com*

## ← Outside story: from page 48

New Hampshire particularly hard, with widespread power outages.

In 1951, a multi-region ice storm affected New England, parts of the Midwest, and Canada. This storm heavily impacted forests and rural power, which led to the development of proactive tree-trimming and vegetation management programs. In 1973, another major storm affected New England and upstate New York, causing significant tree and infrastructure damage, especially in rural areas. These six major storms that occurred since 1921 happened every 17 years on average.

The recurrence of ice storms in the Northeast reinforces the need for investment in resilient power grids and forests. Forests can be made more resilient to ice storms by maintaining a healthy stand structure with varying tree ages and sizes.

Cultivating and selecting single-stem-well-formed trees with larger crowns and

stronger stems produce trees that are less likely to suffer catastrophic crown loss. Homeowners can also prepare for ice storms by pruning weak or poorly attached branches, removing deadwood, and ensuring trees have a strong central leader.

If limbs are above power lines, consult your local power company or a professional arborist for removal. Consider inspecting trees for potential hazards now, before the next ice storm hits. By adequately preparing, we can give our trees and forests the best chance of good health in the coming spring.

*Jen Weimer is a forest health expert, photographer, and writer living in the forests of New Hampshire. Illustration by Adelaide Murphy Tyrol. The Outside Story is assigned and edited by Northern Woodlands magazine and sponsored by the Wellborn Ecology Fund of New Hampshire Charitable Foundation: nhcf.org.*

## ← Oligarchs: from page 16

are entitled to.

In pre-revolutionary America, the ruling class governed through the "divine right of kings," the belief that the King of England was an agent of God, not to be questioned. In modern times, the oligarchs believe that as the masters of technology and as "high-IQ individuals," it is their absolute right to rule. In other words, they are our modern-day kings.

And it is not just power. It's incredible wealth. Today, Musk, Bezos, and Zuckerberg have a combined worth of \$903 billion, more than the bottom half of American society — 170 million people. Since Trump was elected, unbelievably, their wealth has soared. Elon Musk has become \$138 billion richer, Zuckerberg has become \$49 billion richer, and Bezos has become \$28 billion richer. Add it all up: the three wealthiest men in America have become \$215 billion richer since Election Day.

Meanwhile, while the very rich become much richer, 60% of Americans live paycheck to paycheck, 85 million are uninsured or under-insured, 25% of seniors are trying to survive on

Their nightmare is that we will not allow ourselves to be divided up by race, religion, sexual orientation, or country of origin and will, together, have the courage to take them on.

\$15,000 or less, 800,000 are homeless, and we have the highest rate of childhood poverty of almost any major country on earth.

Do you think the oligarchs give a damn about these people? Trust me, they don't. Musk's decision to

dismember USAID means that thousands of the poorest people around the world will go hungry or die of preventable diseases.

But it's not just abroad. Here in the United States, they'll soon be going after the health-care, nutrition, housing, and educational programs that protect the most vulnerable people in our country — so that Congress can provide huge tax breaks for them and their fellow billionaires. As modern-day kings, who believe they have the absolute right to rule, they will sacrifice, without hesitation, the well-being of working people to protect their privilege.

Further, they will use the enormous media operations they own to deflect attention away from the impact of their policies while they "entertain us to death." They will lie, lie, and lie. They will continue to spend huge amounts of money to buy politicians in both major political parties.

They are waging a war on the working class of this country, and it is a war they are intent on winning.

I am not going to kid you — the problems this country faces right now are serious, and they are not easy to solve. The economy is rigged, our campaign finance system is corrupt, and we are struggling to control climate change — among other issues.

But this is what I do know: The worst fear of the ruling class in this country is that Americans — Black, White, Latino, urban and rural, gay and straight — come together to demand a government that represents all of us, not just the wealthy few.

Their nightmare is that we will not allow ourselves to be divided up by race, religion, sexual orientation, or country of origin and will, together, have the courage to take them on.

Will it be easy? Of course not.

The ruling class of this country will constantly remind you that they have all the power. They control the government; they own the media. "You want to take us on? Good luck," they will say. "There's nothing you can do about it."

But our job today is to not forget the great struggles and sacrifices that millions of people have waged over the centuries to create a more democratic, just, and humane society:

- Overthrowing the King of England to create a new nation and self-rule. Impossible.
- Establishing universal suffrage. Impossible.
- Ending slavery and segregation. Impossible.
- Granting workers the right to form unions and ending child labor. Impossible.
- Giving women control over their own bodies. Impossible.
- Passing legislation to establish Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid, a minimum wage, clean air and water standards. Impossible.

In these difficult times, despair is not an option. We've got to fight back in every way we can. We have to get involved in the political process — run for office, connect with our local, state, and federal legislators, and donate to candidates who will fight for the working class of this country. We have to create new channels for communication and information sharing. We have to volunteer not just politically, but to build community locally.

Whatever we can do is what we must do.

Needless to say, I intend to do my part — both inside the Beltway and traveling throughout the country — to stand up for the working class of this country. I hope you will join me in that struggle in the days, weeks, and months ahead.



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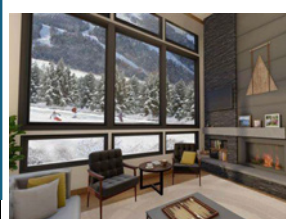


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