



FATHER'S DAY
Don't forget: Sunday, June 15, it's time to celebrate the dads!



POOLS OPEN
Swimming season is here! In Rutland, Northwood Pool opens for the season June 14 and White's Memorial Park Pool opens June 15. In Killington and Woodstock, town rec pools open June 16.

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PITTSFORD VILLAGE FARM TO BREAK GROUND

The community is invited to celebrate on Thursday, June 19.

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EDUCATION FUNDING REFORM WARNINGS

Many are speaking out against hasty ed funding reform, H.454. The bill is poised to raise taxes in Rutland County, decimate schools in Windsor County.

Page 8

White River Valley SU withdraws from the Vermont School Boards Association

Break reveals statewide fault lines in education reform

By Corey McDonald/VTDigger

The White River Valley Supervisory Union last week moved to withdraw its membership from the Vermont School Boards Association, highlighting deep divisions among the state's school districts and supervisory unions over the trajectory of education reform.

The White River Valley board's decision marks an overt break in unity with a prominent advocacy organization at a critical time for public education in Vermont.

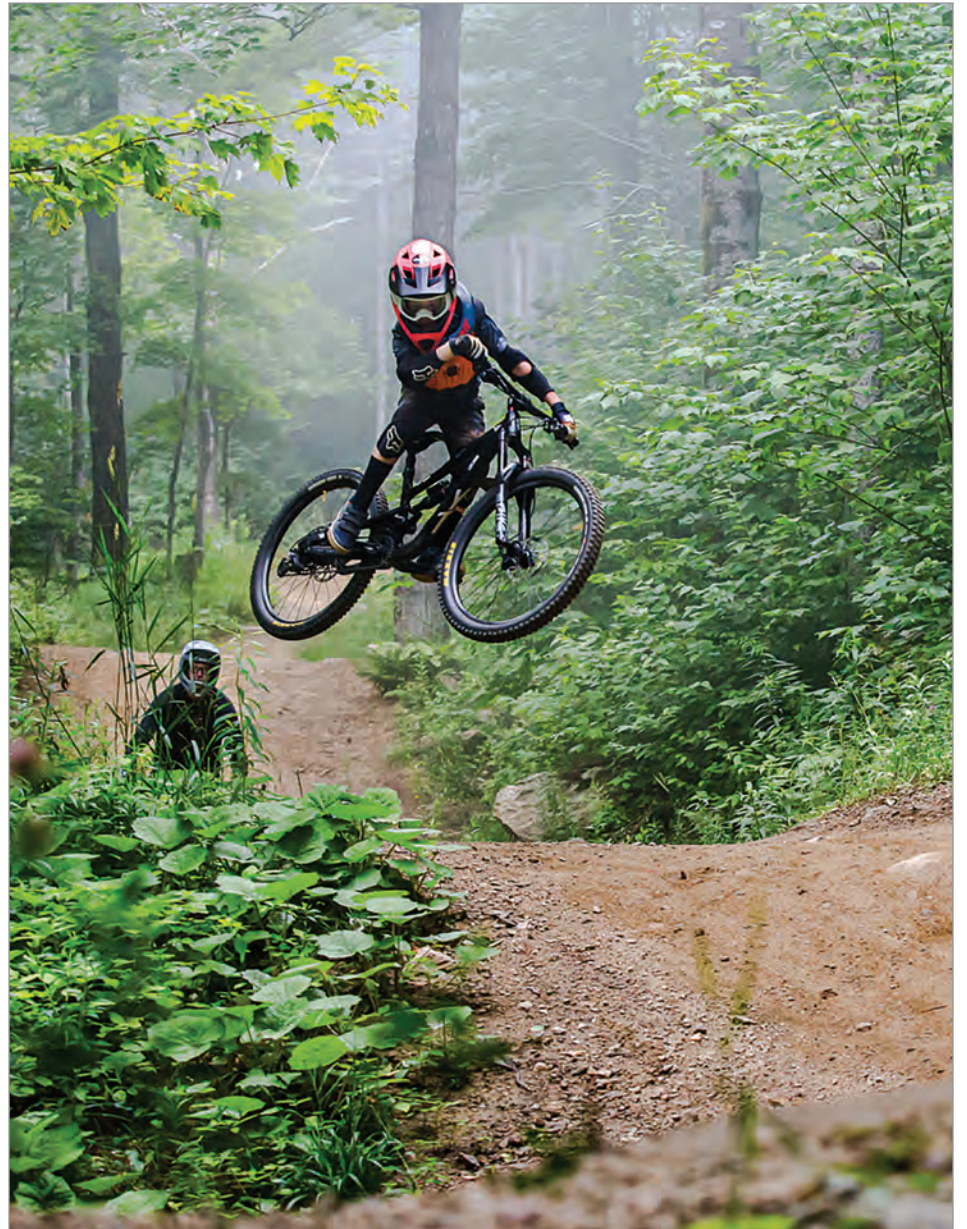
State lawmakers are working overtime to strike a deal on legislation that would lay the groundwork for major systemic reform in the coming months. House and Senate members have endured weeks of strained negotiations, and leaders in both chambers, along with Gov. Phil Scott, said they were committed to working out a compromise on the bill, H.454, by June 16, when lawmakers are scheduled to reconvene for a vote.

The Vermont School Board Association collects annual membership dues from every school district in the state and lobbies on behalf of its members.

The White River Valley Supervisory Union, a collection of eight schools, with six districts that serves students from 10 central Vermont towns, was paying the association roughly \$10,000 a year in membership dues, according to Kathy Galluzzo, chair

Leaders in both chambers, along with Gov. Phil Scott, said they were committed to working out a compromise on the bill, H.454, by June 16.

SU withdrawal → 7



Courtesy Killington Resort

Killington Bike Park opens mid-week starting Friday

Starting Friday the 13th Killington's bike park will be open every day. Riding will be offered at Snowshed seven days a week and Ramshead on weekends until July 3, when K-1 will also open.

Vermont's ski areas boast growth with 4.16 million skier visits for 2024-25

Vermont's Alpine and cross-country ski areas joined industry partners, supporters, and friends at Ski Vermont's 56th annual meeting at Sugarbush Resort, June 4-5, recapping a season of continued growth despite challenges.

Vermont's Alpine ski areas reported 4.16 million skier visits for the 2024-25 season, an increase of 1.1% over the previous year and 6.2% over the 10-year average. These totals put Vermont 0.6% ahead of the New England region's 0.4% growth, and just 0.6% behind the national average visitation increase of 1.7%.

With strong visitation and continued year over year growth, Vermont remains the top ski state in the East and fourth largest in the nation, measured by skier visits, a key performance indicator for the snow sports industry.

The state's ski areas averaged 117 operating days this season, slightly lower than the 10-year average of 123 days. Average snowfall of 218 inches was a 19-inch increase over last year, and 35 inches above the 10-year average.

"The growth in visitation numbers reflects the commitment Vermont's ski areas have to providing the best experience and best possible snow for visitors," said Ski Vermont president Molly Mahar. "Ski areas are committed to investing in resilience for their communities, with capital dollars going toward efficiency and snowmaking projects as well as expanded programming

Skier visits → 6

Chittenden landowner held in contempt in legal battle with Mountain Top Resort

The Gerlachs ordered to pay resort's attorney fees, prohibited from taking down the resort's trail closure ropes

By Greta Solsaa/VTDigger

Chittenden property owner John Gerlach has been found in contempt in the latest development of an ongoing legal battle with Mountain Top Resort. The May 22 decision came after Gerlach removed a rope barring access to one of the resort's cross-country trails.

The dispute began last summer when Gerlach and his wife, Debra, relocated two of the resort's trails that ran through their private land.

The Gerlachs purchased the property with an easement that allowed Mountain Top Resort to operate ski trails within

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Courtesy VTSU

Students in the School of Resort Management gathered inside K-1 Lodge at Killington resort to celebrate 16 graduates, Saturday.

Tourism workforce gets skilled leaders from VTSU’s Resort & Hospitality Management Program

Unique partnership with Killington Resort celebrated

As Vermonters and visitors alike hit the slopes of Killington this winter they likely crossed paths with a VTSU Resort & Hospitality Management student working on the mountain and gaining valuable hands-on experience to support their career aspirations.

This weekend, 16 students graduated from the program. Here’s a snapshot of their impressive accomplishments over the past three years:

- 2,764 days skied
- 3.47 average GPA
- 53 jobs held by students throughout their three years
- 32,719 total hours worked
- \$610,810 total wages earned
- \$52,045 average wages earned per student over their three years

Unique among other academic programs offered at VTSU, the Resort & Hospitality Management Program is an accelerated, three-year program that is wholly embedded within Killington Resort. With an average of 15-20 students each year, the program is woven into the Killington community, where VTSU has a dedicated learning site and an on-site residence hall for students in the program. Students learn from industry experts as they take course loads that reflect the multitude of diverse knowledge needs across the industry, can ski and bike for free at Killington, and earn a paycheck in addition to academic credit while they gain operations experience at the resort.

Mike Solimano, president and CEO of Killington Resort, stated, “It’s been a great program for us for over 20 years. So many of our team have come through that program so we look at it as a feeder program to our management team. In fact, seven graduates are staying on with us for careers here after graduation this weekend, bringing the total number of Resort & Hospitality Management program alumni currently working at Killington to 48. I think the other piece that’s

really important is students are really getting hands-on experience. A lot of programs are theoretical. Not this one. The dorm is right down the road and they are fully immersed at Killington and in the Killington culture.”

VTSU President David Bergh added, “VTSU is incredibly proud of the partnership we’ve built over the years with Killington and of the many incredible graduates of this program. This program is a great example of the type of experiential learning students have come to expect from Vermont State and illustrates a creative way we’re addressing the needs of employers across Vermont’s top economic driver: our tourism industry. Students are coming to Vermont for this program, they’re getting incredible experience, and they’re staying to live and work here because they’re able to get a great paying job that they love, and they’re able to work where they play. It’s a win-win-win.”

Kristel Killary, assistant professor and coordinator of the Resort & Hospitality Management Program, noted, “these students are immersed year-round in all aspects of resort operations. They’re running front-end, mountain, and back-end operations while connecting with industry leaders, learning how to adapt to industry changes, and doing it all in the heart of Vermont’s green mountains. It’s an incredible opportunity for anyone who loves the outdoors and is interested in a career in Vermont’s booming tourism industry.”

“My favorite thing about this program is that we get hands-on experience,” shared CC Allember, a graduate who is now beginning her career in snowmaking. “If you don’t like to be in a regular classroom or doing the regular school thing, if that’s not your forte, I think this would be an awesome choice for you. It definitely gets you ready for the real world. It’s outdoorsy and hands-on. I’ve spent three years living and breathing at Killington Resort and I absolutely love it.”

For more information, visit: vermontstate.edu/academic-programs/resort-hospitality-management-bs.

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MOUNTAIN TIMES

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Mission Farm accepts National Sacred Landscape Award for Odeon amphitheater

Mission Farm accepted a national recognition at the American Institute of Architects (AIA) Conference in Boston on June 6. Mission Farm was honored for its thoughtful integration of land and spirituality, earning the Sacred Landscape Award for the creation of the “Odeon,” a stone amphitheater designed as a community gathering space in Killington.

The Sacred Landscape category, part of the Faith & Form International Awards Program for Religious Architecture & Art, recognizes outdoor environments—either new or restored—that invite prayer, meditation, or meaningful community engagement. The program is co-sponsored by Partners for Sacred Places and Interfaith Design, an American Institute of Architects (AIA) knowledge community.

The vision for the Odeon emerged from conversations at Mission Farm focused on building connection, reducing isolation, and deepening the community’s relationship with the land. In 2022, the organization commissioned Vermont stone artisan Dan Snow to bring that vision to life.

“The community members wished to craft an assemblage of stones into a space that would concentrate the earth’s energy into a light-capturing atmosphere,” said Snow. “Two belief systems would have to intersect and amplify one another to bring the project to successful completion.”

The result is a striking stone amphitheater that flows naturally from the hillside and reflects the spirit of Mission Farm’s stone church. In 2023, the design was further enhanced with the addition of a “sike”—a cyclorama-like structure that completes the circular Odeon.

The AIA jury noted, “The larger stones act

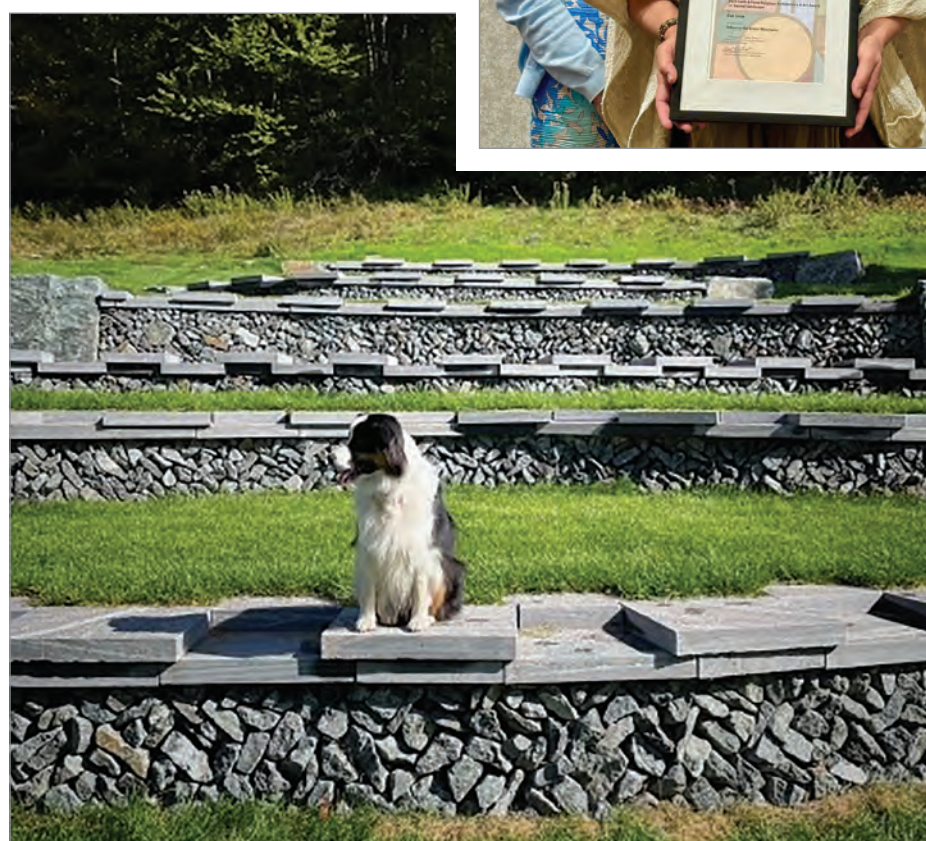
as an extension from the stone church. The level of detail in the placement of the stones makes it seem as if it belongs to the landscape as if it has always been here. Spirituality extends into the landscape.”

Lisa Ransom, executive director of Mission Farm, emphasized the importance of the award. “Recognition of work by the Partners for Sacred Places is a tremendous honor. For the past five years, we have worked towards conservation of the land, building connection with our community, and offering peace and connection with Creation.”

The project was a collaborative effort. Snow was joined by apprentices Jared Flynn and Whitney Brown and supported by local partners, including landscape designer Jack Rossi, excavation specialist Craig Mosher, and stoneworker Scott Baughman.

To celebrate the award and the growing role of the Odeon in the community, Mission Farm will host a community celebration on Sunday, Aug. 24, from 12 -4 p.m. The event will feature live performances, food artisans, blessings from local faith leaders, and family activities.

For more information, visit: missionfarm-vt.org or acredplaces.org.



Submitted

Lisa Ransom, executive director of Mission Farm accepts the award with an AIA representative.



Fact: TIF builds education and municipal funds

The cost of living in Vermont continues to rise, especially in communities with greater affordability challenges but with fewer resources to invest in major infrastructure projects necessary to address those needs. A recent bill that passed in the Vermont Legislature aims to allow communities to leverage the same financing model behind TIF for small-scale housing projects.

While the bill made its way through the legislative process, a common myth kept rising to the surface: the belief that TIF takes money from the state Education Fund and local municipal funds. This is simply untrue. Given the relevance of this issue on both the state level and for Rutland, this week’s article focuses on dispelling that misconception.

Why the myth?

Readers may recall from the April 16, 2025 article, “TIF isn’t a tax on you, here’s what it is,” that when a TIF district is established, the original taxable value (OTV) of properties within the district is frozen. This means that taxes generated from that base value continue to flow, in full, to the state Education Fund and to the municipality’s general fund, as they always have. After new development occurs and property values increase, a significant portion of the new tax revenue (the increment) is allocated to the TIF fund to pay for the infrastructure improvements, while the remainder of the increment is allocated to the education and municipal funds.

The claim that TIF takes money from these funds is more of a misunderstanding of how the new tax revenue is used. In reality, no existing revenue is lost in this process. And the new revenue? It would not exist without the infrastructure improvements that helped bring new development projects online.

In fact, TIF creates new money!

Not only do the TIF projects not cost the

education and municipal funds, they actually add new tax revenue to each. Through the program, 30% of the new state taxes go to the Education Fund and 15% of the

municipal taxes go to the City’s general fund. These monies are in addition to the base value taxes from the properties in the District. And at the conclusion of the TIF District, 100% of the taxes are allocated for their usual purposes.

But for the public investment made possible through TIF, the private development wouldn’t have happened—and neither would the new tax revenue. So, the Education Fund and the City’s coffers are not losing money; they’re gaining new revenue that wouldn’t have otherwise existed.

Cycle of reinvestment

Public improvements lead to private development, which leads to more tax revenue, which leads to even more improvements—and none of it comes at the expense of schools or city services. And all of it creates much needed housing, jobs, and vitality in the City and surrounding areas.

That brings us to a brief update about the current state of TIF in Rutland. On May 30, the City submitted its first project to the Vermont Economic Progress Council (VEPC) for the investment of municipal infrastructure to support the Downtown Hotel + Living Project. This development will generate sufficient new tax revenue to cover the debt service on the public improvements and will generate additional tax revenue for the education and municipal funds—ultimately growing the tax base, providing an important downtown amenity, creating housing, and creating jobs. VEPC review will occur this summer, after which the City of Rutland will have a bond vote to authorize the debt so construction can begin and the project can open its doors in 2027.

For more information, visit: rutlandvt-business.com/tax-increment-financing.



Pittsford Village Farm to break ground June 19, launches capital campaign to complete community hub

Pittsford Village Farm will officially break ground on the renovation of its historic farmhouse on June 19, marking a significant milestone in a multi-year effort to transform the nearly 150-acre site into a regional resource for community connection, early childhood education, and affordable housing.

Located at 42 Elm St., across from Kamuda's, Pittsford Village Farm (PVF) has been a growing fixture in town since forming as a nonprofit organization in 2018. The project focuses on the restoration of the 18th-century farmhouse and the 19th-century barn, which once belonged to the historic Forrest Farm.

Upon completion, the renovated 8,000-square-foot farmhouse will house a ground-floor community center, a 30-child early childhood education center, a locally run café, and two affordable 2-bedroom apartments on the second floor.

Faced with rising construction costs, PVF partnered with Naylor & Breen Builders to divide the project into two phases. Thanks to over \$2.5 million in secured federal, state, and local grants, as well as \$200,000 in in-kind donations of professional expertise, labor, and materials, Phase One is now fully funded and ready to begin. This initial phase will deliver the early childhood center, apartments, café, and critical site improvements, including parking and pedestrian access. It will also prepare the ground floor space for the community center build-out in the next phase.

To complete Phase Two and fully realize the vision of a community center, PVF is continuing its \$1.2 million capital campaign. To date, more than \$800,000 has been raised—roughly 65% of the total goal. The June 19 groundbreaking



Courtesy Pittsford Village Farm

A digital rendering from Duncan Wisniewski Architecture of the completed Pittsford Village Farm restoration project.

event also marks the kickoff of the public phase of the campaign, which aims to close the remaining funding gap and enable the second phase of construction to proceed.

Already a vibrant destination for community gatherings, Pittsford Village Farm is home to a popular summer “Tunes-day” concert series, scenic hiking trails linked to a 16-mile town network, and events throughout the year such as the Touch-a-Truck, Turkey Trot Fun Run, Sap-Bucket Tree

Lighting, and moonlight sledding parties.

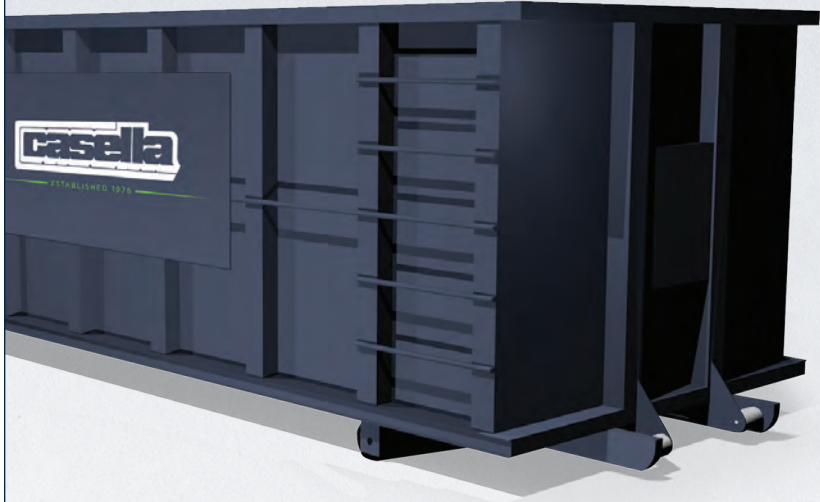
With the farmhouse renovation underway, PVF will take a significant step forward in its mission to serve as a welcoming hub for Pittsford and the wider Central Vermont region.

The June 19 groundbreaking celebration will feature presentations, building tours, and a wine tasting from Shelburne Vineyards. The event is free and open to the public.

For more information, visit: pittsfordvillagefarm.org.

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Over 30 young anglers reel in big fun at Fran Renner Youth Fishing Derby

More than 30 eager young anglers lined the pond at the Mendon Fish and Game Club on June 8 for the 2025 Fran Renner Youth Fishing Derby. With 300 brook trout freshly stocked for the occasion, the annual event delivered a morning full of excitement, friendly competition, and family camaraderie.

Now in its 40-plus year run, the derby remains a cherished tradition in the local community, offering children a hands-on way to experience nature, learn sportsmanship, and enjoy the simple thrill of reeling in a catch.

After the last lines were pulled from the water, families gathered to enjoy a complimentary lunch provided by a generous group of local supporters, including Hannaford, Price Chopper, Wendy's, KFC, Gill's Delicatessen, and Tenney Brook Market.

The festivities continued with a prize giveaway featuring a wide range of angler-friendly rewards. Highlights included:

- A half-day fishing trip on Lake Bomoseen donated by Woodard Marine
- Gift certificates from Applebee's, Stewarts Shops, McDonald's, Mendon Mini Golf & Snack Bar, Maple Angus, and Sugar and Spice Restaurant
- Brand new fishing poles from the Ellis Brothers and club members
- Tackle boxes donated by Walmart stores in Rutland and Lebanon, New Hampshire

"The derby is more than just a day of fishing—it's about building lifelong memories and strengthening community bonds," said a representative from the Mendon Fish and Game Club. "We're grateful to all our sponsors and families who continue to make this event such a success year after year."



Submitted
Over 30 anglers gathered in Chittenden on June 8 for the Fran Renner Youth Fishing Derby.



Submitted
The replacement of Bridge 9 in Plymouth will close Route 100A from July 7 to Aug. 17.

Bridge replacement underway in Plymouth, Route 100A

Drivers traveling along Route 100A should prepare for ongoing delays and a full closure later this summer as construction ramps up on Bridge 9 in Plymouth. The Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans) has initiated a long-term project to replace the aging structure over Pinney Hollow Brook.


A southbound lane closure is currently in effect near Bridge 9, with traffic controlled by temporary signals and occasional flaggers. This traffic pattern will remain in place until July 7, when a full closure of the bridge is scheduled to begin. The closure will last 42 days, through Aug. 17, to allow for complete removal and replacement of the span.

Bridge 9, originally built in 1984, is a 31-foot-long single-span concrete slab bridge. While rated "good" in several structural categories, signs of deterioration—including cracking, spalling, and exposed rebar—prompted the decision to replace it.

This week's construction activity will focus on demolition containment and partial demolition of Bridge 9 in preparation for the full closure.

The bridge is located at mile marker 3.976 on Route 100A, approximately 3.7 miles north of Route 100.

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



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TOWN OF
KILLINGTON
VERMONT

INFORMATION MEETING:
CONNECTION TO MUNICIPAL WATER SYSTEM
MONDAY, JUNE 16, 10 A.M.
PUBLIC SAFETY BUILDING, 800 KILLINGTON ROAD

Zoom Link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88519491301>

Construction is underway for a new municipal water system, and we're excited to provide updates to users along **Killington Road** and a section on **East Mountain Road** regarding connection to the system.

The first connections are anticipated to begin in the spring of 2026. The first three construction contracts will be completed this fall and include development of the wells, building the wellhouse and high service pump station, and the first of two 750,000 storage tanks on Shagback Mountain. The fourth construction contract is also underway, installing distribution lines and services along East Mountain and Killington Roads.

We have uploaded to the town's website service connection stub drawings that show the design location of the Town owned water service, which terminates at the edge of the road right of way with a curb stop or a gate valve. The customer portion of the water service begins at this point. (www.killingtontown.com: Departments, Public Works, Water System, Water System Information). Plans can also be viewed at the Town Manager's Office by scheduling at time with Abbie Sherman (contact info below).

Since property owners are responsible for designing, permitting, constructing, and maintaining the customer portion of the water service, the town is inviting you to an informational meeting where you can work with town staff, engineers, State officials, and other landowners to plan for your connection and receive more information regarding next steps.

The informational meeting will be held in the Public Safety Building on **Monday, June 16 at 10 a.m.** If you have any questions beforehand, or cannot make the meeting, feel free to forward all questions to Abbie Sherman, Public Works Director, at publicworks@killingtontown.com. A virtual link to the meeting will be provided on the Town of Killington's webpage in the events calendar.

← Skier visits:
from page 1

and activities to appeal to a wider range of guests.”

Despite a slow start in November, the core winter months of December, January and February delivered consistently seasonable weather and temperatures with abundant snowfall, particularly in the northern mountains. Blustery and frigid weather dampened peak period visitation over the Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday weekend and Presidents’ Week. The lack of March snowfall and inclement weather during spring weekends further reduced visitation, and an early melt cut the spring season short.

Further exacerbating challenges for ski areas was the Canadian response to rhetoric from the federal government, resulting in decreased visitation toward the end of the season. Canadians account for up to 50% of visitation at several ski areas in the northern part of the state. Vermont’s ski areas will continue working with the tourism industry to strengthen relationships and keep lines of communication open with our neighbors to the North.

The consistently cold winter weather was a boon for Ski Vermont’s cross-country area members, which reported a total of 322,353 skier visits, up 37% from last season’s disastrous result when 50% of visits were lost. While several of Vermont’s cross-country ski areas have limited snowmaking on portions of their trail networks and several others have plans to add it, and the majority rely on natural snowfall. Adequate snow over the holidays and a reliably cold January and February meant cross-country areas could consistently operate for most of the season, though some had to close in early March due to milder temperatures and a lack of natural snowfall.

Highlights of this year’s annual meeting program included a workforce development panel and roundtable, a presentation on Vermont’s outdoor recreation strategic plan, and a presentation and working session on the importance of mental health and inclusion in the outdoor industry.

Speakers included Heather Pelham, commissioner of the Vermont Dept. of Tourism and Marketing; Claire Polfus, recreation program manager for the Vermont Dept. of Forests, Parks and Recreation; Sabina Haskell, executive director of workforce strategy and development for the state, Kendal Smith, deputy commissioner of the Vermont Dept. of Labor; Tino Rutanhira, co-founder of the Vermont Professionals Of Color Network; Jon Erickson, associate dean of the UVM Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources; Sean Doll, professor at VTSU’s outdoor education, leadership and tourism; and keynote speaker Mirna Valerio, an author, athlete and advocate for inclusive outdoor spaces.

Kelly Pawlak, former general manager at Mount Snow

Resort and former president and CEO of the National Ski Areas Association accepted an Industry Achievement Award for her contributions to Vermont’s ski industry. Career industry awards were also announced for Keiki Sierman (46 years) and Alan Donahue (42 years) from Killington Resort and Doug Zecher (57 years) and Terry Randolph (36 years) from Bromley Mountain. Career awards are given to retiring employees with 25 or more years of service at a ski area.

Skiing is an important economic driver and employer in the state, particularly in rural areas where many ski areas are located. Ski Vermont’s Fifth Grade Passport helps to get thousands of children on the slopes annually and partial proceeds from the program support Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports.

State skier visits, according to Ski Vermont

2025-2025: 4.16 million	1993-1994: 4.3 million
2023-2024: 4.1 million	1992-1993: 4.3 million
2022-2023: 4.1 million	1991-1992: 3.9 million
2021-2022: 3.8 million	1990-1991: 4.1 million
2020-2021: 3.5 million	1989-1990: 4.6 million
2019-2020: 3.7 million	1988-1989: 4.5 million
(Covid ended mid-March)	1987-1988: 4.9 million
2018-2019: 4.2 million	1986-1987: 5.2 million
2017-2018: 4.0 million	1985-1986: 4.5 million
2016-2017: 3.9 million	1984-1985: 3.9 million
2015-2016: 3.2 million	1983-1984: 4.2 million
2014-2015: 4.7 million	1982-1983: 3.0 million
2013-2014: 4.5 million	1981-1982: 4.0 million
2012-2013: 4.5 million	1980-1981: 3.1 million
2011-2012: 3.9 million	1979-1980: 2.1 million
2010-2011: 4.4 million	1978-1979: 3.2 million
2009-2010: 4.1 million	1977-1978: 3.6 million
2008-2009: 4.0 million	1976-1977: 3.0 million
2007-2008: 4.4 million	1975-1976: 2.6 million
2006-2007: 3.8 million	1974-1975: 2.8 million
2005-2006: 4.1 million	1973-1974: 1.7 million
2004-2005: 4.4 million	1972-1973: 2.3 million
2003-2004: 4.2 million	1971-1972: 2.7 million
2002-2003: 4.5 million	1970-1971: 2.7 million
2001-2002: 4.1 million	1969-1970: 2.4 million
2000-2001: 4.6 million	1968-1969: 2.3 million
1999-2000: 3.9 million	1967-1968: 1.8 million
1998-1999: 4.0 million	1966-1967: 1.7 million
1997-1998: 4.3 million	1965-1966: 1.7 million
1996-1997: 4.0 million	1964-1965: 1.2 million
1995-1996: 4.1 million	1963-1964: 1.2 million
1994-1995: 3.7 million	1962-1963: 1.0 million



Submitted

← Trail battle:
from page 1

their property lines, but also permitted the Gerlach family to move trails as long as cross-country skiers had access to similarly safe and groomed trails.

The resort’s general manager and activities director said at the time that the two modified trails were too narrow and steep to groom, limiting their cross-country skiing guests’ access and potentially hurting their business.

In October, Rutland Superior Court Judge Alexander Burke agreed with the resort in a preliminary injunction, which granted the resort permission to use the original trails and prohibited the Gerlachs from interfering with existing trails or the resort’s maintenance and safety measures.

But in February, the resort claimed in a motion to the court that the Gerlach family

violated the terms of the order by obstructing safety markers and using snowmobile equipment on resort trails. The resort asserted such activities affect employees’ ability to maintain existing trails, although snowmobiles are used on other resort pathways.

During a Christmas visit to Chittenden from his primary residence in Florida, John Gerlach took down a rope the resort placed on the Sunset Trail to bar cross-country skiers entry, and used a snowmobile on trails crossing his property where such activities are not allowed by the resort.

In the May 22 decision, Burke held John Gerlach in contempt for removing the rope marking the trail closure, but disagreed that use of snowmobile equipment violated the injunction and impaired the resort’s ability to maintain trails.

John Gerlach’s son, Jake, also was found to have snowmobiled and repeatedly removed rope from a closed trail during a visit to the Chittenden property in March, but Burke did not find him in contempt, as he was not the subject of the initial injunction.

The Gerlachs were ordered not to remove the resort’s trail closure ropes and to instruct their guests to follow suit. The Gerlachs must also pay the resort’s attorney fees related to the motion requesting enforcement of the injunction and sanctions.

This is not the only legal conflict the Gerlach family has faced over trails.

The Gerlachs claimed the town of Chittenden failed to legally establish a public trail running through their 600-acre property. The previous land owners had entered an agreement in 2006 allowing a

former road running through the property to be transformed into a publicly accessible hiking trail.

In a May 5 ruling, Burke denied the Gerlachs’ request for the court to rule that no past agreements properly set up the trail for public use after a similar route was discontinued in the 1800s. Burke instead granted summary judgement to the town, asserting the previous owners “unequivocally intended to dedicate the disputed trail to public use.”

A lawyer for the Gerlach family and lawyers for the town of Chittenden were not immediately available for comment Friday, June 6.

Khele Sparks, general manager of the Mountain Top Resort, said the resort could not offer comment at this stage of litigation.

SU withdrawal: from page 1

of the supervisory union's board.

But in recent weeks, board members with the supervisory union questioned the association's lobbying efforts. At a May 27 meeting, board members had strong words for the association's support for legislation that would do away with supervisory unions.

"They don't believe in us, so they can't lobby for us," supervisory union board member Bill Edgerton said at the meeting.

Leaders of the Vermont School Boards Association said the majority of the organization's members support its position on supervisory unions.

In a press release announcing the decision, White River Valley Supervisory Union board members said their withdrawal arose from disagreements around the association's support for versions of H.454 that they said would result in "long bus rides for students, the dissolution of supervisory unions, no community involvement in decisions surrounding the future of rural schools, and no path to tax relief for Vermonters."

The statement went on to say that the association's advocacy went "against the communities that WRVSU serves and the children they educate."

The White River Valley Supervisory Union is the first to break with the association, but it may not be the last.

Districts within the Lamoille South, Twin Rivers and Greater Rutland County supervisory unions have had similar discussions and plan to consider resolutions this month to suspend their dues or withdraw their membership, according to board meeting minutes and interviews with board members.

In Windham County, board members with the Windham Southeast Supervisory District — one of two districts in the Windham Southeast Supervisory Union — voted on a resolution calling on the association to refrain from supporting legislation "not grounded in sound research or lacking clear fiscal impact modeling, especially on consequential issues like school governance and consolidation."

Timothy Maciel, a board member with the southern Vermont school district, in an interview said the board would consider suspending their dues to the association "if basic standards of democratic representation and accountability are not met."

"There's really good folks in the VSBA," he said. "But primarily, they have to represent our values and positions. If they aren't representing those values, then we, in my opinion, shouldn't continue with them."

Why supervisory unions?

Vermont has 52 supervisory unions or supervisory districts — two different governing and administrative models for the state's 119 school districts.

State law only gives school districts the power to set budgets and to raise money through issuing bonds. A supervisory union or supervisory district generally provides back office functions such as accounting and payroll and may oversee the provision of special education services and curriculum coordination, though their specific roles differ across the state.

The supervisory union structure, which was relied upon during the push for school district consolidation driven by Act 46, provides a unifying structure for school districts with vastly different operating structures — a way for them to share resources while maintaining independence.

The White River Valley Supervisory Union is a particularly diverse example, with six districts following four different operating models. One of the school districts — the White River Union District, for the towns of Bethel and Royalton — operates all grades from pre-kindergarten through high

school. Another, serving Granville and Hancock, operates none, and provides tuition to its resident students to attend the public and private schools they choose.

Of the other four districts, two pay tuition and allow choice for middle school and high school for the towns of Rochester, Sharon and Stockbridge, while two provide tuition and choice just for high school for the towns of Chelsea, Strafford and Tunbridge.

The school choice allowed in five of the six districts in the White River Valley Supervisory Union lets students attend private schools like nearby Thetford Academy and Sharon Academy.

Flor Diaz Smith, the president of the Vermont School Boards Association, said supervisory unions make it difficult to "have aligned outcomes and support for all our students."

"We're trying to create coherence through this system," she said.

Complicating matters is the number of public school students that districts across the state are paying to send to private schools.

There were around 3,500 students using public money for private school tuition in the 2022-23 school year — a small fraction of the almost 83,000 students educated in public schools that same year, according to the Vermont Agency of Education.

But that smaller group has played a big role in the education debate, and supervisory unions that allow students publicly funded choice want to keep it that way.

Galluzzo said that school choice is an important factor for her supervisory union, and the region's independent schools provide educational options that are often closer to home for some families.

"Families make that choice," she said. "Kids find their fit in some of the independent schools for different reasons. I think more choice is better than less choice."

Scott's education proposal, unveiled in January, would have eliminated the supervisory unions' governance structure and instead established five regional districts of roughly 10,000 to 15,000 students each, except for the Champlain Valley district, which was more than twice that size. In another change, the new districts' boards would have been empowered to designate certain private schools as "choice schools" available to all students in the larger district via lottery.

Sue Ceglowski, the executive director of the Vermont School Boards Association, said during the White River Valley Supervisory Union Board's meeting that the organization came out strongly against the governor's plan.

However, the association could not publicly support legislation that required the inclusion of supervisory unions because it was "paired with allowing for the continuation of a tuitioning system that provides continued access to independent schools," she said.

Ceglowski said most of the organization's members supported its position on supervisory unions and that its stance was "based on resolutions that have been passed by our members."

In an interview, Diaz Smith also said there was "a lot of interest from the supervisory union advocates to stay with [school choice], to have everybody change but them, to have this system change around them."

"That is not collaborative," she said. "That is not all coming to the table."

A rural school lobby

After their vote to leave the association, the White River Valley Supervisory Union Board voted during its May 27 meeting to shift the funds that would have gone to the Vermont School Board Association to the Rural Schools

Community Alliance, an organization formed in January that has quickly emerged as an advocate and lobbying arm in the State House for Vermont's rural schools.

The board in its press release said the Alliance "has established itself as a strong ally, helping rural schools vocally oppose legislation that forces school closure."

"We were paying an entity to lobby for us, but they were lobbying for us to be closed," Galluzzo said in an interview Thursday. "I think at this point in time, we need to put our money toward somebody in Montpelier that is going to fight for us."

As fears mount over the possible closure of small, rural schools, the White River Valley Supervisory Union and others have turned to the Rural Schools Community Alliance to advocate on their behalf as education reform has progressed this session.

Since its formation in January, the alliance has grown to represent more than 100 towns in the state, according to Margaret MacLean, a steering committee member with the organization.

She said the Alliance sees supervisory unions "as essential structures for rural schools," that offer more democratic representation and local control for smaller communities.

MacLean and her organization have come out against Scott's proposal for five regional districts, and said that consolidated structures won't work "when you have towns that are distinct and separated by geography and mileage."

"We don't see that as more efficient. We see that as less democratic," she said. "Yes, democracy can sometimes be messy, but the benefits of it pay off in terms of engagement and involvement and community voice in support of schools."

Officials with the rural alliance and the school boards association have met and discussed their visions for Vermont's public education system, both sides said. But disagreements remain between the two organizations over the efficacy of supervisory unions.

"It's not to be difficult. It's not to be inflexible," Diaz Smith said. "It's just the data was not there to support supervisory unions."

Not everyone is on board with ditching the Vermont School Board Association. In Peacham, the school board will also take up a resolution to discuss reducing the amount of money they sent to the association.

But Mark Clough, the district board's chair and the vice chair of the School Board Association, said he's "heard over and over again from a lot of districts and [supervisory unions] around the state that they really want tighter controls" of schools and districts under their purview.

"The state feels, in general, that districts are the way to go, because it just provides more control to get costs and student outcomes in a better place than allowing it to just go off on its own with supervisory unions," Clough said in an interview. "The [supervisory union] model, as good as it is for rural areas — and it does fit for some rural areas — it doesn't fit for all regions."

Galluzzo left open the possibility of rejoining the Association at some point in an interview. But at the May 27 meeting, board members with the supervisory union concluded they had no other choice but to withdraw their membership.

Stacey Peters, the chair of the Granville-Hancock Unified School District, which is part of the supervisory union, said during the meeting last week she considered it a matter of "life or death" for the future of their schools.

"You're asking us to kind of sign away our livelihood here, and I think that that is not a simple difference of opinion," she said at the meeting. "Being asked to pay for our own execution does not feel like a position that I think we should be supporting"

GUEST EDITORIAL

Want lower taxes? Then let's reform education the smart way

By Bryce Sammel

Editor's note: Bryce Sammel, of Barnard, previously served on and chaired both the Barnard Academy and Mountain Views school boards.

Vermonters are rightly worried about taxes. With rising costs across the board, including property taxes, health care and energy bills, many residents, especially those without school-aged children, are asking a fair question: Why are we spending so much on education, and are we getting our money's worth?

If you care about taxes, you deserve to know the truth: closing schools and cutting programs doesn't automatically lower your property taxes. It can raise them.

When schools close, or programs are gutted, young families leave. That shrinks the full-time population and weakens the local economy and the residential tax base. Empty homes get snapped up by second-homeowners, inflating local property values and the Grand List, creating the tax increases we're seeing today in communities across Vermont.

At the same time, Vermont's aging population means we need younger families more than ever. Not just to fill classrooms but to power our economy and support essential services. Strong public schools are a magnet for those families, and they're also where we prepare students to become skilled workers in trades, healthcare, agriculture, small business and other critical sectors.

If those students leave for better opportunities elsewhere or can't afford to live here as adults, the cycle worsens. That's why we must invest wisely in education and keep taxes manageable so that working families and young Vermonters can afford to stay.

Let's fix what's
broken without
bulldozing
what works.

The current proposals in Montpelier, including H.454, claim to answer that question by cutting costs through school consolidation and funding reform. But these proposals don't

appear to fix what's broken. They shift the costs in ways that may backfire on communities, taxpayers and the economy.

In addition, forcing expensive transitions like merging mega-districts, laying off staff or overhauling infrastructure without support creates short-term costs that outweigh any long-term savings. Taxpayers will end up footing the bill for poorly planned reforms that don't deliver results.

There is a better way. A more innovative approach to education reform could stabilize taxes and improve efficiency without destabilizing our communities.

Instead of extreme mandates, we should focus on voluntary consolidation and shared services, offering increased per-pupil funding or targeted grants for districts that work together to reduce overhead. A high school that serves 450 students or a classroom with 15 kids may make fiscal sense without sacrificing educational outcomes. Rewarding schools that hit those marks is smarter than punishing those that don't.

We could also set a realistic goal of reducing the number of school districts, not to five, as some have proposed, but perhaps by half. That alone could cut administrative costs and save taxpayers money while preserving local control.

Some other ideas the governor has proposed would also help facilitate easier consolidation in the near future.

A unified school calendar is a practical way to promote cost savings and future flexibility. If all Vermont schools

Smart reform → 10



Future Tourists Told Why US Democracy Collapsed by R.J. Matson, CQ Roll Call

LETTERS

Missing the mark on ed reform

Dear Editor,

If and when the governor and Legislature agree on something they call "transformational educational reform," it's unlikely to be what most people expected or wanted. Vermonters won't see the property tax relief they were hoping for because changes to the funding system will be a few years off. Instead, the first sign of reform will be a reorganization of their school districts, which they didn't ask for. On top of that, democratic decision-making on school budgets will be a thing of the past.

People may be wondering what happened to the commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont, the body created after local voters saw a significant increase in school budgets and taxes last summer. The commission was given 18 months to study Vermont's education system and get public input on how to improve education for their kids and make it more "efficient and sustainable."

Missing the mark → 34

CHIP is a game changer

Dear Editor,

Vermont just took a bold, historic step toward solving one of the most urgent issues facing our state: the lack of affordable and attainable homes for Vermonters of all income levels and backgrounds.

With the passage of the Community Housing Infrastructure Program (CHIP) during the 2025 legislative session, the state now has a powerful new tool to

The cost of roads, sewer lines, water systems, and stormwater controls can sink a project before the first shovel hits the ground.

In many Vermont communities, particularly in smaller or rural towns, the financial burden of building or upgrading this infrastructure is simply too high for developers or municipalities to absorb. The math doesn't pencil out. And when the

It's smart, targeted tax
increment financing.

help communities unlock housing development that has, for too long, remained stuck on paper. As leaders in housing finance and banking, and as board members of Let's Build Homes, we have a clear message: this is a game changer.

We hear it constantly from nonprofit developers, private builders, and community leaders across the state. Even with viable sites, designed thoughtful projects, and a waiting list of buyers and tenants, the numbers don't work. Why? Because of infrastructure.

math doesn't work, the homes don't get built.

CHIP fixes that.

The program allows communities to use future property tax revenue generated by new development to finance the upfront cost of the infrastructure those developments need. It's smart, targeted tax increment financing. It means that towns don't have to choose between keeping taxes stable and making long-term investments in housing. And it means developers can finally say yes

CHIP → 11

A Titanic problem in healthcare

Dear Editor,

Our healthcare "system" operates via a Byzantine system of price hikes, price discounts, different pricing for different customers, and an immense web of middlemen who operate it all. The complexity and the middlemen will always keep prices higher than they otherwise would be. Always.

Our irrational system causes immense personal harm, misery and damages our economy in ways that can't be seen at the surface.

It would be nice if the people in government with the power and the duty to protect the public acknowledged the fact that charging as much as they can get away with is perfectly legal, even rational under the "free market" system. Many businesses do it. That's why that system has no place in healthcare, where people don't have the option of just deciding not to buy.

Until we address that fundamental fact, all we are doing is moving the deck chairs around on the proverbial Titanic.

Lee Russ, Bennington

CAPITOL QUOTES

Los Angeles protests

The Trump administration's mass targeting of undocumented communities has sparked massive protests in Los Angeles, which some believe was the president's intention all along. In an escalation of the situation, Trump ordered the deployment of 4,000 National Guard members and 700 U.S. Marines as of Tuesday — doubling the number he initially sent.

"The federal government is taking over the California National Guard and deploying 2,000 soldiers in Los Angeles — not because there is a shortage of law enforcement, but because they want a spectacle. Don't give them one. Never use violence. Speak out peacefully... This is an unmistakable step toward authoritarianism that threatens the foundation of our republic. We cannot let it stand."

said California Governor **Gavin Newsom** who is suing Trump to reverse the National Guard order.

"2,000 National Guard is not enough for the LA insurrection and Democrat led war on America!!!"

said **Marjorie Taylor Greene** Georgia representative and QANON supporter on X.

"Deportations have never sounded better,"

said Tennessee Senator **Marsha Blackburn**.

"This a dangerous escalation meant to provoke chaos,"

said former vice-president **Kamala Harris**.

"President Trump's deployment of the National Guard without the authorization of the governor is designed to raise tensions. Everyone has the right to peacefully protest and has the right to do so safely. This is blatant intimidation of those assembling,"

said Vermont Senator **Peter Welch** on X.

COMMENTARIES

Vermonters asked us to tackle the real cost drivers to the property tax — and we did

By Sen. Kesha Ram Hinsdale

Editor's note: This commentary is by Sen. Kesha Ram Hinsdale, D-Chittenden Southeast. She is the Vermont Senate majority leader and a member of the Senate Economic Development and Education Committees. She lives in Shelburne with her husband and two young children.

As Vermont debates how to stabilize our education finance system, it's easy to get caught in the cycle of blame. But the challenges we're seeing in our school budgets didn't emerge in a vacuum. The real cost pressures driving up education spending are rooted in broader systems — housing, health care, mental health and basic affordability. This year, we tackled those head-on.

As a lead architect of S.127, I'm proud to say we passed a \$2 billion infrastructure package — the largest investment in housing and infrastructure in Vermont history. This landmark legislation is more than a housing bill — it's a long-term strategy to support families, educators and entire communities.

When children are forced to move multiple times in a school year, when teachers can't afford to live near the schools where they work, when families are priced out of the very communities that anchor them — our schools bear the consequences. S.127 cuts through

Cost drivers → 11

H.454: Another tax hike disguised as funding reform

By Ryan Heraty

Editor's note: Ryan Heraty is the superintendent of the Lamoille South Supervisory Union and a doctoral student at the University of Vermont, studying education finance and public policy.

Most Vermonters agree our state is facing an affordability crisis, yet few suggest the solution is to raise taxes on low and middle-income Vermonters. Shockingly, all three versions of the latest education reform bill will increase taxes significantly in many of the towns that need relief the most.

As the Superintendent of Lamoille South, I spoke out strongly against the last "reform" (Act 127) that led to a rash of budget failures

and taxes skyrocketing across the state. This bill promised more for vulnerable students, yet the resources only reached a handful of districts. Recent data from the Joint Fiscal Office indicate that the law is doing the exact opposite of its intended purpose, di-

The problem is that central offices only account for 5% of the total education fund, and the evidence-based model assumes school sizes that don't exist in Vermont.

verting money from high-poverty towns to subsidize those that can pass larger budgets. This could have been avoided with careful transition mechanisms and more accountability. Unfortunately, a common-sense

H.454 tax hike → 11

Market-rate housing is the affordable housing solution

Editor's note: Stephen Box is a Rutland-based general contractor, landlord, and advocate for citizen developers.

When it comes to increasing the number of available affordable housing units in Vermont, there are two strategies.

The first approach is to build more affordable housing, and this is the current favored strategy of Vermont's non-profit housing developers with projects such as the St. Johnsbury (nine units, two commercial spaces, gallery - \$6



The Accidental Activist
By Stephen Box

million) and Putney (25 units - \$15 million) which results in apartments that cost roughly \$600,000 each.

The second approach is to build more market-rate housing, which opens up affordable housing options in a phenomenon referred to as the "filtering up" effect. As more expensive market-rate housing becomes available, those who can afford it will move in, which frees up

older, less expensive housing that is then

Market-rate housing → 34

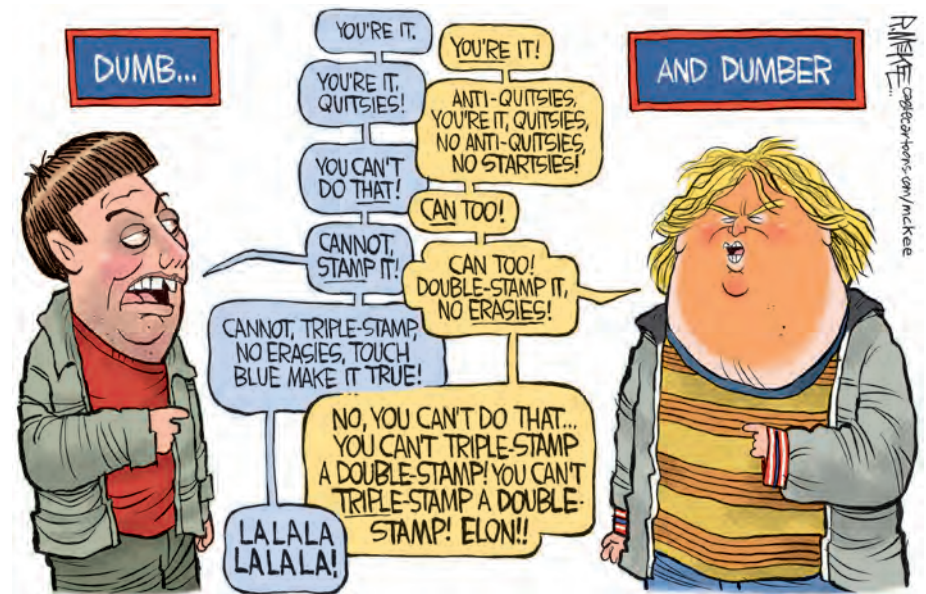
CARTOONS



Falling Dollar by Daryl Cagle, CagleCartoons



After-Graduation Plans by Gary McCoy, Shiloh, IL



Elon and Trump Dumb and Dumber Argument by Rick McKee, CagleCartoon

LETTERS

This Father's Day, let's commit to saving rural Vt

Dear Editor,

As Vermont dads of children attending Vermont schools and members of the Rural School Community Alliance, we're used to showing up for our kids: on the sidelines, at bedtime, in the school pickup line, and around the dinner table. Today, we're showing up in a different way: to urge lawmakers to stand up for our kids and our communities as they consider final changes to the education transformation bill.

We love Vermont for many of the same reasons we choose to raise our kids here: the tight-knit communities, the open spaces, the chance to know your neighbors, and the powerful

bond between rural schools and the towns they serve. But right now, that way of life is at risk.

The Rural School Community Alliance represents school districts, supervisory unions, and municipal leaders in more than 100 Vermont towns and villages along with numerous supporters from non-member towns throughout Vermont. Rural community schools are not just places of learning they are cornerstones of civic life, economic resilience, and family stability. As the future of public education in our state hangs in the balance, we ask the legislature to keep five key priorities in mind:

Transparency around the funding formula. Before any new funding system is enacted, Vermonters deserve a clear, honest accounting of how it will affect our communities, property taxes, and school budgets. We can't make decisions in the dark, and our lawmakers shouldn't either.

Protecting democratic engagement. No school should be closed without a vote of the people. Period. Community input is essential to maintaining trust and ensuring decisions are made in the best interest of kids, families, and taxpayers. A full educational and community impact study

Vermont dads → 35

MEMORIALS

Howard Barbash, 80

The graveside service for Howard Barbash, who passed peacefully on Dec. 6, 2024, will be held at 2 p.m. Tuesday, June 17, at the Riverside Cemetery in Killington. He will be laid to rest in his beloved home of Killington.

Arrangements are with the Aldous Funeral Home.

Richard T. Godfrey, Jr., 96

A memorial visitation for Richard T. Godfrey, Jr. (July 8, 1928 - Feb. 12) will be held at the Cabot Funeral Home in Woodstock, Vermont, on Friday, June 20, from 3-5 p.m. with a reception to follow at the Thompson Senior Center.

Smart reform: from page 8

operated on the same schedule, it would eliminate one of the barriers to collaboration and future district mergers as well as making it much easier for students in different schools to access career and technical education centers without as much of a disruptive impact on the rest of their high school schedule.

Setting universal minimum graduation requirements would establish a clear statewide standard for earning a diploma, ensuring every Vermont graduate meets a baseline level of preparation. If, in the future, schools or districts merged, there would be no risk of it affecting students' outcomes because they would already be aligned. At the same time, individual schools could add additional requirements for advanced programs, CTE tracks or academic pathways, allowing for local innovation and higher achievement.

When it comes to school infrastructure, delaying repairs only makes them more expensive later. If we want to reduce costs long-term, we need to invest in energy-efficient, right-sized school buildings today. Let's raise the state match for projects meeting new enrollment benchmarks and sustainability standards. The cost would pay off quickly through efficiency of scale, reduced heating bills and lower maintenance.

Most importantly, we need a funding formula that reflects the real costs of running schools in Vermont.

Short-term grants, limited use of surplus or reserve funds, or revenue adjustments could ease the transition and help districts adjust without sudden tax spikes. This way, we can start today while continuing to discuss the needed broader tax reform.

It's not about protecting the status quo or pretending everything's fine. Vermont's education system needs to evolve. But let's not fall for proposals that sound good on paper and cost us more in practice.

Want lower taxes? Then, support a reform strategy that incentivizes smart decisions, doesn't force bad ones and avoids short-term chaos that leads to long-term costs. Let's fix what's broken without bulldozing what works.

Let your representatives know that real reform balances cost savings with common sense. It rewards efficient schools and academic achievement, encourages collaboration and respects all Vermont taxpayers.

CHIP: from page 8

to projects that have been on hold for years.

This isn't speculative. It's backed by real projections: up to \$200 million a year in CHIP-supported financing for 10 years means up to \$2 billion in public infrastructure investment statewide. If fully utilized, CHIP could help Vermont build 40,000 new homes in the next decade. It also has the potential to generate up to \$660 million in new Education Fund revenue, according to the state's Joint Fiscal Office.

Just as importantly, CHIP is available to every Vermont municipality, no matter its size or zoning structure. Whether it's a small rural town trying to build homes adjacent to their village or a growing community planning dense

infill near its downtown, CHIP levels the playing field and gives every community a path to housing growth.

The passage of CHIP would not have been possible without the leadership and momentum generated by Let's Build Homes, a brand-new coalition of more than 200 businesses and organizations and over 500 individual Vermonters. The coalition captured the moment, ran with the ball, and scored, bringing unprecedented energy and coordination to the effort to make meaningful housing policy a top priority in Montpelier.

We also commend the Legislature and the Scott administration for building CHIP with simplicity in mind. The program's design is streamlined, and while

important decisions still lie ahead in the rulemaking process, the commitment to clarity and access is evident.

Let's be clear: CHIP won't solve every problem. Zoning reform, workforce challenges, material costs, and permitting challenges all remain significant hurdles. But what CHIP does is remove one of the biggest, most immediate roadblocks: infrastructure costs. And that's a breakthrough.

As housing finance professionals, we understand that timing, cost, and predictability are crucial when it comes to securing financing and building projects. CHIP changes the equation. It helps projects pencil. It helps Vermont build.

To the bill sponsors, legislative leaders, organizational partners, and all those who made this moment possible—thank you. Vermont has a proud tradition of tackling big chal-

If fully utilized, CHIP could help Vermont build 40,000 new homes.

lenges with creativity and resolve. With CHIP, we've proven once again that bold solutions are possible when we work together.

Maura Collins, executive director of Vermont Housing Finance Agency, Let's Build Homes board member; and Jason Pidgeon, VP, Mortgage Banking and Consumer Credit at Northfield Savings Bank, Let's Build Homes board member

Cost drivers: from page 9

decades of gridlock to deliver major investments in water, sewer and energy infrastructure, which will in turn increase the supply of homes that Vermonters can actually afford.

At the same time, under the steadfast leadership of my district-mate, Sen. Ginny Lyons, the Legislature made meaningful progress on one of the biggest drivers of public and private costs: health care. Sen. Lyons has been a tireless champion for reform, and this year, her work resulted in crucial steps to rein in runaway prescription drug prices and bend the cost curve that has strained families, hospitals and school budgets alike. These reforms begin to address the systemic issues that have long placed education spending under undue pressure from a budget being eaten away by unsustainable health care costs.

We also made major strides in addressing one of the most urgent and growing challenges our schools face: youth mental health. Rising levels of anxiety, depression and behavioral health crises have placed an enormous burden on educators and school budgets.

This year, we responded with the "Kids Code" (S.69) and the "Phone-free Schools" bill (now a part of H.480) — two groundbreaking bills that tackle the impact of digital platforms and device addiction on young people's mental health and cognitive development.

The Kids Code puts guardrails around tech companies, requiring them to design digital products with child safety in mind — not profit. Phone-Free Schools empowers districts to limit in-school smartphone use so students can focus, connect face-to-face and learn in healthier environments. These policies are about more than screen time; they're about protecting kids' well-being and reducing the downstream costs — academic, behavioral, and emotional — that schools are increasingly expected to manage on their own.

Finally, as we look to education finance reform, we need to be honest about where the money is — and where the pressure is coming from. One of the most meaningful changes we could make to our education finance system is to tax property vacancy. Right now, there's often more financial incentive to leave a commercial or residential property empty than to rent it.

In over 80 towns across the state, the "non-homestead" property tax rate is lower than the homestead property tax rate, meaning second homeowners pay less than permanent residents. That's hollowing out both our main streets and our backroads.

Empty storefronts and unoccupied homes erode the vitality of our communities and shrink the tax base that supports our schools. Rather than racing to consolidate schools or cut programs, we should be modernizing our tax code to reflect the actual drivers of inequity and revenue loss. The money is there — it's just too often sitting behind shuttered windows and underused properties while school budgets take the hit.

Yes, we should explore district consolidation — but only when it truly benefits kids and their educational outcomes. Vermont's small schools are often the heart of their communities, and closing them indiscriminately won't solve the affordability crisis. We cannot expect our education system to compensate for housing shortages, inadequate health care, youth mental health crises or systemic poverty — and then punish it when it can't.

We've taken bold, historic steps to address the housing, health care and mental health challenges that have long burdened our schools. Let's acknowledge that progress and use it as a springboard to real, thoughtful education finance reform — one that uplifts our communities instead of dividing them.

Let's lead with values. Let's tackle the rising costs and tax disincentives that hollow out our communities and invest where it makes a real difference — in children, families and vibrant neighborhoods. That's how we build a future where every child has the opportunity to thrive.

H.454 tax hike: from page 9

approach was ignored, and we are now facing another looming disaster.

There were three versions of bill H.454 — one from Governor Scott, one from the House, and the Senate — but each version will result in more of the same: legislation we didn't ask for at a cost we can't afford.

The governor's proposal moves the state from 119 to five districts. The plan claims to save money by regionalizing central offices and moving to an "evidence-based" model for funding. The problem is that central offices only account for 5% of the total education fund, and the evidence-based model assumes school sizes that don't exist in Vermont.

The right thing to do now is to slow down and make a better plan.

Elementary schools of 500 students and large regional high schools would require massive capital investments and long bus rides. The cost of transportation and negotiating new contracts would wash out any savings, and a statewide tax rate would raise taxes in many towns with no guarantee of additional funding.

Most concerning is that the plan ignores the cost drivers (e.g., healthcare) and defers hard decisions to a small board representing a large geographic area. In the Winooski Valley District, a board of five would make decisions for 47 towns, and people would no longer vote on their budgets. The only way

this plan saves money is by having this board do the state's dirty work—firing teachers and closing rural schools.

The House proposal is slightly stronger. It includes a funding formula based on Vermont-specific data and starts to hold independent schools more accountable for public dollars. Unfortunately, it also contains several provisions that make it a dealbreaker. Similar to the governor's proposal, this plan doesn't save money. It is marketed as a cost-saver with a minimum district size of 4,000 students, school size minimums of 450, and class size minimums that vary by grade level. Also, like the governor's plan, it fails to address cost drivers, contract negotiations, and the school construction necessary to make it work.

The funding formula is also built primarily around test scores, which Vermonters have paid little attention to for at least a decade. Without a careful review of current spending, this plan misses an opportunity to make sure public dollars are used wisely.

The Senate's version of the bill removes the arbitrary district and school size minimums yet also raises several concerns. Like the two versions that preceded it, this bill fails to address cost drivers and includes a statewide tax rate that would increase taxes in many towns. For example, the taxes in Enosburg and Richford would rise by 30%, in Barre by 22%, in Slate Valley by 20%, and in Morrisville by 19%. The promise is that these towns would receive more money in return, but new district

lines (drawn by a politicized task force) would eliminate additional revenue by merging the winning and losing districts and keeping the statewide tax rate.

Therefore, a current district that is low-spending yet high-performing would be forced into a higher tax rate in a larger district with less local control. To be clear, this bill penalizes taxpayers in low-spending towns while doing nothing to ensure they would receive additional dollars in return.

It is easy to point out the problems and hard to find better solutions. However, in this case, the Rural School Community Alliance has testified repeatedly on research-based solutions that would save money, stabilize property taxes, and improve education. It is too late in the session to implement most of these recommendations; however, there are still things that can be done.

If the Legislature's primary goal is to reduce property taxes, it could simply lower the excess spending threshold that is in the current law. If they are working to save money, they should start by analyzing current districts and supporting school boards to find efficiencies. If a foundation formula is the goal, they should ensure non-partisan experts are the ones who develop the base budget for each district. Instead, we are offered three proposals that will significantly disrupt education, raise taxes on those who have been financially responsible, and open up a highly charged political process for drawing new district lines. The right thing to do now is to slow down and make a better plan.



WE RISE

MAKE THIS MOMENT A MOVEMENT

You're invited to join past and present Vermont Women's Fund grantees, community members, changemakers, thought leaders, and business professionals working toward a more equitable state for our women and girls.

Our gathering in Killington includes insightful discussions and networking as we examine the current status of women and girls in Vermont, highlighting both the challenges that persist and the progress that has been made.

June 13 | Killington Grand Resort Hotel

12-4: Free lunch & community dialogue
on pressing issues for women & girls

4-6: Business & community networking

Friday, June 13

**RSVP for part or all
of the afternoon**



The Vermont Women's Fund is a component of the Vermont Community Foundation. We work to improve the lives of young women and girls by targeting philanthropic giving, forging statewide strategic partnerships, funding research, and supporting programs that address their fundamental economic, educational, and social needs while also improving gender inequities by advancing systemic change. Visit our website to join us for an event, volunteer, become a sponsor, or donate:

vermontwomensfund.org.

Thank you to The Mountain Times for sponsoring this ad.

WORDPLAY

CONFECTIONS WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards

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

- BONBON
BUTTERSCOTCH
CANDY
CARAMEL
- CHOCOLATE
DRAGEE
GLAZE
GUM
- GUMDROP
GUMMY BEAR
HONEY
LICORICE
- LOLLIPOP
LOZENGE
MARSHMALLOW
MARZIPAN
- NOUGAT
PRALINE
SUGAR
SWEETS
- SWEET TOOTH
SYRUP
TAFFY
TURKISH DELIGHT

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Solutions → 30

CLUES ACROSS

1. Racquet sports association
4. Places to sleep
8. Native American tribe
10. Small platforms
11. Egg shape
12. Running out
13. French painter
15. Some are "of the Caribbean"
16. Painful intestinal problem
17. More irritated
18. Prove yourself
21. Catch
22. Supplement with difficulty
23. American automotive giant
24. Form of "to be"
25. Boxing's GOAT
26. Peyton's little brother
27. Eli's big brother
34. Capable of producing

CLUES DOWN

1. Consisting of uncombined atoms
2. Island country
3. Heavenly body
4. Caribbean island
5. Copyread
6. A place to eat
7. Drops down
9. Native group of Alaska
10. Engage in
12. "Desperate Housewives" lane
14. Thy-

35. Reproductive structures in fungi
36. Allowed to go forward
37. Smiles
38. Arteries
39. VVV
40. Win a series without losing a game
41. This (Spanish)
42. Opposites of beginnings
43. Germanic mythological god

roid-stimulating hormone
15. Foot (Latin)
17. A place to bathe
19. Animosities
20. Partner to cheese
23. Venus __, plant
24. A donation
25. Pokes holes in the ground

26. Midway between northeast and east
27. Looked into
28. Not young
29. Annoy constantly
30. Something one can strike
31. Most glacial
32. Ten less than one hundred

33. Idle talker
34. Has moved through the air
36. Container for shipping

SUDOKU

Solutions → 30

How to Play

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

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

Level: Intermediate

GUESS WHO?

I am an actor born in Kentucky on June 9, 1963. I dreamed of being a musician and dropped out of school at 15 to perform with my band. In the 1980s, I rose to stardom on a popular TV show about undercover cops. But it was leading roles, many of them quirky characters, that solidified my fame.

Answer: Johnny Depp

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WED
6/11

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.

American Red Cross Blood Drive

10 a.m.-2:30 p.m. Killington Grand Hotel, 228 E. Mountain Road, Killington. Free. Donate blood and help save lives. Eligible donors can schedule an appointment at redcrossblood.org using sponsor code KILLINGTON or call 1-800-RED-CROSS. Power Red donations encouraged for type O, B-, and A- donors. redcrossblood.org.

Active Seniors Lunch

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

Gentle & Restorative Yoga

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

Diabetes Support Group

1-2 p.m. (Monthly, 2nd Wed.) RRM 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. chcrr.org/diabetes-support-group.

Cribbage for Adults

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

Market on the Green

3-6 p.m. (Wednesdays) The Green, 1 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Weekly outdoor market featuring local farms, artisans, prepared food vendors, and live music in a family-friendly setting. Visit woodstockvt.com.

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.

Friends of the Library Book Sale

4:30-6:30 p.m. Fair Haven Free Library, 107 N. Main St., Fair Haven. By donation. Take-what-you-want, pay-what-you-can book sale hosted by the Friends of the Library. Proceeds support community programs. fairhavenfree.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. chcrr.org/diabetes-support-group.

Ballroom Dance with Patti Panebianco

5:30-7:20 p.m. (Wednesdays) Stone Valley Arts, 145 East Main St., Poultney. Join instructor Patti Panebianco for ballroom dance with East Coast Swing at 5:30 p.m. and Salsa at 6:30 p.m. stonevalleyarts.org.

Women's Mountain Bike Group Rides

6-8 p.m. (Wednesdays) Fairgrounds Trailhead, 131 Town Farm Road, Poultney. Free. Weekly no-drop rides on Slate Valley Trails for all women, beginner to advanced. Groups split by pace and experience. Bring water, snacks, and after-ride beverages. Check Facebook for weather cancellations. slatevalleytrails.org.

Olive Klug Outdoor Concert

6:30 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Free. Musician-in-residence Olive Klug performs an outdoor concert as part of their June residency at Artistree. Klug's original music will also underscore the summer production of "Three Tall Women." artistreevt.org.

Jazz Cafe: Jazz Essentials at Stone Valley Arts

7-9 p.m. Stone Valley Arts, 145 E. Main St., Poultney. Free. Enjoy an evening of live swing and jazz featuring Bear Irwin, Ron White, Glendon Ingalls, Bill Vitek, and Nick Aloï in an intimate, relaxed setting. stonevalleyarts.org.

Film Screening: 'Jane Austin Wrecked My Life' (R)

7:30 p.m. Playhouse Movie Theatre, 139 Main St., Randolph. \$7-\$10. RomCom about a young woman in Paris who dreams of becoming a successful writer and experiencing true love. In French with English subtitles. playhouseflicks.com.

THURS
6/12

Essentrics Stretch and Strengthen

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

Hiking Group - Rail Trail

9 a.m.-2 p.m. Godnick Adult Center, 1 Deer St., Rutland City. 18+. Free. Moderate elevations. Hikers encouraged to wear sturdy footwear, long sleeves/pants to protect against ticks. Bring water and lunch. Meet at Godnick Center to carpool. rutlandrec.com.

Intermediate Line Dance

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

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.

Mendon Senior Lunch

11:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Maple Sugar & Vermont Spice, 2563 US-4, Mendon. \$8. Monthly lunch for seniors held on the second Thursday. To reserve a seat, call Barbara Capman at 802-775-3957.

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.

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.

Robert Frost Through the Seasons: Spring

3:30-5 p.m. VINS Nature Center, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. \$14 general public, free for VINS members. Join Executive Director Alden Smith for a guided outdoor poetry workshop exploring the works of Robert Frost, with trail walks and seasonal discussion. Advance registration required. vinsweb.org.

Trail Sit and Sips Presented by Lawson's - Mt. Peg (WAMBA)

4-7:30 p.m. Lower Know Meadow Parking Lot, Woodstock. Free. Join VMBA, Woodstock Area Mountain Bike Association, and Lawson's for group rides, raffles, on-site membership sales, and an après party with beer for members 21+. Raffle at 7:15 p.m. vmba.org.

Intro to Relief & Monoprint Printmaking

4:30-7:30 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. \$180. Learn mixed-media printmaking techniques with artist Pam Smith in this one-day workshop combining relief and monoprint methods. No experience necessary. Register: artistreevt.org.

Michelob ULTRA Golf League

5-8 p.m. (Thursdays, through Aug. 28). Killington Golf Course, 227 E. Mountain Road, Killington. Refer to website for pricing. Weekly 9-hole scramble tournament with team and individual sign-ups, prizes from local businesses, and the return of the McGonagle Cup. Must be 21+ to participate. killington.com.

Singo Bingo at The Sparkle Barn

6-7:30 p.m. The Sparkle Barn, 1509 US Route 7, Wallingford. \$8. Music-themed bingo night in the Bloom Room featuring three games and prizes from local businesses. Includes a keepsake Dazzle Bingo Dauber. Ages 18+; BYOB for 21+. thesparklebarn.com/events.

Women's Circle

6-8 p.m. Vermont Farmers Food Center, 251 West St., Rutland. Free. A social and learning space for women and gender expansive individuals 18+, with time for connection, discussion, and light refreshments. socialtinkering.org/womenscircle.

LGBTQIA+ Speed Dating by Wingman of the Year

7-9 p.m. Bailey's Place, 13 Evelyn St., Rutland. Free. Ages 18+. A fun and inclusive evening of speed dating for the LGBTQIA+ community, with laughter, conversation, and the chance to make meaningful connections. facebook.com/BaileysPlaceVT.

Film Screening: 'Jane Austin Wrecked My Life' (R)

7:30 p.m. Playhouse Movie Theatre, 139 Main St., Randolph. \$7-\$10. RomCom about a young woman in Paris who dreams of becoming a successful writer and experiencing true love. In French with English subtitles. playhouseflicks.com.

FRI
6/13

Senior Café

10-11 a.m. Hartland Public Library, 153 US-5, Hartland. Free. Monthly gathering on the first Friday for unprogrammed social time with refreshments. Technical support appointments available by request. Transportation assistance may be arranged through Volunteers in Action. admin@aginginhartland.org or via@mahhc.org.

Chaffee: Artery

10:30 a.m. - noon. 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.

Friends of the Library Book Sales

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. By donation. Thousands of gently used books, CDs, DVDs, and puzzles for all ages, plus rare and antique selections. Limit two grocery bags per family. No book dealers. Proceeds support library programs. rutlandfree.org.

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.org.



**VERMONT FREE
FISHING DAY**

ALL DAY

Calendar:

from page 14



DRAWING FROM NATURE: FEATHERS AND NESTS

SATURDAY @ 9 AM

We Rise: Status of Vermont's Women and Girls

Noon-6 p.m. Killington Grand Hotel, 228 E. Mountain Road, Killington. Free. Join Vermont Women's Fund grantees, community leaders, and advocates for lunch, panel discussions, and networking focused on the challenges and progress facing women and girls in Vermont. Includes lunch and reception. RSVP at forms.gle/TRBg4xYg3EGczw4A9. vermontwomensfund.org.

Hartland Farmers Market

4-6:30 p.m. Hartland Farmers Market, 153 US Route 5, Hartland. Free. Weekly Friday market returns with local produce, goods, and community spirit. Interested vendors can find applications and info online. hartlandfarmersmarket.com.

Food Truck Friday – West Rutland

4-7 p.m. West Rutland Recreation, 294 Fairview Ave., West Rutland. Free. Enjoy food from Hangry Hoggs, Pelletier's Maple, and Scoop n Chill plus live music in a laid-back community setting. facebook.com/westrutlandrecreation.

History Through Craft Workshop

4-7 p.m. Proctorsville Market, Proctorsville Green, Proctorsville. Free. Join the Cavendish Historical Society to make patriotic bubble wands in this hands-on history workshop. Visitors to the CHS Museum on Sundays can also create paper red, white, and blue carnations. 802-226-7807 or margocaulfield@icloud.com.

Market on the Green

4-7 p.m. (Fridays through mid-October) Village Green, 7 Depot St., Proctorsville. Free. Enjoy local produce, meats, cheeses, baked goods, maple syrup, handmade crafts, music, and more. proctorsvillemarket.com.

Teen Movie Night & Ice Cream Social

5-7 p.m. Prouty's Parlor, 62 Merchants Row, Rutland. Free. Youth ages 11-17 are invited for a screening of "The Boogeyman" (PG-13) starting at 5:30 p.m., plus a build-your-own sundae bar, free soda, and social fun. comealiveoutside.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, \$10 for students, \$12 for RRMC employees and family. Learn West Coast Swing with flexible registration options for individual nights or the full series. Pre-registration required. vtwestiebest@gmail.com.

VINS Member Appreciation Evening Picnic

5:30-7:30 p.m. VINS Nature Center, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. Free for VINS members. An exclusive after-hours event to thank members with behind-the-scenes wildlife programs, live music, open access to the Forest Canopy Walk and Nature Center, and food options from the Nature Store or Quechee Pizza Chef. Registration required. vinsweb.org.

Food & Art Friday with The Rhythm Riderz

5:30-8:30 p.m. Sable Land, 588 N Taggart Hill Road, Stockbridge. \$5-\$20 suggested donation. Enjoy a hip hop dance performance by VT-based breaking crew The Rhythm Riderz, plus works-in-progress from Sable's Artists in Residence and wood-fired pizza from Fat Dragon Farm. BYOB and blanket. thesableproject.org/food-and-art.

Porcupine Bikes Group Mountain Bike Ride – Pizza Ride

6-8 p.m. The Trail House, 758 Old Lake Rd., Poultney. Free. Join Slate Valley Trails and Porcupine Bikes for a Friday night group ride open to all ability levels. Groups may split by pace. Post-ride wood-fired pizza served by donation. slatevalleytrails.org.

Stockwell Brothers in Concert

6-8 p.m. Shrewsbury Meeting House, 88 Lottery Rd., Shrewsbury. By donation. Opening show of the Shrewsbury Meeting House Concert Series featuring Vermont's own Stockwell Brothers. Acoustic set blending traditional and progressive bluegrass styles. Bring a chair or blanket. Rain or shine; food available from Spring Lake Ranch. shrewsburyvt.org/venue/community-meeting-house.

Artist Talk: Woodturner David Munyak

7-8:30 p.m. Brandon Artists Guild, 7 Center St., Brandon. Free. As part of the Artist of the Month series, Middletown Springs woodturner David Munyak discusses his design principles, techniques, and finishes. Light refreshments served. brandonartistsguild.org.

Film Screening: 'How To Train Your Dragon' (PG)

7:30 p.m. Playhouse Movie Theatre, 139 Main St., Randolph. \$7-\$10. New live action remake of the hit animated film trilogy about the friendship between a young man and his dragon. playhouseflicks.com.

After Hours with John Pinetree

7:30-10:30 p.m. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green #2, Woodstock. \$20-\$25. Enjoy a night of live music with John Pinetree. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. for drinks. Presented by Pentangle Arts. pentanglearts.org/event-details/after-hours-with-john-pinetree

'Lilo & Stitch' & 'Thunderbolts' Double Feature

9 p.m. Bethel Drive-In, 36 Bethel Drive, Bethel. \$12 adults, \$8 children (ages 5-12), Free under 5. Cash only. "Lilo & Stitch" (PG) at 9 p.m. followed by "Thunderbolts" (PG-13) at 10:55 p.m. betheldrivein.com.

SAT
6/14

Bird Walk

8-10 a.m. Smokey House Center, 426 Danby Mountain Road, Danby. Free. Explore diverse habitats with local birder and forester Lee Allen during this final guided walk of the spring birding series. Learn to identify bird species, hear about conservation efforts, and enjoy views across 5,000 acres of land. All skill levels welcome; bring binoculars or borrow a pair on-site. smokeyhouse.org.

Vermont Free Fishing Day

All day. Statewide. Free. Fish anywhere in Vermont without a license on this annual day for residents and nonresidents. Highlighted by a free family fishing festival in Grand Isle. vtfishandwildlife.com.

West Rutland Marsh Monitoring Walk

7 a.m. Marble St. Boardwalk, West Rutland. Join Rutland Young Professionals for a monthly monitoring of West Rutland Marsh led by a Rutland County Audubon member. Beginners to experts invited. Walk the whole 4-mile route or go halfway. rutlandyoungprofessionals.org.

Birding Meetup

8-8:45 a.m. Vermont Institute of Natural Science Nature Center, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. Free. Join fellow birders and VINS staff for an informal morning meetup focused on bird identification and population tracking. All skill levels welcome; intermediate to advanced birders encouraged. Binoculars available to borrow. Held outdoors, rain or shine. vinsweb.org.

Pancake Breakfast Buffet & Food Drive

8-11 a.m. Masonic Lodge, 63 Franklin St., West Rutland. By donation. Monthly public breakfast hosted by Hiram Lodge #101 featuring pancakes, French toast, eggs, hash browns, corned beef hash, bacon, sausage, and beverages, served with real Vermont maple syrup. Non-perishable food and monetary donations accepted for the West Rutland Food Shelf.

Trail Sit

9-11:30 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.-2 p.m. Fairgrounds Trailhead, 131 Town Farm Road, Poultney. Free. Join Slate Valley Trails for outdoor mindfulness and nature-connection experience along the trail. All ages welcome; no prior experience needed. slatevalleytrails.org.

Drawing from Nature: Feathers and Nests

9 a.m.-Noon. Vermont Institute of Natural Science Nature Center, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. \$52 general public, \$48 VINS members. Explore feather and nest textures using watercolor and ink in the first class of the Drawing from Nature series. No experience required; materials list provided. Designed for adults and youth 10+ with adult companion. Advance registration required. vinsweb.org.

Free Community Shred Event

9 a.m.-Noon. Ron Hance Operations Center, 26 Allen St., Rutland. Free. Safely dispose of personal, non-commercial documents (limit 3 standard-sized boxes per vehicle; no binders or books). The Rutland County Humane Society will be onsite with info on pet adoption and animal welfare programs. hfcuvt.com.

Strawberry Jam Fun Run 2025

9:15-11 a.m. Green on Park Ave., Middletown Springs. \$20-\$30. Kick off the Strawberry Festival with a USA Track & Field sanctioned 5K run/walk and a youth fun run. Registration includes music and a race t-shirt (guaranteed if registered by May 30). Event capped at 150 participants. runreg.com/strawberry-jam-run.

Mount Tom Farmers Market

9:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. (Saturdays) Saskadena Six parking lot, 247 Stage Road, South Pomfret. Shop local produce, handmade goods, and crafts at Woodstock's oldest open-air market. Enjoy trails, picnic spots, and a growing list of local vendors every Saturday through Oct. 18. woodstockvt.com.

Vermont Farmers Market

9 a.m.-2 p.m. Depot Park, Downtown Rutland. Free. Outdoor market open for the season. Shop local produce, crafts, and goods every Saturday through Oct 25. vtfarmersmarket.org.

No Kings: Day of Action Rally

10 a.m.-Noon. Gazebo Park, 5 N. Main St., Rutland. Free. Join a national day of action opposing authoritarianism and political corruption. Peaceful, nonviolent rally to affirm democratic values and community solidarity. nokings.org and mobilize.us.

Friends of the Library Book Sales

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. By donation. Thousands of gently used books, CDs, DVDs, and puzzles for all ages, plus rare and antique selections. Limit two grocery bags per family. No book dealers. Proceeds support library programs. rutlandfree.org.

Organizing and Decluttering 101

11 a.m.-noon. Fletcher Memorial Library, 88 Main St., Ludlow. Free. Professional home organizer Kris Harmelink shares tips on tackling clutter, identifying goals, and overcoming common obstacles. fmlnews.org.

Celebrate 'Wings of Fire'

11 a.m.-1 p.m. Phoenix Books, 2 Center St., Rutland. Free. Drop in for crafts and activities inspired by "Wings of Fire," including making dragon eggs, comics, and custom book covers. Open to all ages. phoenixbooks.biz.

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/.

Masterclass: Harmonica with John Pinetree


1-3 p.m. Woodstock Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green #2, Woodstock. \$25. Join John Pinetree for an intensive harmonica masterclass covering techniques, key/harp choices, and specialty tuning. Participants are encouraged to bring their instruments. pentanglearts.org.

Roast Beef Supper

5-7 p.m. Odd Fellows Hall, 37 Lake St., Belmont. \$15 adults, \$8 children 12 and under. All-you-can-eat family-style roast beef supper with mashed potatoes, gravy, vegetables, rolls, and desserts. Takeouts available starting at 4:45 p.m. Benefits Mount Holly Volunteer Fire Department. 802-259-2460.

Vietnam Veterans of America Chapter 1 Banquet

5-8 p.m. Franklin Conference Center, 1 Scale Ave., Rutland. Chapter 1 of the Vietnam Veterans of America celebrates its 45th anniversary with a banquet, guest speakers, a buffet dinner, and recognition of MIA/POW soldiers. vietnamvetschapter1@gmail.com.

 **Calendar:** Email events@mountaintimes.info.....
from page 15

‘What the Constitution Means to Me’ – Benefit

Reading

7-9 p.m. Shaker Bridge Theatre at Briggs Opera House, 5 S. Main St., White River Junction. \$20. One-night reading of Heidi Schreck’s Tony-nominated play, directed by Bill Coons and featuring Susan Haefner, Richard Waterhouse, and Kaitlynn Cherry. Proceeds support the theatre’s 18th season. shakerbridgetheatre.org.

‘How To Train Your Dragon’ (PG)

7:30 p.m. Playhouse Movie Theatre, 139 Main St., Randolph. \$7-\$10. New live action remake of the hit animated film trilogy about the friendship between a young man and his dragon. playhouseflicks.com.

‘Lilo & Stitch’ & ‘Thunderbolts’ Double Feature

9 p.m. Bethel Drive-In, 36 Bethel Drive, Bethel. \$12 adults, \$8 children (ages 5-12), Free under 5. Cash only. “Lilo & Stitch” (PG) at 9 p.m. followed by “Thunderbolts” (PG-13) at 10:55 p.m. betheldrivein.com.

SUN
6/15

Ludlow Farmers Market

9 a.m.-1 p.m. 37 S Depot St., Ludlow. Free. Weekly outdoor market featuring local vendors every Sunday through October. ludlowmarket.org.

Intro to Fused Glass

10 a.m.-Noon. Kaleidoscope Art Supply, 37 Center St., Upstairs, Rutland. \$40. Learn basic fused glass techniques while creating two small flower suncatchers in this Father’s Day workshop with Vermont artist Charlotte. All materials included; finished pieces will be fired and available for pickup two weeks later. kaleidoscopeartsupply.square.site.

Movement Improvisation Lab

10 a.m.-Noon. Sundays (through June 22), Stone Valley Arts, 145 E. Main St., Poultny. A five-week exploratory series in guided movement play with dancer and choreographer Melisa Clark. Open to all. Each session includes breath-based warm-ups, improvisation, creative reflection, and instant composition. \$125 for the full series or \$30 per session. pimagroup.org.

Father’s Day “Base Ball” at Billings Farm

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. Included with admission. Celebrate Father’s Day with farm tours, exhibits, and a lively 1860s-style base ball game at 2 p.m. Dads receive a free scoop of ice cream from the Farmhouse Scoop Shop. billingsfarm.org.

Olga Vinokur Performance at North Chapel

2 p.m. North Chapel, 7 Church St., Woodstock. Free. Acclaimed pianist Olga Vinokur performs, sharing her internationally recognized artistry. northchapelvt.org.

Revolutionary Cemetery Talk and Tour

2-3 p.m. Cavendish Historical Society Museum, 1958 Main St., Cavendish. Free. Learn about Cavendish patriots during a historical talk followed by a walk to the Revolutionary War Cemetery. Dress for a hill walk. 802-226-7807 or margocaulfield@icloud.com.

Film Screening: ‘How To Train Your Dragon’ (PG)

2 p.m. Playhouse Movie Theatre, 139 Main St., Randolph. \$7-\$10. New live action remake of the hit animated film trilogy about the friendship between a young man and his dragon. This screening shown with open captions. playhouseflicks.com.

50th Annual Strawberry Festival

2-4 p.m. Middletown Springs Historical Society, 10 Park Ave., Middletown Springs. Free admission; \$10 strawberry shortcake. Celebrate with fresh strawberry shortcake, local crafts, live music, a quilt exhibit, children’s activities, and a raffle. Fresh berries available by the quart. middletownspringshistoricalsociety.org.

Soul Collage

3-5 p.m. Kaleidoscope Art Supply, 37 Center St., Rutland. \$35. Join artist and intuitive Christine Meola to create personal divination cards in a guided session focused on self-connection. All supplies provided. kaleidoscopeartsupply.square.site.

Long Pose Figure Painting

5:30-7:15 p.m. Kaleidoscope Art Supply, 37 Center St., Rutland. \$22. Join Raven for a long pose figure painting session. All skill levels and mediums welcome. Ages 18+ or 16+ with waiver. Art supplies and easels provided or bring your own. kaleidoscopeartsupply.square.site.

‘Lilo & Stitch’ & ‘Thunderbolts’ Double Feature

9 p.m. Bethel Drive-In, 36 Bethel Drive, Bethel. \$12 adults, \$8 children (ages 5-12), Free under 5. Cash only. “Lilo & Stitch” (PG) at 9 p.m. followed by “Thunderbolts” (PG-13) at 10:55 p.m. betheldrivein.com.

MON
6/16

Bone Builders

10 a.m. Sherburne Memorial Library, 2998 River Road, Killington. Free. Weights are provided. sherburnelibrary.org or 802-422-432.

Monday Movie

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

Roller Skating Lessons at Barwood Arena

5:30-6:30 p.m. (ages 5+), 6:45-8 p.m. (adults 16+). (Mondays through July 7). \$40 for series. Barwood Arena, 45 Highland Ave., White River Junction. Four-week Monday evening series for absolute beginners to intermediate skaters. Includes instruction and guided open skate. Skaters must bring their own skates, helmet, wrist and knee pads. Register: hartfordvt.myrec.com.

Group Trail Run

6-8 p.m. Fairgrounds Trailhead, 131 Town Farm Road, Poultny. Free. Weekly Monday night runs with Slate Valley Trails. Routes vary with options for different distances and abilities. Bring water, snacks, and bug spray. Check Facebook for weather updates. slatevalleytrails.org.

TUES
6/17

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.

Night Golf League

5 p.m. (Tuesdays) Green Mountain National Golf Course, 476 Barrows Towne Road, Killington. Weekly four-person team scramble league open to all ability levels. Sign up by 4:30 p.m. Tuesdays at the clubhouse. greenmountainnationalgolf.com.

Long Pose Figure Painting

5:30-7:15 p.m. Kaleidoscope Art Supply, 37 Center St., Upstairs, Rutland. \$22. Join artist Raven for a relaxed long pose figure painting session. All skill levels welcome; ages 18+ or 16+ with parental waiver. Materials and easels available or bring your own. Artists receive 10% off supplies purchased day of class. kaleidoscopeartsupply.square.site.

Wallingford Walking Group

6-7 pm. Hart Library, 14 S. Main St., Wallingford. Free. 25-45 min. walks with Heather Johnson. Walk at the pace of the group. No pressure and no judgment, just enjoyment of the outdoors. comealiveoutdoors.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.

Tuesdays: Summer Concert Series – Yankee

Chank

6-8 p.m. Pittsford Village Farm, 42 Elm St., Pittsford. Free. Kicking off the Tuesdays summer concert series, Yankee Chank brings Cajun music to the Village Farm grounds. Bring a blanket or lawn chair. Concerts are outdoors and weather dependent. Donations appreciated. pittsfordvillagefarm.org.

‘Just Getting By’ – A VT Humanities Documentary

Screening

6:30-8 p.m. Hartland Public Library, 153 US-5, Hartland. Free. Screening of “Just Getting By,” a documentary exploring food and housing insecurity in Vermont. Directed by Bess O’Brien and produced by Kingdom County Productions, the film highlights the experiences of working families, the homeless, New Americans, and Native-led farming initiatives. Sponsored by Vermont Humanities. hartlandlibraryvt.org.

Gather Together with Social Tinkering

6-8 p.m. Vermont Farmers Food Center, 251 West St., Rutland. An inclusive all-ages community social with games, puzzles, and activities; participants are welcome to bring instruments, crafts, or games to share. socialtinkering.org/gathertogether.

ONGOING

‘Almost Heaven: John Denver’s America’

June 11–July 6. Walker Farm, 705 Main St., Weston. \$25-\$88. Weston Theater Company presents a musical celebration of John Denver’s life and songs, from “Take Me Home, Country Roads” to “Annie’s Song.” Directed by Sherry Stregack Lutken. westontheater.org.

AP Art & Seniors Exhibit

Through June 14. Gallery hours vary. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Free. Enjoy artwork from graduating seniors and AP art students from Woodstock Union High School and The Sharon Academy. artistreevt.org.

NSAA Downhill Bike Park Summit

June 16-18. Killington Grand Resort & Conference Center, 228 E. Mountain Road, Killington. \$250-\$475. Annual summit hosted by the National Ski Areas Association offering workshops, discussions, and networking on downhill mountain biking operations, safety, trail design, and technology. Registration includes sessions, meals, and materials. nsaa.org.

‘Threads...’ Fiber & Fabrics Exhibit

Through July 18. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. Free. A community fiber and fabric art exhibit. chaffeeartcenter.org.

Vermont Days: Free Admission to State Parks & Historic Sites

All day June 14-15. Statewide Vermont State Parks and State Historic Sites. Free. Celebrate summer with free entry to all Vermont State Parks, six State Historic Sites, the Vermont History Museum (Montpelier), and the Vermont History Center (Barre). Enjoy hiking, fishing, picnicking, and learning Vermont’s history. vtstateparks.com.

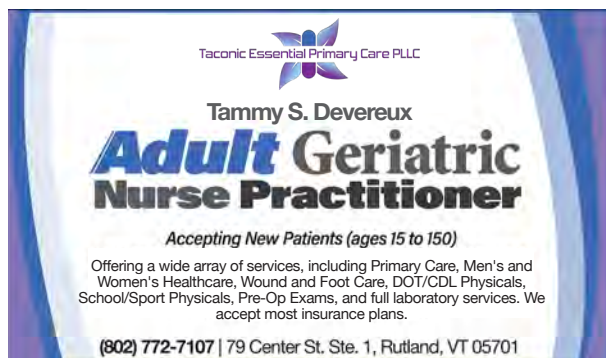
UPCOMING

Cirque Series Trail Run

June 28 at 9 a.m. Killington Resort, 4763 Killington Road, Killington. \$99. First-time Killington host of the Cirque Series features a 7.23-mile, 3-peak mountain trail race, with bib pickup at 7 a.m., awards at 1:30 p.m., raffle at 2 p.m., vendor village, and after-party at 6 p.m. at Killington Distillery. cirqueseries.com.

‘The Sound of Music’ at King Farm

June 19-29. King Farm, 382 King Farm Road, Woodstock. \$12-\$25. BarnArts presents an outdoor production of “The Sound of Music” in a scenic hilltop setting with a local cast and live music. Bring chairs or blankets and a picnic. barnarts.org.



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WED
6/11

LUDLOW

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

POULTNEY

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

RUTLAND

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

SOUTH POMFRET

6:30 p.m. Artistree – Olive Klug on the Hillside

THUR
6/12

BARNARD

5:30 p.m. Fable Farm – Feast & Field: Shady Rill

BRANDON

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

BRIDGEWATER
CORNERS

5 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Jeremiah Strauss

KILLINGTON

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

6 p.m. Rivershed – Krishna Guthrie

8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Carl Anton

LONDONDERRY

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

LUDLOW

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

POULTNEY

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

QUECHEE

5 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music with Leo Reinhard

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

RUTLAND

6 p.m. Speakeasy Cafe – Trivia Night

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

WOODSTOCK

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Sammy B

FRI
6/13

BOMOSEEN

5:30 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – John Lyons

6 p.m. The Lakehouse – Ryan Fuller

BRIDGEWATER
CORNERS

6 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Trivia in the Taproom

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. Snowshed Umbrella Bar – Liz Reedy

6 p.m. Rivershed – Rob Pagnano

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

6 p.m. The Foundry – Rhys Chalmers

7 p.m. Casey's Caboose – Tboneicus Jones

PITTSFORD

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

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Mike Schwaner

QUECHEE

5 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Jazz with Peter and Friends

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Plymouth Rock

RUTLAND

6 p.m. Stonehedge Indoor Golf – Duane Carleton

STOCKBRIDGE

7:30 p.m. Wild Fern – Hezzie & The Flashbacks

WOODSTOCK

6:30 p.m. Town Hall Theatre – John Pinetree and The Yellin' Degenerates

SAT
6/14

BOMOSEEN

5:30 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Tom Davison

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mills Comedy Club – Comedy Show with headliner Zach Russell

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. The Umbrella Bar in Killington – Duane Carleton

6 p.m. Rivershed – Rob Pagnano

6 p.m. The Foundry – Music by Cooper

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

LUDLOW

7 p.m. The Killarney – Liz Reedy

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Breanne Elaine

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Fromo

6 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music With Temple Mountain

RANDOLPH

10 a.m. Farmers Market – Liz Reedy

RUTLAND

10 a.m. Farmers Market – George Nostrand

8 p.m. The Moose Lodge – Karaoke with Sunset Entertainment

STOCKBRIDGE

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

WOODSTOCK

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

SUN
6/15

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Ryan Fuller

BRIDGEWATER

CORNERS

3 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Breanna Elaine

KILLINGTON

Noon. Rivershed – Brunch with Tboneicus Jones

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tboneicus Jones

6 p.m. Rivershed – Trivia

6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Blues & Whiskey with Marc Edwards

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

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

LUDLOW

5 p.m. Main and Mountain – Liz Reedy

QUECHEE

2 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music with Beth Monroe

STOCKBRIDGE

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

MON
6/16

KILLINGTON

5:30 p.m. Sushi Yoshi – Tboneicus Jones

LUDLOW

5 p.m. Little Mexico – Sammy B

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

RUTLAND

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

STOCKBRIDGE

6 p.m. Wild Fern – Bow Thayer/ Sons of Williams

WOODSTOCK

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – The Grey Cats

TUE
6/17

PITTSFIELD

7 p.m. Town Hall – Open Jam

POULTNEY

7 p.m. Poultney Pub – Bluegrass Jam

RUTLAND

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

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Shawn Colvin



By Neilson Hubbard
Grammy-Award winning singer-songwriter Rodney Crowell

Shawn Colvin and Rodney Crowell share the stage at the Paramount

The Grammy-winning musicians aim to please with an evening built on songwriting and acoustic style

Friday, June 20 at 7:30 p.m.—RUTLAND—Two of Americana's most celebrated voices—Shawn Colvin and Rodney Crowell—will share the stage at the Paramount Theatre as part of their “Together On Stage” tour. The evening promises an unforgettable blend of storytelling, stripped-down arrangements, and the kind of musical chemistry that only decades of artistry can create.

For both Colvin and Crowell, this show represents something new. “We’ve known each other for a long time,” Colvin said, “but we’ve never done a tour like this—trading songs, singing together. I think it’s going to be great. I’m thrilled. I’m a huge fan of Rodney.”

Crowell echoed that sentiment. “I think it came out of a conversation Shawn and I had a couple of years ago,” he said. “Then we were on the Cayamo boat together, and we talked about it some more. Eventually, I just said, ‘Let’s not talk about it—let’s do it.’”

The Paramount Theatre—with its renowned acoustics—is the perfect setting for this type of show, which Crowell described as “more songwriterly.” “It’s not about hitting marks,” he said. “It’s about intuiting how to tell a story you’ve already told in a brand-new way. There’ll be songs we do together; we’ll interrupt each other, tell

stories—it’ll seem unrehearsed because mostly it is.”

A legacy of lyrics and longevity

Rodney Crowell is often referred to as a songwriter’s songwriter, with a career spanning more than four decades that includes Grammy wins, induction into the Nashville Songwriters Hall of Fame, and hit songs recorded by legends such as Johnny Cash, Emmylou Harris, and Bob Seger. Still, Crowell finds joy in the quiet creative process: “I like performing, I really do,” he said. “But my favorite thing is writing. It’s really an introverted experience.”

That doesn’t mean he’s slowing down. Crowell’s new album “Airline Highway” is due out August 29, and he hinted that the Paramount audience may hear some new material—even if it was initially recorded with “screamin’ slide guitars.” “If the song works, it works,” he said. “I’m not afraid of playing it acoustic.”

Shawn Colvin’s enduring voice

Shawn Colvin, whose signature track “Sunny Came Home” earned her multiple Grammy Awards, brings a poetic and introspective voice to the performance. A gifted guitarist and lyrical storyteller, Colvin’s work has long resonated with fans seeking songs of emotional honesty and nuance.

She recalled to the Mountain Times how her father introduced her to the guitar.

“My dad tried to teach my brother, who didn’t care,” Colvin said. “I said, ‘Hello, do you mind?’ So he started teaching me.” Colvin also credits a Mel Bay guitar chord book and early musical influences, such as Laura Nyro and Elton John, for shaping her style. “At 15, I started listening to Laura Nyro. She was either a wizard or a genius,” she said of the legendary singer-songwriter.

Though 2026 marks the 30th anniversary of her landmark album “A Few Small Repairs,” Colvin is focused on the road ahead. She hinted at new material in the works and is looking forward to future tour dates, including an August run with Keb’ Mo’ and an October tribute concert to Emmylou Harris in San Francisco.

An evening to remember

Both artists are bringing decades of experience—and a sense of play—to this Northeast mini-tour. “We’ll have fun,” Crowell promised. “That’s a guarantee. It’s not work. It’s called playing music.”

Two outstanding performers sharing the stage at one of the area’s best venues—what a great way to start the summer.

For tickets and more info, visit: paramountvt.org.

Brandon Artists Guild launches 2025 Artist of the Month series with woodturner David Munyak

June 13 from 7-8:30 p.m.—BRANDON—The Brandon Artists Guild will kick off its 2025 Artist of the Month series with a special presentation by woodturner David Munyak of Middletown Springs on Friday at the Guild’s downtown Brandon gallery.

As the first featured artist in this 5-part summer series, Munyak will offer an inside look at his creative process, sharing the design principles, techniques, and careful craftsmanship behind his finely finished wooden bowls and vessels.



Submitted
David Munyak’s work will be on hand during a presentation at the Brandon Artists Guild on June 13.

Known for his meticulous attention to detail and graceful forms, Munyak’s work blends functionality with artistry, reflecting a deep appreciation for the natural beauty of wood. The Artist of the Month series provides the public with an opportunity to engage directly with some of the region’s most talented makers. Each evening talk offers an intimate opportunity to learn more about the methods, inspirations, and challenges behind an artist’s work—all in the welcoming setting of the Guild’s gallery. The event is free and open to the public, and light refreshments will be served. For more information, visit: brandonartistsguild.org.

Middletown Springs marks 50 years of strawberry celebration



June 15 from 2-4 p.m.—MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS—The Middletown Springs Historical Society will celebrate a sweet milestone on Sunday as it hosts its 50th Annual Strawberry Festival at its building on the Green at 10 Park Ave.

A cherished summer tradition, the festival offers a relaxing afternoon of local flavor, live music, and community gathering. Visitors can enjoy strawberry shortcake made with fresh-picked berries, homemade biscuits, Stewarts vanilla ice cream, and whipped cream—all served with a choice of iced tea, lemonade, or hot coffee. The shortcake costs \$10, and fresh berries will also be available by the quart.

The event also features a small craft fair with local artists and craftspeople offering maple products, jewelry, photography, knitted goods, and beeswax items. Live acoustic music will accompany the festivities, and attendees can enter a raffle for a chance to win a variety of prizes.

New this year is a quilt exhibit titled “Patterns and Provenance: Quilts of Middletown Springs, 1840–1920,” featuring 20 heirloom quilts passed down through local families. The exhibit will be on display in the Historical Society’s first-floor museum space and will remain open on Sundays from 2 to 4 p.m. through October 12, with additional viewings available by appointment through December 21.

Children are invited to take part in a hands-on paper quilt activity, and admission to both the museum and children’s activities is free.

For more information, contact David Wright at (802) 235-2376 or Pat Hemenway at (802) 235-2421.



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Shaker Bridge Theatre presents a one-night benefit reading of ‘What the Constitution Means to Me’

Saturday, June 14, from 7-9 p.m.—WHITE RIVER JUNCTION—Shaker Bridge Theatre will present a one-night-only staged reading of “What the Constitution Means to Me” at the Briggs Opera House, 5 S. Main St., White River Junction, as a fundraiser to support its 18th season. The event, which coincides with Flag Day, invites audiences to engage with one of the most acclaimed and thought-provoking American plays of the last decade.

Written by playwright Heidi Schreck, “What the Constitution Means to Me” breathes new life into the U.S. Constitution by framing it through the eyes of a 15-year-old debater who once earned her college tuition through high school competitions on the topic. In this heartfelt, humorous, and deeply personal play, Schreck resurrects her teenage self to examine how the Constitution has shaped the lives of four generations of women in her family—and how it continues to influence American life today.

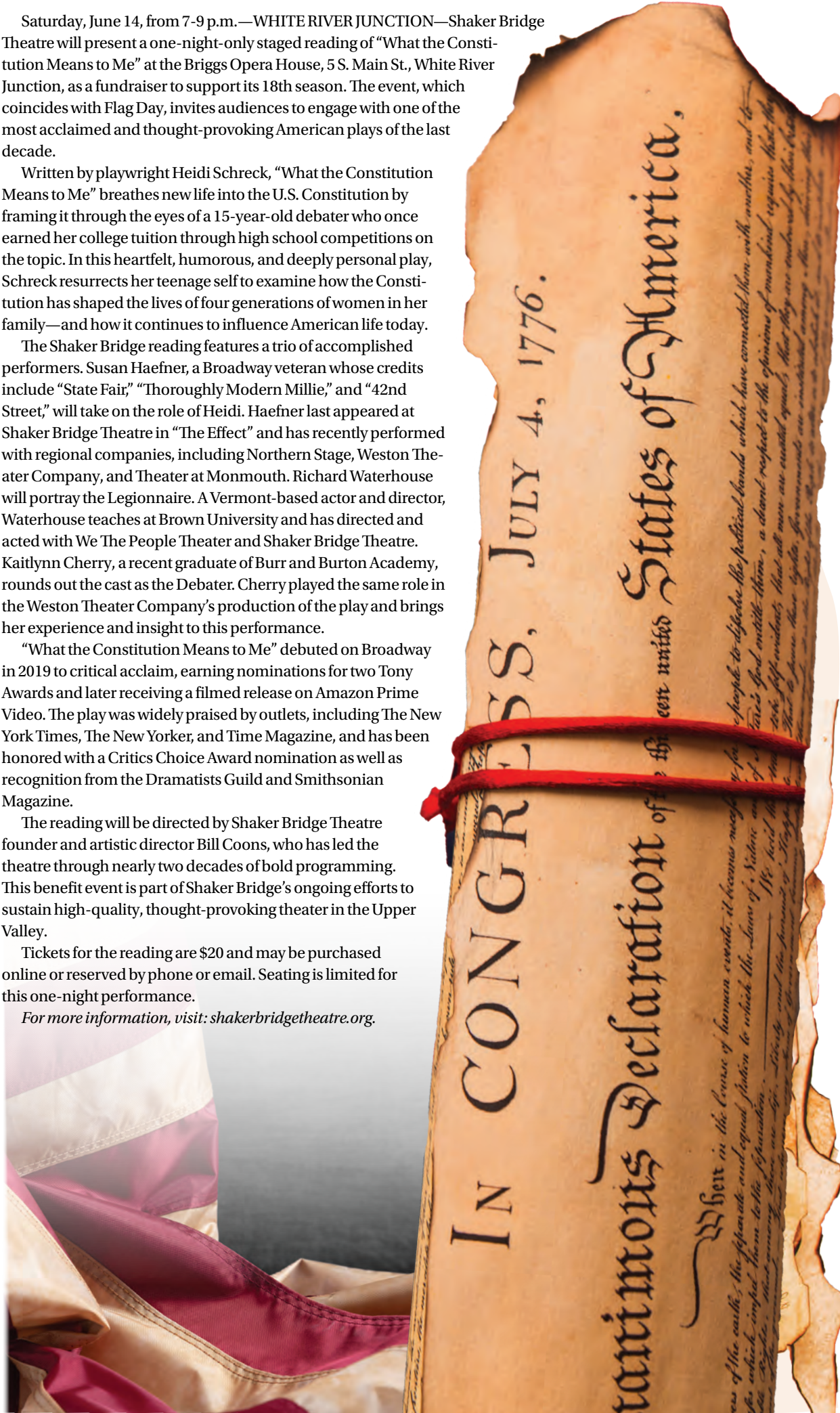
The Shaker Bridge reading features a trio of accomplished performers. Susan Haefner, a Broadway veteran whose credits include “State Fair,” “Thoroughly Modern Millie,” and “42nd Street,” will take on the role of Heidi. Haefner last appeared at Shaker Bridge Theatre in “The Effect” and has recently performed with regional companies, including Northern Stage, Weston Theater Company, and Theater at Monmouth. Richard Waterhouse will portray the Legionnaire. A Vermont-based actor and director, Waterhouse teaches at Brown University and has directed and acted with We The People Theater and Shaker Bridge Theatre. Kaitlynn Cherry, a recent graduate of Burr and Burton Academy, rounds out the cast as the Debater. Cherry played the same role in the Weston Theater Company’s production of the play and brings her experience and insight to this performance.

“What the Constitution Means to Me” debuted on Broadway in 2019 to critical acclaim, earning nominations for two Tony Awards and later receiving a filmed release on Amazon Prime Video. The play was widely praised by outlets, including The New York Times, The New Yorker, and Time Magazine, and has been honored with a Critics Choice Award nomination as well as recognition from the Dramatists Guild and Smithsonian Magazine.

The reading will be directed by Shaker Bridge Theatre founder and artistic director Bill Coons, who has led the theatre through nearly two decades of bold programming. This benefit event is part of Shaker Bridge’s ongoing efforts to sustain high-quality, thought-provoking theater in the Upper Valley.

Tickets for the reading are \$20 and may be purchased online or reserved by phone or email. Seating is limited for this one-night performance.

For more information, visit: shakerbridgetheatre.org.



Rockin' the Region with Rivalry

Jacob Vahey, 14, and Lila Bucci, 15, who form the duo group Rivalry, are the youngest musicians I've interviewed to date. Coincidentally, Vahey's Mom, Laura, attends my music bingo at the Public House Pub in Quechee. Rivalry played the Public House on St Patrick's Day and Cinco De Mayo. They'll return to play there on Aug. 25. Owner Andrew Schain said, "They're great kids and are really trying hard to make it. They're young but fun."

Vahey (of Hartford) and Bucci (of Norwich) are high school freshmen who met back in 2023 at Tuck's Rock Dojo in Etna, New Hampshire, which is similar to a School of Rock-type school. Tuck, a graduate of Berklee College of Music, and his wife, Jaden, run the school. Vahey and Bucci were placed in the same band because of their affinity for rock music, specifically The Foo Fighters. Later that year, they had their first gig, so to speak, an unofficial busking session in the Quechee Gorge parking lot on Columbus Day weekend. Bucci said their popularity grew from there.

I love how band names are formed. Rivalry is one of the best I've heard. Jacob is a Red Sox fan, and Lila is a New York Yankees fan; the two of them are Rivalry, just like their baseball teams (Go Sox!)

Rivalry performs their acoustic shows with Vahey on acoustic guitar and Bucci on vocals. They write and produce their music, mainly playing rock covers with an occasional Noah Kahan tune.

"We try and play well-known songs that a lot of people know," Vahey said.

They'll take a song like Alice in Chains' "Rooster" and play it acoustic, an intriguing proposition for sure.

Vahey's first and favorite instrument is the drums, which he has been playing since he was 3. His dad played a drum kit in their house, and Vahey would stand there and watch, then get up and play the beat his dad just played.

"He was a fast learner," Bucci said.

When they play as a band, he's usually on drums. Vahey is a multi-instrumentalist who is primarily self-taught, with some YouTube tutorials.

Bucci began singing at a very young age.

"I basically came out of my mom singing. I had a speech therapy issue when I was little; I wasn't speaking. My mom said at age 2, I would walk around the house belting gibberish, but I was singing,"

Bucci comes from a musical family. Her mom was in a local band, her sister sings, and her dad played guitar and mandolin.

"I would pick up his mandolins, strum, and pretend to play a song, and sing along," Bucci added. She started playing guitar and bass at the beginning of last year and currently plays guitar in the Tuck's Rock Dojo band.

Through Tuck's, Vahey and Bucci had huge gigs when they opened for Noah Kahan at the Bank of NH Pavilion in September 2023. Vahey picked up the guitar for that show because

there was another drummer. Bucci said, "That was probably the best thing in our entire lives." Kahan called them up to sing "Stick Season." Kahan was also a student at Tuck's when he was younger and kept the connection. Kahan was in one of Tuck's Rock Dojo bands, just like Vahey and Bucci.

Rivalry's self-titled, 10-track debut album comes out June 13. Vahey plays all the instruments, and Bucci sings. Vahey also produced the entire album in his home studio. They've previously released two singles, "Future" and "Falling Down." The album will be released digitally on all major music platforms, including Spotify, Apple Music, etc. I listened to those two on their YouTube channel, and they got me hooked. "Future," track 4 on the album, is my favorite. It has an Evanescence feel to it. It's a perfect blend of drums, guitar and vocals. There's an instrumental part halfway through that has a great beat. I found myself rocking along to it, and then it goes right back to her vocals. "Falling Down" (Track 5) is an acoustic number that showcases Bucci's incredible vocals. The lyrics are easy to follow along to.

The entire album contains a song for every mood. Bucci's vocals are perfect on every tune but also a little different on each one. I'm impressed with the professionalism of the album. Each track is produced wonderfully, a credit to Vahey. You won't think it's been made in a home studio. The album gets off to a rocking start with "It's Over," featuring a one-minute instrumental intro. Track 6 "In The Dark," has a Foo Fighters feel to it. The album ends acoustically with "I'll Cry Too," where Bucci's vocals really shine. Two thumbs up, way up.

Vahey is starting a production company, Bliss Road Productions. In addition to producing songs for other budding artists, he hopes to help young local musicians, who might not otherwise have the money to record professionally, record at his home studio.

Rivalry has a plugged-in show at Ottauquechee Yacht Club on July 26, where Tuck and Jaden Stocking will join them on stage.

"It should be loud but fun. A big change from our normal acoustic set," Bucci said.

Vahey and Bucci love music. Vahey hopes to make a career out of it.

"I want to do it for as long as I can," Vahey said.

"I love music. It's been there for me through hard times in my life. When I'm on stage, and I see people smiling at the song we're playing, and I'm singing it well, that makes me happy. I'm glad I have an impact," Bucci said.

For more information on Rivalry, visit Rivalry's YouTube Channel ([rivalry_band](#)), Facebook page ([Rivalry](#)), and Instagram ([rivalry_band](#)).



Rockin' the Region
By Dave Hoffenberg



By Adi Schultz

Teen duo Rivalry's (Jacob Vahey and Lila Bucci) self-titled debut album will be released on June 13

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Killington Recreation gears up for a summer of fun at the Johnson Recreation Center

KILLINGTON — With a hopeful nod to clearer skies after a rainy May, the Killington Recreation Dept. is preparing for a summer packed with activities, events, and community connections. The Johnson Recreation Center will serve as the hub for the town's seasonal offerings, with programs for all ages beginning in mid-June.

Johnson Recreation Pool opens June 16

The town pool at the Johnson Recreation Center will officially open for the season on Monday, June 16. The pool will offer daily free swim hours, along with designated adult swim time. Hours are Monday through Thursday, with adult swim from 11 a.m. to noon and free swim from noon to 5:30 p.m. On Fridays through Sundays, free swim extends until 7 p.m.

Registration for group and private swim lessons is now open. Lessons will begin on July 7 and are available for various skill levels and age groups.

Youth programs highlight summer sports

Among the youth offerings is the return of the junior golf program for ages 8 to 12. This 10-week program offers young golfers the opportunity to practice on the Green Mountain National Golf Course, featuring weekly play and driving range sessions, as well as matches against neighboring junior golf programs.

The popular Challenger Soccer Camp returns Aug. 18–22, offering players aged 6 to 14 a mix of fun games, skill development, and tactical instruction. Open to players of all experience levels, the camp will be held at the Rec Center.

Adult recreation and events

The Killington Pickleball Club invites new and experienced players to join a growing local community. Membership offers access to reserved court times and provides an opportunity to connect with other enthusiasts in the area.

For those looking to enjoy summer evenings, the River Road Concert Series kicks off July 3 with a performance by The Loonz and continues every Thursday through Aug. 21. Concerts run from 6 to 7:30 p.m. on the lawn of Sherburne Memorial Library.

Celebrate the 4th and the 50th

This year's Fourth of July celebration will also mark the 50th anniversary of the Johnson Recreation Center. A full day of festivities includes a parade, pool activities, live music, a barbecue, field games, fireworks, and a new pie-baking contest. Full event details are available at killingtonrec.com.

Chili Cook-Off returns Aug. 7

The Chili Cook-Off returns to K1 Base Lodge on Thursday, Aug. 7, featuring live music from Rick Redington and Tuff Luv. Prizes will be awarded in several categories, including restaurants, individuals, and best vegetarian chili. Registration is open to all.

Facility rentals available

Residents can reserve Johnson Recreation Center facilities free of charge on a first-come, first-served basis. For more information, email recdirector@killingtontown.com.

For full details and to register for programs or events, visit: killingtonrec.com.



The Chili Cook-Off returns to K1 Base Lodge on Thursday, Aug. 7.



By Robin Alberti



The popular Challenger Soccer Camp returns Aug. 18–22.

Courtesy Challenger Sports

Monday Movies at the Sherburne Memorial Library

This week's film: 'Small Things Like These'

KILLINGTON—Every Monday at 1 p.m., the cinephiles meet up at the Sherburne Memorial Library for a free screening of a recent film. This week's feature is "Small Things Like These," starring Oscar winner Cillian Murphy and Oscar nominee Emily Watson. In 1985, coal merchant Bill Furlong uncovers disturbing secrets in a small Irish town that the Roman Catholic Church controls. Adapted from the 2021 novel by Claire Keegan.

For more information, visit: sherburnelibrary.org/movie-monday.



Courtesy IMDb

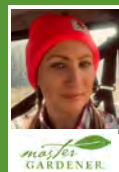
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Gardening Tip of the Week



Daisies have always been a timeless classic addition to flower gardens. If you enjoy the look of the simple Daisy but would like a slight twist on it, Chamomile is a wonderful alternative with many benefits. Based on your growing zone and the type of Chamomile, you can add it as an annual or a perennial. With the appealing look of Daisies, Chamomile has long been used for teas, better sleep, and other medicinal purposes. In addition to it's health benefits, Chamomile is low maintenance and drought tolerant. Pollinators, Butterflies, and Birds also feed from it. Lastly, Chamomile has been known to kill off certain Fungus in soil to help maintain soil health.



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Hey Claws, have you seen the news? There's so much unrest in the world lately — protests, conflicts, and divisions everywhere.

Yeah it reminds me of an old story.



An old story?

Yeah, the one about the two eager beavers who drew close to the flame, poured gas on the fire, got burned and felt pain.



What is that, the CLAWS version of Humpty Dumpty? Anyway, aren't you worried about the rising tensions between nations?

I'm more worried about whether the raccoon is going to forgive me for scolding him or not!



Come on Claws, you can't just sit here like a bump on a log! We have to do something.

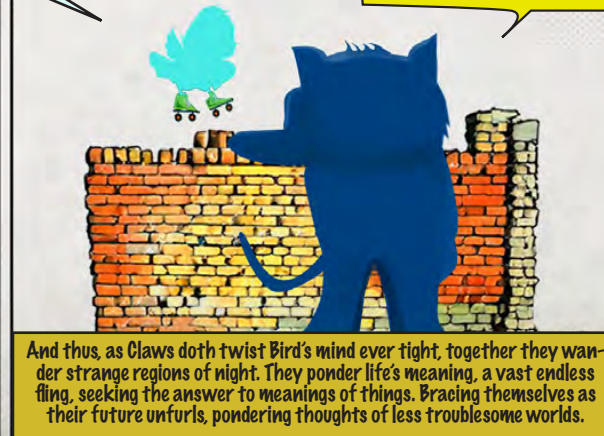
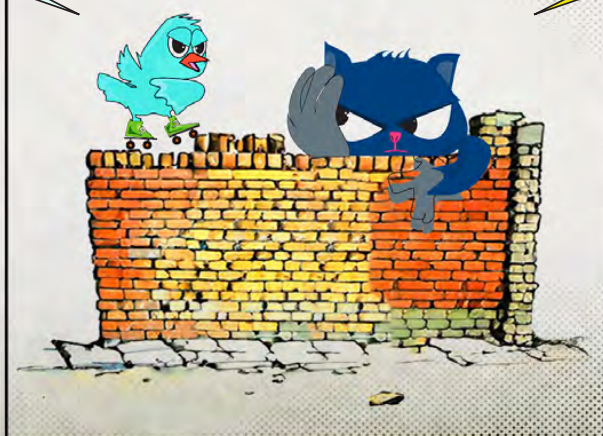
I reject that criticism. I'm no bump on a log...I am a bump on a strangely yellow and orange colored a brick wall.

But, but, but....what do you think people should do about all these problems?

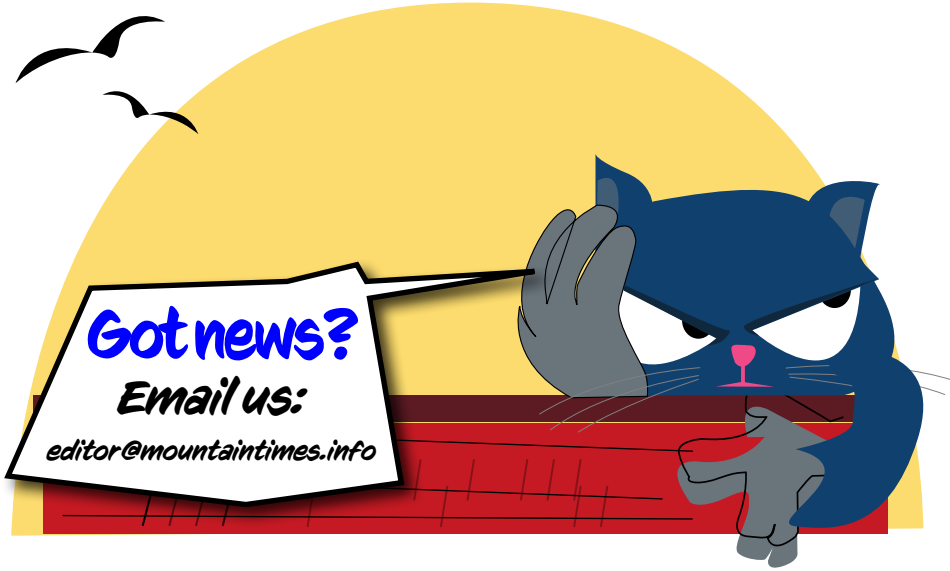
Wrestling a croc from another man's swamp, won't fix your lawnmowers rusty old pump.

Not pretending to know what that means. I think I liked you better when you were a terrible super hero suffering delusions of grandeur! I may not be a Robin but I'm more than willing to help fix the world.

Sometimes we just have to look around our own yard before we try to be everybody else's hero.



And thus, as Claws doth twist Bird's mind ever tight, together they wander strange regions of night. They ponder life's meaning, a vast endless fling, seeking the answer to meanings of things. Bracing themselves as their future unfurls, pondering thoughts of less troublesome worlds.



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Submitted

Participants at a recent birding walk at SHC focused binoculars before hiking.



Submitted

Lee Allen reviewed technology used for birding during a birding hike at Smokey House Center.

Smokey House Center hosts its final bird walk of the season on June 14

Saturday, June 14, from 8–10 a.m.—DANBY — Bird enthusiasts of all experience levels are invited to join Smokey House Center’s final birding walk of the season on Saturday morning. Led by local birder and forester Lee Allen, the guided walk will explore a variety of habitats across Smokey House’s 5,000-acre working landscape, offering opportunities to observe and identify local and migratory bird species in the field.

This walk concludes a successful spring birding series at Smokey House, where participants have engaged in workshops covering topics ranging from beginner birding techniques to the use of modern birding technology. So far this season, more than 60 bird species have been spotted or heard during the events, including year-round black-capped chickadees and American Goldfinches, as well as long-distance migrants such as bobolinks and Savannah sparrows, which now nest in the property’s grasslands.

“Whatever the weather, Smokey House is always birdy,” said Allen. “I expect that this Saturday will be no exception.”

The program, co-sponsored by the Rutland County Audubon Society, highlights Smokey House Center’s commitment to biodiversity and land stewardship. Participants will learn about habitat conservation and how the center’s land management practices support bird populations and other wildlife.

Those interested in attending should meet at the Conference Barn, located at 426 Danby Mountain Road, at 8 a.m. Binoculars are recommended, though loaner pairs will be available on-site. The event is free and open to all ages and skill levels.

For more information, visit: smokeyhouse.org or email danielle@smokeyhouse.org.

'The Phoenician Scheme' goes according to Wes Anderson's plan

"The Phoenician Scheme" marks the 12th feature film in writer/director Wes Anderson's near 30-year career. Anderson, working from a script co-written with frequent screenwriting collaborator Roman Coppola, channels his innermost self to produce another exacting artifact of precise framing, intricate set design, stitch-perfect costumes, and a caravan of his favorite stock actors, plus a few newcomers who will surely become part of his future movie plans.

The knock on Anderson is he's a director who is the victim of his peculiarities. He's a film auteur who makes films that look, smell, and feel different from everyone else's. To say a movie is "Wes Anderson-y" is to evoke a particular cinematic style reserved for one filmmaker—Wes Anderson. Like other auteurs such as Quentin Tarantino, David Lynch, or Martin Scorsese, when you watch a Wes Anderson movie, you know you're watching a Wes Anderson movie. And "The Phoenician Scheme" is no different. The movie carries forth the styling and aesthetics that have always been a Wes Anderson trademark but have grown in intensity since his brilliant 2014 film, "Grand Budapest Hotel." In that film, Anderson drew upon all his strengths, including screenwriting, to craft an adventure that struck a chord with a dose of poignancy that's been missing in the decade since.

Detractors of Wes Anderson, who love him so much they hate him because he refuses to break out of the comfort zone that sets him apart from every other filmmaker, will find plenty to gripe and gristle about with "The Phoenician Scheme." The film, another puzzle box story that unfolds in a wave of fast-moving plot complexity, yet easily solvable once you clear past all of the tracking shots and still frames, carefully composed in a throw-back 1.44:1 aspect ratio, is about an industrialist named Zsa-Zsa Korda, played by Benicio del Toro with the relish of an actor we've forgot-

ten how great he can be when given a role big and meaty enough to suit his abundance of talent. Korda is on a boondoggle to secure his legacy with one last ambitious scheme before one of his umpteenth assassination attempts catches up with him.

Korda is a family man. Well, he's amassed an enormous family with many wives, who have all died under mysterious circumstances—he swears it wasn't him. His vast European fortune, which hangs in the balance of this latest scheme, will go to one of his nine children (eight boys and one Catholic novice). Korda summons the nun-in-training, Sister Liesel, to accept her birthright and help him complete his Phoenician Scheme. The reluctant Liesel (played with deadpan brilliance by newcomer

Mia Threapleton) reluctantly accepts the challenge, if only to exact revenge on her uncle Nubar (Benedict Cumberbatch), who Korda says murdered her mother.

This setup is all but an excuse for Anderson to take his audience on a wild adventure as Korda and Liesel meet up with one potential investor after another, trying to secure their participation in the scheme. Along the way, Korda will learn to care for someone other than himself or his business interests, and Liesel will get to know the father she never had, even if that man isn't even her real father.

There are twists and turns along the way, but the fun of the film lies in navigating these chapters, which provide Anderson's frequent acting collaborators the opportunity to have fun chewing up the scenery. An especially hilarious scene finds the potential investment in Korda's scheme contingent on a basketball dunking contest. I won't tell you who wins, but Bryan Cranston and Tom Hanks steal the scene in the process.

Missing from this film is the almost always reliable quirky soundtrack of odd Wes Anderson jukebox favorites. Instead, the tunes are replaced with a brilliant score from

another frequent Anderson collaborator, Alexandre Desplat. Even Desplat's wife shows up in one of several afterlife dream sequences as one of Korda's dead wives.

Another part of the fun of watching "The Phoenician Scheme" is picking out Wes Anderson's film references. "Scheme" looks to the past of the inventive, visually stylish comedies and dramas of The Archers, filmmakers Michael Powell and Emeric Pressburger. This British filmmaking duo wrote and directed some of the greatest British films of all time, from "The Red Shoes," "Canterbury Tale," "Black Narcissus," to "I Know Where I'm Going!" Two of their masterpieces, "A Matter of Life and Death" and "The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp," appear to have significant influence on the proceedings here. The afterlife dream sequences evoke "A Matter of Life and Death," and the basketball contest I referenced earlier shares a kinship to the famous duel sequence in "Colonel Blimp." There are even shades of the 1969 abstract film, "The Color of Pomegranates." It's fine if you haven't seen these films or recognize the filmmakers Anderson is referencing, but it shows that his point of reference is deep.

One notable aspect of this film is its cinematography. "The Phoenician Scheme" marks the first time Anderson shot one of his live-action features without Robert Yoeman as his director of photography. French master Bruno Delbonnel takes over for "The Phoenician Scheme," and he is more than up for the task. No continuity is lost in the switch, and if anything, "The Phoenician Scheme" could be the best-looking Anderson film to date. It's the closest approximation I've seen of a film shot today to mirror the look of a 3-strip technicolor film. The film's look conjures the spirit of The Archers' legendary go-to cinematographer, Jack Cardiff. Are these not enough plaudits to convince you to give "The Phoenician Scheme" a shot? Is it Wes Anderson's best? No. But even on Wes Anderson's lesser days, a movie like "The Phoenician Scheme" is worth the price of admission.

James Kent is the arts editor for the Mountain Times.



Screens and Streams

By James Kent



"The Phoenician Scheme" is now playing at the Nugget Theaters in Hanover, New Hampshire.

Courtesy FB



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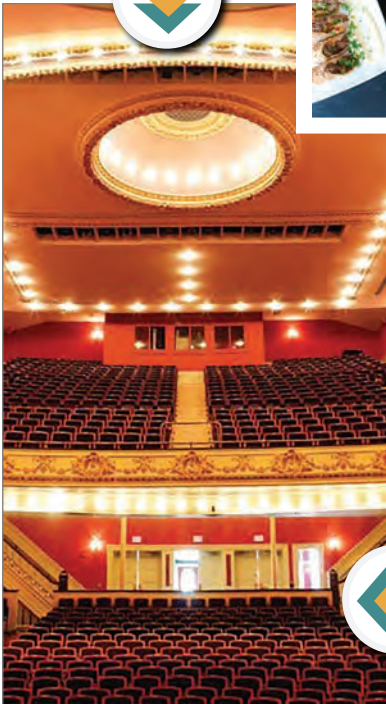
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Courtesy Shandi Marie- Brand Photographer

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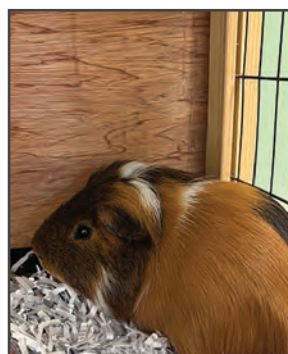
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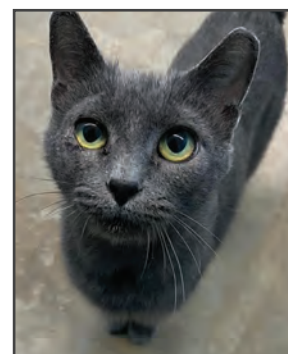
Tippy—2½-year-old.
Female. Rottweiler mix.



Chester—7-month-old.
Male. American guinea pig.



Junior—4-month-old.
Male. Pointer mix.



Sophie—5½-year-old.
Female. Domestic shorthair.



Tank—5-year-old. Male.
Terrier mix.



Daffodil—juvenile.
Female. Hamster.



Gloria—7½-year-old.
Female. Pitbull terrier.



May—8-month-old.
Female. Akita mix.



China—2½-year-old.
Female. Mixed breed.



Tito—4-year-old. Male.
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Cosmic Catalogue

Remembering forward



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall

We are in a strange time. You might be yearning, remembering the world that was. A world you can never go back to.

A world you can remember like it was yesterday, even though it may be many years ago. It may only be yesterday. A world that you can still see, taste, smell, and hear but can no longer touch.

The new world is still unfolding. No one really knows exactly what that world will look like or what it will feel like once we get there. We just know it will be different.

Change is exciting and new—a chance to start afresh. Sometimes, change is also the attempt to erase something you want to avoid feeling. You reach for the new world only to find yourself in a different setting, yet nothing has really changed at all.

Change doesn't have to be about worshipping at the altar of the new. The past doesn't have to be about preserving the ashes of a dying world. A balance is needed. Remembering is needed. Ensoulment is needed.

Remember who you are as the pace of life and technology attempt to extract it. Find the place within your soul and tend to it like a doting mother does her infant.

Aries March 21 - April 20

How can you create the home life you desire if you haven't figured out your priorities? As much as you try, you can't be everything to everyone, or else you'll be nothing to anyone—especially yourself. The only way you can realize your domestic dreams is by setting some boundaries. It may seem counterintuitive, but you need to keep your energy tight, so stop leaking it out for things that don't really matter to you. Figure out what matters, and the rest is easy.

Leo July 21 - August 20

When was the last time you had some fun? Threw caution to the wind? Indulged in some healthy risk-taking? Unleashed your inner child? When was the last time you did more of what you love to do, and with whom? This may not be so much about painting the town red or being the life of the party, but about you finding pathways to reveal your true self, not just to others, but also to yourself. Fun may take on a different tone than usual now.

Sagittarius November 21 - December 20

Everything related to the entanglements you have with other people from the past, present, or even the future is in focus. Deaths, taxes, marriages, divorces, and everything in between are highlighted. More than that, it's also the way you feel about them. If mistakes have been made in the past, let them go. Don't let the past dictate your future. What is about to happen and what you need to do will be under the spotlight. Believe in yourself!

Taurus April 21 - May 20

How could your life change if you were only willing to change your mind? Even if you couldn't change your mind entirely, could you at least shift your perspective? You can choose to be right, or you can choose to be happy. Having both at the same time is rarely a possible thing. Though it's not impossible. In other news, if you're overdue for a little bit of self-indulgence or a special treat, then go for it! You may even change your mind if you're in a better mood!

Virgo August 21 - September 20

You might be reminded about what it's like to have people who are truly in your corner. Be it at work or within your personal circles, your connections are looking up. If they aren't, then that's OK, too. They probably won't be front and center in your life for too much longer. Spend more time with those who make you feel good about life and about yourself. Be with those who are truly aligned with your soul and make you feel alive and taken care of.

Capricorn December 21 - January 20

Relationships really are a mirror. If you're in a good one and have good people around you, then you, too, will be good. If you don't have the best influences in your life, then it's hard to see the good in yourself. Regardless of your situation, in order to have good people in your life, you have to believe you're a good person. We all have faults and failings, but they don't define us. A fresh start in all kinds of relationships has arrived. Embrace this new beginning wholeheartedly.

Gemini May 21 - June 20

How would you like your bank balance to look a year from now? A wonderful new financial cycle begins. That said, you need to fully believe in yourself, and you need to trust that the Universe / God / whoever will provide for you. A confident attitude, as well as a positive one, will put you in good stead to be the right energetic match for the abundance you want and rightly deserve. You may need to discover your true self first!

Libra September 21 - October 20

A cycle of new opportunities in your professional life is opening up for you. Having a more prominent or public-facing role may be required of you now. Rewards and recognition for your past efforts are also possible. Let the accolades fall on you. That said, it's one thing to have someone praise your songs and dances, but if they aren't putting money in your bank account, it may be time to find a boss, a job, or a profession that does.

Aquarius January 21 - February 20

Life really is about to get bigger. This means that your problems could get bigger. Your schedule and your to-do list could get bigger. It could mean that all those problems you've been troubleshooting for a big chunk of the year so far could also find arrive at their conclusion. It's not been an easy road, but it is about to get better. Whatever you do, don't neglect yourself, your well-being, and what you need to do while the candle burns at both ends.

Cancer June 21 - July 20

The tide is high for you now, where you may be able to fully indulge in self-development and growth that leads to a new kind of wisdom. You may also be well positioned to fully discover who you are. Step out of your comfort zone a bit and adopt the attitude that the world is conspiring in your favor. Banning self-doubt or diminishing yourself based on past experiences is not the way to manifest all your desires.

Scorpio October 21 - November 20

You are redefining what the phrase "the world is your oyster" means. In fact, you may even be embodying it. Whether the horizons you're traversing are literal or metaphorical, one thing is for certain: you're not going to be the same person in 12 months as you are today. Prepare to have your mind and your breadth of experience stretched in ways you can only imagine. The world is, indeed, wonderful, and you're going to find out just how much so.

Pisces February 21 - March 20

What is even the point of life if you're not enjoying it? It's so easy to get caught up in the pace of life and the demands it places upon us. That said, will you remember the extra hours you spent in the office on your deathbed? What you'll remember are the good times you had with those you love the most. The next year is the perfect time for you to create memories that will last a lifetime. Live life with joy!

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

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Goldenrod crab spiders: Masters of disguise

On a spring morning walk, I stop to smell a painted trillium and am greeted by a goldenrod crab spider (*Misumena vatia*). Bending down for a sniff of the white and pink blooms, I am face to face with the perfectly camouflaged white spider, hidden thanks to a remarkable color-changing ability.

A member of the family Thomisidae, goldenrod crab spiders are both crabby and spider-y. A medium-sized crab spider, these creatures are familiar garden visitors across southern Canada and the United States. They are typically white or yellow with two pink or red bands along the sides of the abdomen. A sexually dimorphic species, females can weigh 100 times what a male weighs. One of the key identifying features of the species is the arrangement of the spider's forelegs, known as raptorial limbs. The two front legs are positioned skywards rather than forwards, twisting them into a laterigrade, or crablike, posture, similar to the smartphone shrug emoji. When startled, they crabwalk.

Unlike most spiders that spin webs to catch their prey, this sit-and-wait predator saves its energy by hiding in plain sight. Taking advantage of attractive flowers, the goldenrod crab spider camouflages on brightly colored petals, waiting to pounce on unsuspecting pollinators such as flies and bumblebees. External digestion allows them to capture and consume insects that are unusually large compared to their body size. First, the spider grasps prey with its legs and immobilizes it with venom. Then, the spider injects the prey with powerful enzymes, liquefies their insides, and slurps out the tissues.

Goldenrod crab spiders are also a bit chameleon-like. They are unique in their ability to change color to match the flower they are sitting on: if they're hunting on a daisy, they'll turn white, but if they're hunting on a sunflower, they'll turn yellow. This color change process from white to yellow and back again can take several days. (Admittedly, unlike chameleons, who can change almost instantaneously.) The arrangement of their eyes allows them to see the plants and their own bodies simultaneously, so to match their outfit to the flower, they likely eyeball it.

The crab spider's ability to change its appearance is a result of the concentration of its body pigments. The spider is covered by a transparent cuticle. Below, underneath the exoskeleton, is the hypodermis, a.k.a. the color factory. Inside, pigments called ommochromes produce bright yellow, and refraction of guanine crystals pro-

duces white. When light lands on a spider, the color reflected is a combination of the pigment contents. Basically, if the spider wants to appear more yellow, it builds more ommochrome granules. If it wants to appear white, it breaks those granules back down again.

Though the phenomenon has been studied since 1891, the purpose behind the color change is still an area of active research. For centuries, the basic explanation was camouflage: blend into a flower and receive free meal delivery. But, recent studies show that there might be more going on than previously thought. Because many insects see differently than humans via ultraviolet (UV) light, the crab spider may still be visible to a number of other insects. While

the UV-absorbing spider might blend in on a UV-absorbing white flower, the spider might stand out on a UV-reflecting yellow flower. But this depends on the insect. One study found that honey bees may use green signal receptors unless they are very close to flowers, meaning the spiders stay well-hidden despite a UV color contrast, while another study found that honey bees can detect the contrast in colors and may actually be indifferent to it. More research is needed on the topic.

So why bother changing color at all? Perhaps

the reason is both defensive (to hide from predators, such as birds) and aggressive (to lure prey). In some cases, the UV contrast might actually attract an insect, like a glowing nectar guide. Or it might help protect them from solar radiation. Either way, scientists say the skill is unlikely to be solely due to chance.

Goldenrod crab spiders appear on a variety of flowers that bloom over much of the spring, summer, and fall. By the time the spiders have mated, and young spiderlings have hatched, late-blooming goldenrod species provide a reliable hunting ground and a good opportunity for observation. These color-changing phenomena are common in New England woodlots and meadows but are often overlooked, so keep your eyes out while you stop to admire the flowers.

Lee Toomey is an ecologist currently living in Burlington, Vermont. They enjoy looking around for things outside. 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.



The Outside Story
By Lee Toomey



Fowl play

There are talkers, and then there are TALKERS. If you work in an office, you likely know the type: the person who can turn a simple "Good morning" into a TED Talk video. These people don't just stop by your desk—they plant themselves in your doorway, one hand on the frame, the other gesturing wildly. Before you know it, you're an unwilling participant in their narcissistic performance art.

I work with a guy like this in an out-of-town office. It's not that he isn't friendly—he's the friendliest guy in the building. It's just that he has a talent for stretching a five-minute coffee break into an epic saga. And his stories? Well, at best, they are mildly entertaining; at worst, they are time-sucking speech bombs.

Last week, while I was working intensely on a project, this coworker materialized in my doorway, grinning. "You ever wrestled a goose?" he asks as if it's a universal experience. At that moment, I knew I was in for the long haul, so I pulled off my glasses and turned my chair towards him.

"You wrestled a goose?" I asked with a tone of curiosity.

"Well, let me tell you," he begins. "Last night, I was golfing with a buddy, and we came up to a tee box with close to a dozen geese milling about, some sleeping, some poking around for food. I was eager to hit my drive, so I tried shooing them away, but while most of them moved, one stood his ground, glaring at me. When I got too close and started poking him with my club, he started squawking and coming at me, wings flapping, hissing like a steam engine. The bird was relentless!"

I listened with some actual inquisitiveness since I've encountered geese on the golf course dozens of times. However, I've yet to be attacked. In all my goose interactions, they simply waddle away without much concern.

His story would have been great and worthy of some banter, but he went on and on for another 15 minutes, rehashing the same point over and over again. I've learned that in order to deter him or bring closure to the topic, I need to return my focus to my computer. But as soon as I did, he commandeered my mouse, insisting that we look up data points on golf course incursions by geese.

Ironically, as uninterested as I was, I actually found the information mildly compelling.

The biggest concern for greenskeepers is that geese graze intensively on the lush grasses of golf courses, creating bare patches, uneven turf, and holes from probing for food. This damages the meticulously maintained

greens, fairways, and tee boxes, often requiring costly re-seeding or re-sodding.

Most disruptive, however, is that each goose produces about four pounds of droppings daily, leading to unsightly, slippery, and hazardous conditions on the course. The accumulation of feces not only detracts from the aesthetics but also poses health risks, as goose droppings can harbor over 60 transmittable diseases.

If you've ever walked through a flock of geese on the course, you know it's like a fecal minefield. But worse is when your ball happens to roll through a clump of waste. No one wants to use their golf towel to clean that kind of mess.

And while I've never slipped and fallen because of goose droppings, apparently, it's a hazard that has actually result-

ed in civil lawsuits.

It's reported that a typical golf course spends between \$5-10K per year on goose management, including labor for scattering geese and cleaning up droppings. Addition-

al expenses arise from repairing and re-sodding damaged turf, increased maintenance labor, and implementing goose control measures such as trained dogs, decoy wolves, lasers, or other deterrents.

Unfortunately, deterrents were the name of the game in this week's feature, "The Phoenician Scheme," a film so quirky that it may dissuade audiences from thoroughly enjoying it.

Set in 1950 in the fictional modern Greater Independent Phoenicia, the film follows Zsa-Zsa Korda (Benicio Del Toro), a morally dubious industrialist who is attempting to secure a sprawling infrastructure project while trying to reconnect with his estranged daughter, Liesl (Mia Threapleton), a novitiate nun. With a stellar ensemble cast including Michael Cera, Tom Hanks, Scarlett Johansson, and Benedict Cumberbatch, the film is a technical marvel but struggles to balance its ambitious themes and frenetic pacing, resulting in a mixed delivery.

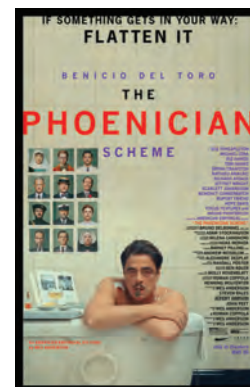
You either dig Wes Anderson films, or you don't. For me, seeing a new Anderson film is like reuniting with an old friend. I've had the same cinematic experience with Woody Allen projects. And just like Woody, some Anderson films grab you, and some don't, but all can be appreciated for their unique style and tone.

A distinctive "C+" for "The Phoenician Scheme," now playing in theaters everywhere.

Got a question or comment for Dom? You can email him at moviediary@att.net.



The Movie Diary
By Dom Cioffi



Observations from the motorcycle



By Merisa J. Sherman

The dream was lived during a recent motorcycle adventure.

The world flies by. Or, more accurately, Vermont does. I'm on the back of our treasured motorcycle, riding with friends through our brave little state. The roads are winding, the paths are twisted, and the streets are super cute. We can ride for miles and miles and miles and somehow always see something completely different.

Sometimes, we get a perfectly paved road that has somehow made it cleanly through the winter, and we can enjoy the smooth feeling underneath the tires. But let's be honest, it's more about missing the frost heaves than riding that smooth line. Or finding an even more crazy adventure as we check out the miles of dirt roads throughout the state.

But I'm not driving. I'm riding. I promised my dad years ago that I would never ride my own. I don't have that kind of long-term attentiveness. I am more of a—hey, did you see that?!—kind of girl. So, I ride on the back, very happy to give the steering and my safety over to the BF, who is one of the smoothest riders I've ever seen.

And being on the back of a bike, I get to see a lot of things. First, I get to watch the other riders in front of us. How they take the corners, how they sit on their bike when they wiggle or stretch their legs over a 200 or even 300-mile day. I love watching the flow so much that we even watch MotoGP races all winter long.

What I'm really here for in Vermont. Our beautiful state in all its glory, the rolling hills unfolding as we come around a corner, following the path of a river as she winds along. I

know how Vermont feels, what she truly looks like, and how she changes from Brattleboro all the way to Derby.

I have taken to studying different aspects of Vermont as we ride along. One day, I studied windows, looking to see how many "witches' windows" I could spot. On another, I studied rooflines and how different areas have different styles. Did you know there's a town that has several container homes—and each one is completely different? Such a fun architectural study. I swear, no two homes in Vermont are alike. A challenge for a town lister but a wonder for a student of architecture and a Realtor like me.

On one ride, I focused entirely on the front doors. Were they covered with a storm door made of solid wood? What colors were folks choosing for their main entrance, and what

kind of planters had they chosen for decorations? How many Vermonters had a traditional front porch, and how many were Revolutionary War-era stone buildings? There are just as many front doors as there are Vermonters. I love it.

Last ride, I was doing research for my perennial garden. I have a beautiful, shady border that I'm developing, but the hosta plants are not enough. I wanted variety—different colors and textures to bring character and beauty to my garden—and the best way to achieve that is to study all the gardens as we ride along. Actually, I tend to do a garden study once a month so that I can see what plants are popping at different points. If we go south, I am reminded of what is about to

Living the Dream → 35



Living the Dream

By Merisa Sherman

Fun outdoor activities for kids in the 50s



Looking Back

By Mary Ellen Shaw

I find it refreshing to see the kids in my neighborhood outside now that warm weather has arrived.

Some are on bikes. Others are "shooting hoops" or playing soccer in their backyards.

Riding bikes was probably the most popular outdoor activity for kids growing up on our street back in the '50s.

We all began our "biking days" on the city sidewalks. Tricycles came first, with one of our parents at our side. My tricycle was shiny red. Upon reviewing online resources to refresh my memory on its appearance, I

concluded that I should have held onto it, as the eBay prices ranged from \$100 to \$400.

Trike riders graduated to two-wheel bikes with training wheels once we got a little older. Mine was a blue Columbia bike without any gears to shift. I wanted to be like the "big kids," so I begged for the training wheels to come off. When that finally happened, my father kept one hand on me and one on the bike as I figured out how to balance. After some wobbly attempts by me, his hands came off, and he walked along beside me as I moved forward on my own. I recall a sense of pride when I figured it out.

Howard Avenue is a fairly long street, so riding from one end to the other satisfied most of us for quite some time. When we were allowed to venture onto neighboring streets, we had hills to deal with. If your bike didn't have gears for changing conditions, you had to stand up and pedal hard when going uphill.

If one kid was outside on their bike, it didn't take long for other kids to come out of their houses. Before long, a procession of bikes was making its way up and down the street. Helmets were not thought of "back in the day." Many of us had baskets on the handlebars of our bikes, along with horns or bells. We attached playing cards to



the spokes of the bike with clothespins. The faster we went, the louder they became!

City streets were re-surfaced at times with a tar-like coating that had fine sand on top of it. Riding too fast around a corner resulted in a tumble that left your knees scratched and coated with tar and sand. It was painful to have it removed. I still have a scar on one knee from that experience.

Another popular way to get around was a two-wheel push scooter. Radio Flyer was the brand kids loved in my neighborhood. Mine was bright red with rubber handles and a kickstand. I don't remember a brake, but some of them had that feature. With one foot on the scooter and one foot on the road, it was a fun mode of transportation.

When I see just one kid shooting a basketball into a hoop or kicking a soccer ball into a net, it makes me think how these "solo activities" would not have been a part of our days. With about a dozen kids in our neighborhood, we needed a "team sport." Fortunately, there was an empty lot owned by the parents of my friend, Betty. We marked out the bases, and both boys and girls played baseball. There was only one mishap when the ball went through the window of Betty's garage. Her parents were understanding and just asked us to be more careful. I think it was

"luck" more than "carefulness" that resulted in no additional broken windows.

And who would think that a large fallen tree that was probably 50 feet tall could entertain us for hours? It was located on an empty lot adjacent to our backyard. We walked from one end of the tree to another on all the branches. It was like one large "balance beam." It served as a place for club meetings and picnics.

Another inanimate object was also the center of our attention at times. A large rock on Billings Avenue made for a great picnic spot. Many a sandwich was eaten on that rock, and if it's still there today, I expect it would look tiny from an adult perspective.

As you can see, it didn't take much to entertain us. All our activities were very simple and also free. They took place outdoors, so we got plenty of fresh air. When we wanted a friend to play with, we went to the kid's house and rang the doorbell. No texting or social media...We actually talked face-to-face with one another. What a novel idea!

Missing the mark: from page 8

After the 2024 elections, however, the commission was sidelined before it could complete its work or hear from Vermonters. Eleven months before their time was

up, Gov. Phil Scott presented his own education reform plan, which took advantage of voters' frustration to push for his priorities of the past decade: school funding cuts, widespread, top-down consolidation, and the sidelining of local voters in decision-making. Scott also threw in an expansion of vouchers—public money for private schools—and the elimination of income sensitivity by leaning into property taxes.

Despite their early criticism of the governor's proposal to consolidate Vermont's 119 school districts into five mega-districts, the Legislature appears ready to give the governor most of what he asked for—especially control of education funding. They are supporting a foundation funding system, which would have the Agency of Education and the Legislature—not local voters—determine how much districts should spend on each student. They want more school consolidation, though not as much as the governor does. And like him, they want to return to school taxes for resident homeowners based on the value of their property rather than household income, which is the better measure of ability to pay. In essence, policymakers appear determined to shield the highest-income taxpayers from paying the same share of their income in school taxes as everyone else.

Because the commission was disempowered, the current reform plans were cobbled together without analyses of the failures of recent attempts to reduce spending and improve student outcomes. We're still waiting for an Agency of Education report on what was accomplished by Act 46, the last significant consolidation effort, which many believe saved no money. Nevertheless, Montpelier is counting on large districts and school closures to reduce the cost of education, even as the cost of health insurance rises and children's mental health needs increase. The current version of the bill would create a task force to design large consolidated school districts by the end of 2025.

Switching to a foundation funding system will take a few years, but we're already getting a glimpse of future education spending battles. We're told that the foundation amount provided to all students will be "evidence-based," the result of careful analyses to determine the cost of an adequate education for all kids. We know the governor will have one number, and the Legislature will have another. Both sides say they want to spend less on education going forward. But neither is revealing what their number provides for students or how they'll rein in costs that are out of schools' control.

Outside of the Statehouse, there has been an outcry against the current education reform efforts—from teachers, parents, kids, administrators, and community members.

So once the foundation is in place, local voters will be left on the sidelines while policymakers negotiate over how much to allocate for education.

Outside of the State House, there has been an outcry against the current education reform efforts—from teachers, parents, kids, administrators, and community members. Inside the building, there is considerable doubt among lawmakers, who admit to being uncomfortable with the process. Two weeks ago, senators acknowledged that they had a half-baked bill based on incomplete or inaccurate data from the administration, which pushed many important decisions down the road. Even the chair of the Senate Finance Committee said she had never felt so bad about voting for a bill.

Education reform may still end in a standoff this year. While legislative leadership and the governor agree on many of the major changes, many members are appropriately raising concerns they're hearing from Vermonters.

less say in their schools—and not getting what they want and deserve: fairer school taxes, a plan to address the real cost drivers in school budgets, and a clear commitment to delivering the resources all Vermont kids need to succeed.

Jack Hoffman, senior analyst at Public Assets Institute, resident of Marshfield (but currently living in France).

Market rate housing: from page 9

available to those with lower incomes.

Currently, market-rate housing typically gets encumbered by local requirements for community benefits that include "inclusionary zoning," which requires the developer to include affordable (lower rent or lower rent/subsidized) housing in the project.

This practice lowers the potential profit of a project, and it is argued that this makes financing more difficult, resulting in developers choosing not to build or building less, which limits housing supply and drives up rents.

Evan Mast of the Upjohn Institute examined the data from new multi-unit buildings in 12 different cities, and his research finds that when a developer builds 100 new market-rate units, it opens up "the equivalent of 70 units in neighborhoods earning below the area's median income. In the poorest neighborhoods, it opens up the equivalent of 40 units."

At the end of the day, there is no doubt that Vermont is in the midst of a housing crisis and that the future of Vermont demands an increase in housing.

That being said, the question is simple: what housing development strategy will yield the most significant impact on Vermont's housing needs?

Doubling down on market-rate housing is a solution with many benefits.

The first is that there is a need for market-rate housing.

Four years ago, Rutland City hired a zoning administrator who bemoaned the fact that he couldn't find housing. Around the same time, the local Home Ownership Center, NeighborWorks, hired a new executive director who echoed the ZA's complaint, "There is no housing." Hospital administrators complain that they pay more for traveling healthcare workers because they can't attract new employees because "there is no housing!"

If Vermont wants to attract and keep professionals, it needs market-rate housing.

Second, an increase in market-rate housing opens up affordable housing that is currently occupied by tenants who can afford to pay more. Still, there is not enough upscale housing available.

Third, an increase in market-rate housing reduces pressure

on the housing market, leading to lower prices and rents. This increases the number of units that qualify as "affordable," whether due to the lower rent or the subsidy. (Public tenants such as the Vermont State Housing Authority or the Rutland Housing Authority have maximum rent rates that they allow for their subsidized tenants)

Fourth, market-rate housing promises a greater yield on an investment, which makes it more attractive to investors, resulting in a shorter timeline for development.

Obviously, it's not an absolute either/or situation, but the focus has certainly been on the low-yield and expensive affordable housing strategy, while the market-rate housing strategy has the potential to have a greater positive impact on Vermont's housing crisis.

The materials cost the same; it's the time that is expensive, and moving faster saves money. Encouraging market-rate housing developers results in more housing developed efficiently and more rapidly.

Given the landscape for affordable housing grants, subsidies, tax credits, loans, and other funding sources, it seems reasonable to ask the simple question:

"What is the fastest route to success, build affordable housing or build market-rate housing?"

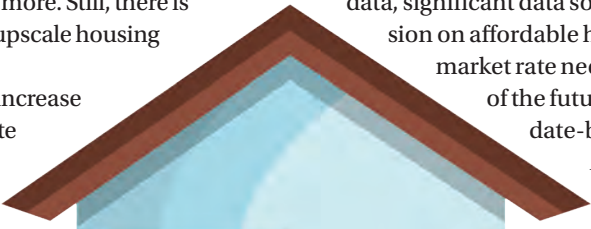
Obviously, it's not an absolute either/or situation, but the focus has certainly been on the low-yield and expensive affordable housing strategy, while the market-rate housing strategy has the potential to have a greater positive impact on Vermont's housing crisis.

This defense of the market-rate housing industry is sure to stir the ire of the "Affordable Housing Industrial Complex," but the ensuing debate is certainly worthy and might even result in a new commitment to exploring innovations in housing development.

When all is said and done, all development includes acquisition (land) fees, construction costs, and development fees. When evaluating projects, ask where the money is coming from. Are these public funds or private investment? Ask where the money is going. Who is profiting from this project, and how much? Ask who is responsible for future costs for the development. Is it the developer, or some non-profit organization, or the community on the hook for the future of the project?

The most significant opportunity for Vermont when it comes to housing is data, significant data so that the discussion on affordable housing needs, market rate needs, and the needs of the future are rational and date-based.

For more info, visit: partnersin-housingvt.com.



Red Clover: The state flower of Vermont

By Nadie VanZandt, Extension Master Gardener, University of Vermont

Introduced to Vermont by European settlers, red clover has become an essential part of the state's landscape and identity. Designated as the state flower in 1894, this pinkish-purple bloom symbolizes Vermont's deep agricultural roots—particularly its dairy farming heritage—and serves as a living tribute to the land's rural character and economic lifeblood.

Originally from Asia Minor and southeastern Europe, red clover spread to the British Isles from Germany in the 1600s and was later transported to North America by English colonists.

Red clover (*Trifolium pratense*) is an herbaceous biennial or short-lived perennial belonging to the legume family. The plant typically grows erect stems with leaves composed of three leaflets, each including light-colored "V" shapes. Its pink to rosy-purple, pom-pom-like flower heads are dense, oval, or spherical clusters, each consisting of up to 125 individual, pea-shaped flowers.

Adaptable and relatively hardy, red clover thrives in U.S. Department of Agriculture hardiness zones 3 to 9. It prefers full sun and performs best when the temperatures are between 60 and 75 degrees F, though it can tolerate both cold and heat. While it favors well-drained loamy soils, it can also grow in a variety of soil types, including those with poor drainage, provided it receives moderate moisture during its growing season.

Like other members of the legume family (which includes peas and beans), the roots of red clover develop nodules when in contact with beneficial soil bacteria known as *rhizobia*. They convert atmospheric nitrogen into a form that plants can utilize through a process known as nitrogen fixation. This enriches the soil with nitrogen, an important macronutrient for plant health. Red clover can contribute 75 to 175 pounds of nitrogen per acre, an amount that underscores its value as a soil enhancer.

This nitrogen-fixing ability, combined with

its rapid growth, flexible planting schedule, tolerance for a wide range of soil types, and ability to break up compacted soils, makes red clover an exceptional cover crop. As the plant decomposes, it contributes organic matter that further improves soil structure and health.

To maximize nitrogen fixation, red clover seeds are often inoculated with *Rhizobium trifolii* bacteria and a sticking agent to encourage nodule formation. Inoculation is important in soils lacking sufficient populations of beneficial bacteria.

Red clover is typically direct-seeded in the spring (April to May) or in the fall, provided optimal moisture conditions are met. Fall planting should occur at least six weeks before the first frost to allow the plant enough time to establish.

Farmers use red clover in a variety of ways: as hay, forage in pastures, as a cover crop, or as part of a crop rotation system to improve soil health and reduce the need for synthetic fertilizers. In addition to its agricultural benefits, red clover is a magnet for pollinators. Many insects are drawn to its nutritious pollen and nectar, with bees and bumblebees serving as its most effective pollinators.

Red clover is also edible to humans. The mildly sweet flowers are the most palatable and are often added to salads, soups, jellies, and baked goods. The leaves can be eaten in salads or brewed into tea. The seed pods are typically reserved for animal feed.

Historically, red clover has been valued for its medicinal properties. Native Americans used red clover infusions to treat various illnesses and applied it as an ointment for venomous bites. Its healing reputation spans ancient traditions across the globe.

Brought by settlers and embraced by generations of farmers, red clover reflects Vermont's deep-rooted traditions and pride in its rural character. Its designation as the state flower honors both Vermont's agricultural history and its enduring connection to the land.



By Couleur/Pixabay

Red clover, the state flower of Vermont, is a versatile plant used for a variety of purposes, including cover cropping and culinary dishes.

Living the Dream: from page 33

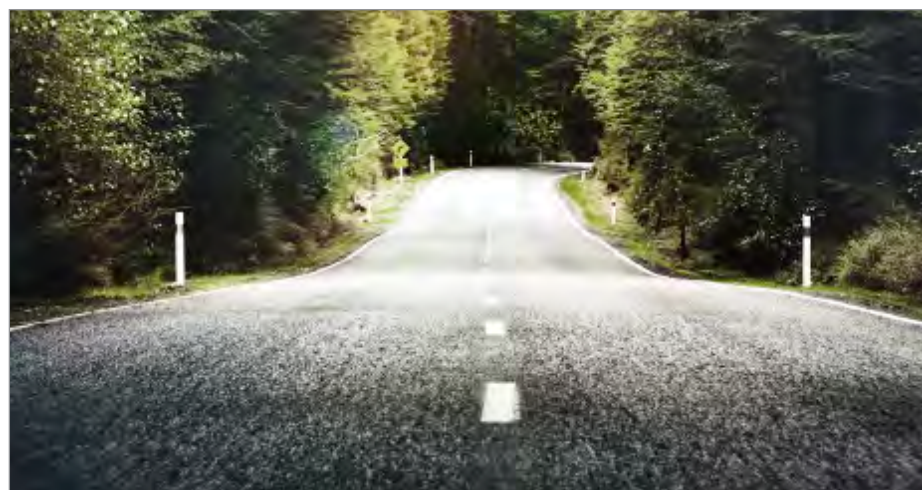
bloom and can get excited. As we ride north, a few more hours with plants that have passed their time.

We meet every week for a new adventure—a new sandwich shop, a new ice cream place—and, of course, new roads. There is so much to see throughout the state it almost makes me sad that I don't leave town all winter. But that's what makes it special. The world changes every season, every latitude or longitude, and even from neighbor to neighbor. It's part of the beauty of the earth that every mountain is unique, no valleys meander in the same way.

Even our bikes are different. This past ride, none of us rode a bike similar to the others. In fact, I have never seen folks confuse their motorcycle for someone else's in the field of bikes. Go to Laconia or Americade, and you will never see the same motorcycle twice. Even all those trikes look different if you really look at them. We spent a week in Sturgis, South Dakota, at the largest bike rally in the world and didn't see the same bike twice.

Diversity, in all things, is what makes our motorcycle adventures—and life—so much fun. Different bikes, different roads, different homes—we might all be different in our own ways, but we all love our brave little state and our lives here and wouldn't want to live anywhere else.

Merisa J. Sherman is a long-time Killington resident, global real estate advisor, municipal official, and Coach PomPom. She can be found on social @femaleskibum or at Merisa.Sherman@SothebysRealty.com.



Vermont dads: from page 10

should be required before any closure is even considered.

Guidelines, not mandates. Don't tie the hands of education professionals. Apply guidelines, not mandates, for class, school, and district size. Especially in rural Vermont, flexibility is needed to maintain optimal learning environments.

Respect for what works in rural governance. Supervisory Unions strike a critical balance in Vermont, allowing for collaboration and efficiency without sacrificing local voice and oversight. Any governance changes must build on what works for rural schools rather than imposing a one-size-fits-all model that erodes accountability, weakens community bonds, and likely results in increased costs.

Real community voice in redistricting. The Redistricting Task Force must listen to the people. Community-developed proposals should be

seriously reviewed and, where possible, integrated into final decisions. The best solutions will come from the ground up, not the top down.

Vermonters asked for tax relief, not a complete transformation of the education system. After years of pandemic recovery, workforce shortages, and skyrocketing healthcare costs, this is not the time for sweeping, untested reforms that put rural kids and families at risk. Proposals to further consolidate our schools, without strong Vermont-based evidence of cost savings or academic gains, are deeply concerning.

Forced consolidation will hollow out our towns, reduce civic participation, and make it even harder for young families to stay in or move to rural Vermont. For us, this isn't just policy. This is personal. Because when the local school closes, the town often fades with it.

This Father's Day, we're not asking for cards or

neckties. We're asking for leadership that values rural communities and keeps Vermont's children at the center of every decision.

We urge legislators to do right by our kids and stand with rural families. Let's build a future where every Vermont child, no matter their zip code, has access to a strong, vibrant community school.

Tim Scott, Peacham; Justin Park, Barnard; Ryan Williams, Marlboro; Peter Bent, Peacham; Matt Hennen, Moretown; Jamie Kinnarney, Calais; Seth McCoy, Randolph Center; Isaac Jacobs, Craftsbury; Eric C. Pomeroy, Peacham; Rob Backlund, Lincoln; Stician Samples, Westminster; Neal Yurick, Hardwick; Cameron Thompson, Newport Town; Dan Devine, Peacham; Kyle Landis-Marinello, Middlesex; Dwight Boerem, Wardsboro; Andrew Frost, Marlboro.

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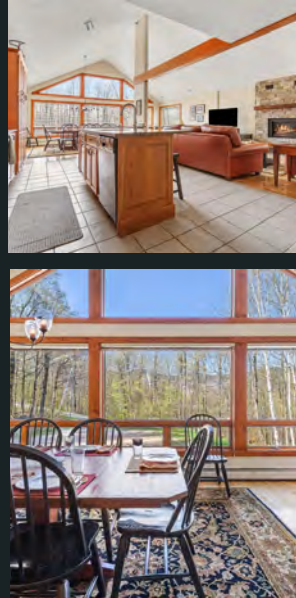
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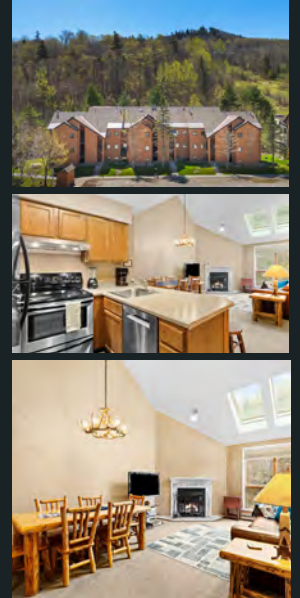
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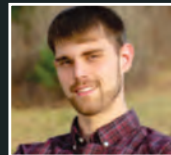
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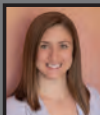
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