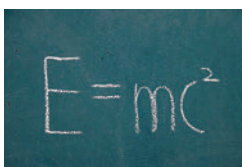




2025 SUMMER GUIDE IS HERE, INSIDE!

Check out this year's Summer guide within this edition and on stands throughout the season. There are over 150 events and activities to explore!



Albert Einstein's theory of special relativity was published 120 years ago, June 30, 1905. E stands for energy, m stands for an object's mass, and c² represents the speed of light multiplied by itself. On the most basic level, the equation says that energy and mass (matter) are interchangeable.

ED COMMISSION MEMBERS RESIGN

Two members, including chair, resign from the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont.

Page 7



VERMONT MUSIC FESTIVAL

West Windsor gets set for its 4th season of the Vermont Music Festival, June 27-29.

Page 16



Submitted

Skate parks differ widely between communities but most are made of concrete which is durable and requires less maintenance. Parks cater to skateboarding, BMX, scootering and inline skating.

Killington residents push for skate park as town reimagines recreation future

A recent online petition has garnered 330 signatures

By Greta Solsaa/VTDigger

As Killington celebrates the 50th anniversary of its recreation center, some residents are pushing to make a skate park a new permanent fixture of the town's summer offerings.

The town crafted its recreation master plan to holistically determine how to best use its resources to serve residents in the future, Recreation Department Director Emily Hudson said.

The department's first priority in the next three to five years is to upgrade the outdated pool house and replace the public pool, which has a "small, slow leak" the town has dealt with for years, Hudson said.

The pool issues "fueled this whole master plan project to start to look at what amenities we need to meet the needs of current programming and what would community members like to see."

The proposal also included a long-term plan to build a multiuse field house for indoor tennis, pickleball, soccer and basketball, and maintenance.

But Tucker Zink, general manager for Darkside Snowboards shop, said he noticed a gap in the project: a skate park.

Killington could follow the lead of more populated towns, like Burlington and Waterbury, that have built skate parks in the last decade, Zink said. The town, with vast mountainous terrain, is known as a hub for skiers and snowboarding in winter, and biking, riding,

hiking and skateboarding in the summer months, he said.

"The people that are here are here to recreate outdoors," Zink said. "Skateboarding goes hand in hand with all that."

The Darkside Snowboards shop has a mini ramp and other regularly used skateboarding features on the property, but "a true concrete facility is worlds beyond what we have here," he said.

Zink created an online petition June 9 to raise awareness during the public comment period on the master plan in hopes that the recreation department would see a skate park as a priority for the Killington community. In just over two weeks the petition has garnered 330 signatures, with more than 100 people adding comments about the positive impact of a skate park for residents and visitors.

"A true concrete facility is worlds beyond what we have here," Zink said.

On June 16, Josh Swett commented: "The main reason I go to Sunday River and not Killington is because of a nearby skate park. I prefer to ride at Killington, but I have to weigh out the overall trip, which ideally includes skateboarding. The halfpipe at Darkside shop is great (one of the best), but it's not enough."

"What I'm doing is just trying to stir up support, to get it on their radar so that, as they revise their plans and move forward with a more finalized plan, they'll include a skate park in it," Zink said.

Zink said the closest skate parks to Killington are in Manchester, Ludlow and Bethel, as the Flipside skate park in Rutland shut down in 2020. The long distance to the facilities creates barriers

Skate park → 5



Submitted

Skate parks create community, proponents say.

Plan to manage 72,000 acres of the Telephone Gap project is finalized

Staff report

The U.S. Forest Service issued its final plan for managing 72,000 acres of public and private land on June 16. The proposed Telephone Gap Integrated Resource Project area is located on the Green Mountain National Forest (GMNF) within the towns of Brandon, Chittenden, Goshen, Killington, Mendon, Pittsfield, Pittsford, and Stockbridge.

"The Telephone Gap project is designed to move the forest landscape toward desired resource conditions within the project area. Resource and public benefits of project activities include improved wildlife habitat, restored soils and wetlands, a sustained network of roads and trails, increased recreation opportunities, and timber harvesting to provide wood products for the local and regional economy while enhancing forest health and diversity," the final notice from the U.S. Forest Service stated.

The Telephone Gap project EA analyzed four alternatives in detail (Alternatives A-D).

"It is my decision to select Alternative C for implementation. This decision is based on the results of the analysis documented in the Telephone Gap project EA [environmental assessment], supporting information in the project planning record, and comments received during the initial project scoping and Telephone Gap project preliminary EA comment periods," wrote Jay Strand, project team leader with the Green Mountain National Forest and author of the final

Telephone Gap → 4



By James Kent

Hot air balloons rose above Quechee Saturday, June 21.

Hot air balloons took flight over Quechee

This past weekend, June 21-22, people came from all over New England to participate in the 45th annual Hot Air Balloon Festival.

Music, food, games, and fun were available for all ages throughout the weekend, but the main attraction was

Hot air balloons → 5

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Killington RAISE grant back on

Killington Select Board looks ahead, hires consultants to help manage upcoming projects

By Curt Peterson

Killington’s new five-member Select Board tackled a long agenda Monday evening, June 23. It’s second meeting as an expanded board saw new leaders emerge. Patrick Cushing was unanimously elected board chair at the last board meeting, June 9, and Bill Vines was elected vice-chair June 23. Jim Haff the only long-term board member had previously served as the chair. He did not oppose Cushing’s chairmanship and nominated Vines for the vice-chair position.

Cushing was elected to the board in March along with Ricky Bowen, and two more selectmen, Jay Hickory and Bill Vines were added in May to make up the new five-member board.

Since last fall, there have been rumblings perpetrated by a small number of meeting attendees regarding alleged corruption and wandering town funds. Theories have continued to fester with no public data or third-party investigation forthcoming, as some members of the public have called for.

“You all ran on this,” said resident George Brant. “I want to know from each of you: Are you going to push for a full audit so we know what’s been going on, or do I have to get folks to sign a petition to make this happen, ‘cause I’ll do it,” he added.

The town’s annual auditor made a brief appearance at the meeting and Town Manager David Atherton said he’d requested they start a bit early on the 2024 audit. Atherton has also brought back Mark Decota, who was formerly the

Killington board looks ahead → 4

Rep. contemplates coming changes to local schools

By Brett Yates

State Representative Jim Harrison, the Republican legislator serving the Rutland-11 district, visited the local select boards in Chittenden and Killington on Monday night, June 23, to discuss the end of the legislative session in Montpelier. Predictably, the conversation turned to H.454, the controversial education reform bill that passed on June 16.

“I think legislative leaders and the governor were committed on the outset to make some changes that would hopefully make the education system more efficient in the future,” Harrison said while in Chittenden. “It’s hard to justify, in the state of Vermont, which has a little lower population than the city of Boston, to have 52 supervisory unions. That’s a lot of overhead.”

Harrison discussed some of the ways the planned consolidation of the state’s school districts may impact locals.

“Chittenden and Mendon are its own little school district. One of the attributes of that is we don’t have a high school. The residents of our towns have school choice,” Harrison observed. “With the new [yet-to-be-determined] district maps — let’s just say we’re part of a Greater Rutland County district, and you’re in with Rutland City — there’s a

“There’s a very real chance that [school] choice could go away,” said Harrison.

H.454 local changes → 11

Rutland’s moment: How TIF is the leverage needed

For many years—decades even—dreams of addressing Rutland’s downtown core have been deferred. Master plans drawn, community meetings held, revitalization goals articulated, and yet limited change has been possible. There has been no large-scale action. That is, until now. But what makes this effort now, with the Tax Increment Financing (TIF) District in play, so different from all of the other prior attempts?

Perhaps it’s easiest to put it this way: those dreams were a lever without a fulcrum, full of potential, but unable to lift the heavy and costly burden of infrastructure improvements needed to realize the vision. Despite the dedication of city officials and the community’s desire for change, the market alone couldn’t bear the cost. The TIF District is that missing fulcrum, a way to evenly distribute the load so that Rutland’s long-held plans can be fully leveraged.

Many factors have aligned that make “today” the best chance for development in Rutland, including: a motivated and dedicated team that

represents a mix of municipal and community leaders, the urgent need for housing in the Rutland region and beyond, recent changes to Act 250 and the downtown core’s Tier 1A exemption, and beautification efforts already underway by the Dept. of Public Works.

“Long discussed infrastructure needs relating to water, sewer, roadways, and sidewalks have been postponed or regarded as unreachable because of the cost of implementation,” said Lyle Jepson, executive director of the Chamber and Economic Development of the Rutland Region. “TIF is the tool that will resurrect long dreamed-of municipal projects, moving them forward at a time when people from all over the nation are looking to Vermont as a safe, welcoming and attractive place to work, live and grow their families.”

We must seize this opportunity. Many of the buildings in Rutland, while beautiful, hide hazardous materials that oftentimes leave spaces idle, unused, and deteriorating. Projects in the TIF District plan for the remediation of these spaces, which will offer

vertical mixed-use layouts that offer both housing and commercial/professional space.

“What’s great about this project is that the proposed projects are located along existing utilities, and are located in the traditional, walkable area of Rutland’s urban core,” said Rutland City Planning Director Ed Bove.

There’s also a more practical, economic outcome expected of all of this, Bove explained. “The increased supply should create downward pressure on housing costs. Also, more housing within walking distance to services will reduce transportation costs associated with suburban housing development.”

And, from a regional perspective, if Rutland City’s urban core is thriving, the region will be stronger.

The moment for implementing these long-awaited dreams has arrived. The economic trends, community readiness and state policies have aligned. With the TIF District as the fulcrum, the Rutland community can finally leverage this opportunity, lift the burden of costly infrastructure upgrades, and finally reach our goals.

For more information, visit the Rutland 360 website: Rutlandvtbusiness.com/tax-increment-financing.



By Emily Pratt Slatin

Above: A chalk artist decorated the street in Downtown Rutland during its Pride celebration on June 21. Top left: A man displayed a sign indicating that even Pride month can't keep all relationships together. Center left: Two furry Pride attendees displayed their support for trans rights. Bottom left: People marched down Center St. in Rutland to show their support for Juneteenth and the LGBTQ+ community.

Pride in Rutland: Flags, resistance, and showing up

By Emily Pratt Slatin

Pride returned to downtown Rutland this June with more color, noise, and purpose than ever before. What began as a joyful celebration quickly became something deeper—something that felt like resistance. And belonging. And a promise that no one in this community has to stand alone.

The day kicked off with the Juneteenth Strut, led by the Rutland Area NAACP, marching from the Rutland Free Library down Center Street. Shortly after, the Pride parade followed, folding into the flow. The two processions moved as one—flag bearers, families, teens, elders, allies, and activists—all marching to the beat of their own truths.

It looked like a river of color—people in motion, flags unfurling in every hue imaginable, each banner a visible declaration of identity, hope, and endurance.

Jeanette Langston stood near the edge of Center Street, watching it all unfold. The flags behind her lifted and snapped in the breeze as if daring someone to look away.

“What a powerful shared moment of resistance,” Langston said, her voice even, her eyes full. “It’s about showing up for each other—especial-

ly the ones still learning how.”

She wasn’t wrong.

This year’s event—organized by Rutland County Pride with support from the local NAACP and dozens of community groups—was the largest and loudest yet. Vendors lined the street with local goods and handmade art. A stage hosted drag performers, speakers, and live music. Food trucks stayed busy. Kids painted signs and decorated pronoun buttons. Adults stood back, smiled, and let it all sink in.

There’s a difference between inclusion and belonging. One checks a box. The other holds the door open and says, “Come in. Stay as long as you want.”

What was once a small gathering has become a cornerstone of Rutland’s summer calendar. And this year, it didn’t just feel bigger—it felt bolder. William Fournery-Mills, executive director of Rutland County Pride, promised it would be “bigger than the last.” He was right. But size wasn’t the only thing that mattered. What stood out was the spirit. There was no corporate gloss. No tokenism. Just real people standing in real

sun, being real with one another. That kind of authenticity is harder to find than we like to admit.

And right now, it matters more than ever.

Even in Vermont, where we like to think we’re ahead of the curve, queer and trans people still face very real threats—subtle, systemic, and sometimes direct. It’s easy to pretend otherwise in polite company, but those who live it know. Pride doesn’t fix it. It doesn’t erase it. What it does is offer visibility. It

plants a flag in the ground—sometimes literally—and says: We’re here. We matter. We’re not going anywhere.

That was the message on Center Street.

There was a sign near the sidewalk that read, “You Belong Here.” It wasn’t loud, but

it didn’t need to be. It just needed to exist. Because in a town like Rutland—where smallness can sometimes feel like invisibility—Pride is about more than celebration. It’s about survival. It’s about telling someone, even just one person, that they aren’t alone. There’s a difference between inclusion and belonging. One checks a box. The other holds the door open and says,

Pride → 5



← Killington Board looks ahead:
from page 2

finance manager, to help get the books in order while the town prepares to hire a new finance director.

While individual Selectmen did not answer Brant directly, Cushing and Hickory said they wanted to see what Decota and the auditors turned up first before pursuing costlier additional options.

Town Planner Lisa Davis Lewis brought the board some good news, announcing that the \$25 million RAISE grant was back on after its fate was called into question by President Trump’s executive order in February that paused all funding for programs that include DEI (Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion).

The town of Killington was originally awarded the \$25 federal grant in June 2024,

for Phase 2-4, which funds Killington Road improvements from The Lookout to Anthony Way. Funding must still be allocated by June 2028—that was not extended despite the pause, Davis Lewis said.

“It may not seem like a tight timeline, but it really is,” Davis Lewis told the board.

One of the first requirements of the funding was to hire a third party project manager. Ken Robie of DuBois & King was at the meeting to answer questions. After a brief discussion the board unanimously voted to sign a contract to move forward with the contract.

The board also unanimously supported re-engaging the contracted services of Stephanie Clarke of White + Burke consulting engineers to help manage the town’s TIF

project, as she had done previously.

Atherton also told the board that recreation and parks director Emily Hudson would be leaving at the end of the summer, creating a vacancy there and at Killington Elementary school where she runs the after school program.

The board also adopted a revised “Select Board Rules of Procedure” policy, Monday.

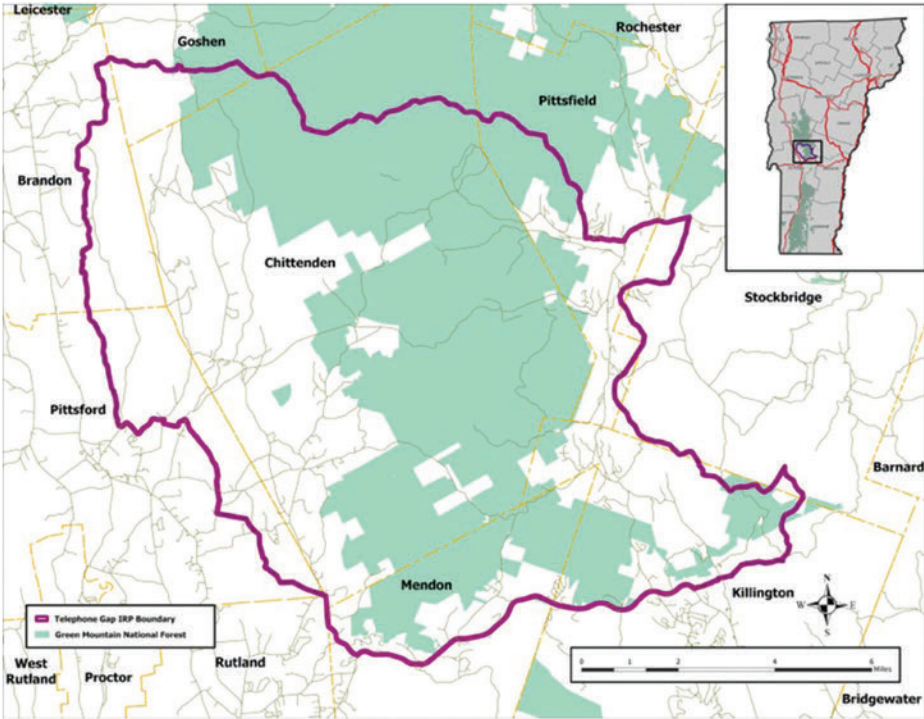
The process for handling complaints and mandates by state statute as part of the “Open Meetings” laws, has been taken very seriously by the five selectmen.

In general, discussion concerned how ethics complaints about town officials will be handled. Cushing’s day job as an intelligence and investigation consultant for

Deloitte Risk and Financial Advisory, and past service as a police officer, lend weight to his input regarding any allegations of unethical behavior and corruption, and he agreed that the town manager should be the primary recipient of any ethics question involving town employees and officials.

If the “accused” is the town manager, the Select Board chair in other towns is usually the alternate, or back-up, contact for filing complaints, Haff noted. Discussion at the previous board meeting including the possibility of appointing a librarian, the town clerk or the police chief, but the chair was selected.

The town’s newly adopted policy is modeled after a template provided by VT League of Cities and Towns.



Courtesy U.S. Forest Service

A map of the Telephone Gap area that was included in the U.S. Forest Service’s final decision. The 72,000-acre area spans most of Chittenden and includes sections of bordering towns in Rutland, Windsor and Addison Counties.

Recreation	
Construction of new trails (miles)	17.4
Mendon Trail Loop – new construction	2.6
Velomont Trail – new construction	14.8
Velomont – new construction	11.4
Velomont Connector – new construction	3.4
Add Velomont to existing use (miles)	13.7
Velomont Trail on existing road or trail	10.8
Velomont Connector on existing road or trail	2.9
Existing trail additions (miles)	13.2
Add Long Trail to the National Forest System (NFS) trail system	3.2
Add existing ATV trails to the NFS trail system	2.4
Add existing snowmobile trails to the NFS trail system	4.7
VAST Corridor 100 Trail (concurrent with added ATV trail)	2.0
Relocated VAST trail on existing roads/trails in South Pond parcel	2.7
Add snowmobile trail on Hadley Lane (Darning Needle extension)	1.5
Add snowmobile trail on Old Turnpike Road	1.4
Miscellaneous trail management (miles)	
Add snowmobile use to the Catamount Trail – South Pond Connector	1.5
Managed use addition to add mountain bike use to existing snowmobile trails (California Lot Trail)	0.3
Catamount Trail (cross-country trail) relocation/improvements	0.6
Address erosion and minimize off-road vehicle access	Yes
Trail decommissioning (miles)	11.9
Mountain bike/hike trail	4.0
Snowmobile trail	7.9

Courtesy U.S. Forest Service

Chart shows the planned total miles of trails (left) and subcategories in each section (right).

← Telephone Gap:
from page 1

report. “I find Alternative C will best address the concerns specific to environmental effects identified from public comments while still meeting the project need,” he added. “Alternative C was developed primarily to address public issues regarding the amount of mature and old forests proposed for harvest including concerns this will negatively impact biodiversity and the forest capacity to sequester and store carbon. I have selected Alternative C for implementation because it addresses these concerns while still providing for multiple resource benefits. Alternative C also has less overall environmental effects compared to Alternative B for a range of resources of concern including forest habitat; carbon and greenhouse gas emissions; threatened, endangered and sensitive wildlife and plant species; and aquatic, soil, recreation, and visual resources. This is primarily due to Alternative C having less acres harvested, and fewer miles of temporary road constructed within the project area.”

The plan goes into effect immediately and will govern work in the Telephone Gap area through 2030.

The plan goes into effect immediately and will govern work in the Telephone Gap area through 2030.

Among other projects, the plan includes a maple tapping special use permit for a 10-year term on approximately 83 acres (up to 4,000 taps) on the south end of Blue Ridge.

It also plans for the removal of all or a portion of an existing dam structure and restore natural stream and wetland ecological processes east of Forest Road 232. “Removing the dam will allow natural hydrological functions to process sediment currently held behind the dam. Additionally, two existing culverts along Forest Road 57 will be replaced with structures to allow aquatic organism passage and flood resiliency,” Strand wrote.

The plan also authorizes the addition of trails for mountain biking, hiking and snowmobiling. This includes a segment of the Velomont Trail and associated connector trails transecting the project area. Additional system trails will be improved providing a more quality experience, and non-sustainable trails will be decommissioned.

A 10-vehicle parking area will be constructed at the existing log landing located at the end of Rockwell Road (Town Highway 83); and another 10-vehicle parking area will be

constructed along Old Turnpike Road north of the National Forest System (NFS)/private land boundary. These additional parking areas will increase recreation access opportunities to the general public.

However, the final decision does not allow for the reconstruction of a hut that burned down.

“My decision does not approve the issuance of a special use permit to the Vermont Huts Association to construct, operate, and maintain a hut near South Pond at the location of a previous four-season lodge,” wrote Strand. “The rationale for the removal of the proposed hut from my decision is Diverse Backcountry Management Area Recreation Standard S-1 states: Construction of new developed recreational facilities shall be restricted to those needed for resource protection. The proposed construction of a hut to provide overnight recreation opportunities near South Pond does not comply with this standard. Deviation from standards requires a Forest Plan amendment. For this reason, the proposed issuance of a special use permit to the Vermont Huts Association to construct, operate, and maintain a hut near South Pond will not be approved as part of this Final Decision Notice.”

802Opportunity expands to offer free tuition for 70% of Vt households

More Vermonters than ever now qualify for free tuition at the Community College of Vermont (CCV), thanks to a major expansion of the 802Opportunity program. The initiative, led by the Vermont Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC) in partnership with CCV, now offers full tuition coverage to Vermonters with household incomes of up to \$100,000—doubling the previous threshold of \$50,000.

Launched five years ago, 802Opportunity is designed to remove financial barriers to higher education and provide a pathway to a debt-free associate degree. According to the Vermont Department of Taxes, this latest expansion means up to 70% of Vermont households now qualify.

“802Opportunity has been enormously impactful because it has enabled me to further my professional goals in a way that I would not have been able to do without it,” said CCV student John LaLonde. “This program has helped me overcome the biggest obstacle to finishing my education: financial insecurity. It has also rekindled my love of learning.”

Since last fall, nearly 2,800 CCV students have benefited from the program. Eligible students—whether new or returning—can choose from 38 certificate and degree programs, including 32 that can be completed entirely online.

CCV President Joyce Judy emphasized the broader impact of the initiative: “802Opportunity opens the door for more Vermonters to pursue a debt-free associate degree. Vermont businesses and communities need an educated workforce, and this program ensures that all Vermonters can invest in themselves.”

VSAC President and CEO Scott Giles called the expansion a “nationally recognized breakthrough” in higher education. “802Opportunity removes financial barriers so students can obtain the education they need

Free tuition → 10



At 6 a.m. Saturday, June 21, balloonists prepared their hot air balloons for flight. Weather conditions were ideal.

By James Kent

← **Hot air balloons:**
from page 1

the hot air balloons. And for those looking to see these gigantic, colorful displays of early flight take off into the sky, it was the early birds who caught the worm.

Shortly after 6 a.m. on Saturday, the first balloons of the day began to loft ticketed passengers in the air. Yes, these flights, which occur only at 6 a.m. and 6 p.m., weather permitting, were sold out long before the weekend. However, to spectate, all that was required was to wake up early enough to view.

And for this first-time hot air balloon festival goer, it was quite the spectacle. The sound of hot air gas filling up the balloon is loud. The size of the balloons is much larger, in person, than they appear once airborne.

The weather on Saturday was perfect, not a cloud in the sky, and the wind was at an acceptable level for easy navigation.

It looked like a blast, and one couldn't help but wish there were enough balloons available for everyone who wanted one to take a ride. Maybe next year. It is an event worth attending.

The festivities all take place at Quechee Green Park at Village Green.

For more information, visit: quecheeballoonfestival.com.

← **Skate park:**
from page 1

for locals interested in skateboarding, especially for younger generations, he said.

Nick LaCaille, commented: “Having grown up around Rutland, going to Flipside was a huge part of my childhood and often considered a second home for myself and most. Seeing its doors close during Covid deeply hurt the skateboarding community in the Rutland/Killington area. You have an opportunity to give kids a place to be themselves, make friends for life and practice one of the best and inclusive sports on the planet. Please bring a skatepark to Killington!!! From traveling up and down the East Coast to the West Coast, skateboarding is growing unbelievably everywhere in the world. Please be a part of the solution and give the kids another place they can also call home for years to come.”

Killington's year-round population is now approximately 1,400. The Covid-19 pandemic brought an influx of people moving to the town, including families with children that needed more opportunities for outdoor activities, Zink said.

Seeing the need for skateboarding opportunities in the community, Zink said Darkside Snowboards has offered a summer skateboarding camp every summer since 2017, and participation has grown steadily over time.

“It's obvious that people want this type of programming” Zink said. “It's suddenly something people want to do. It's just a matter of having a place to do it”

Hudson said the Recreation Department began crafting the master plan last fall in collaboration with a consultant, town planners and the Recreation and Planning Commission, and presented it to the public on April 1.

After receiving little public feedback since April, Hudson said she got the petition this week along with a dozen emails from residents requesting a skate park and a pump track for scooters and bike motocross riders.

The current iteration of the plan is a “placeholder” that can change with public input, and the department plans to share the skate park feedback with the consultant, Hudson said.

Hudson said the town is welcoming ideas during the public comment period, but that it will likely take a decade or more to fund and fully build out the new facilities besides the pool and pool house. She said the department does not want recreation facilities to create “an additional burden” on the town's taxpayers.

Zink said facilities for soccer or baseball require long-term planning for upkeep and programming, but a skate

← **Pride:**
from page 3

“Come in. Stay as long as you want.” What happened in Rutland felt like the latter.

It was a day of dancing, drag, sunburns, and sparkle. But underneath all that, it was something else entirely. It was endurance. It was history. It was a group of people saying, with their presence alone, that joy can be a form of protest and community can be a form of safety.

The collaboration with the Rutland NAACP wasn't just symbolic—it was essential. Queer liberation and racial justice aren't separate movements. They overlap. They always have. And when those two communities share space, something shifts. Something becomes possible.

By mid-afternoon, the air smelled like fried dough and sunscreen. There were more flags than you could count. People hugged. Some cried. Others stood in quiet relief, just watching. One homemade sign read, “Love Wins Because We Show Up.”

That's what stuck. Because that's what this was, in the end. Not just a celebration but a showing up. For ourselves. For each other. For those still finding their words, their names, and their people.

Langston had it right. Showing up is the gift. Everything else—confetti, drag queens, dance tracks—those are mere ribbons. What matters is that we were there. What matters is that we'll continue to be there. And what matters most is that on one afternoon in June, in the middle of a small Vermont city, nobody had to pretend to be anything other than exactly who they were.

Emily Pratt Slatin (she/her) is a writer and photographer living with her wife on a retired dairy farm in Middletown Springs. Her work can be found at RescueGirl1557.com.

park will offer ongoing opportunities for residents while not placing a heavy burden on the town.

“One good thing about a skate park is that once it's built, it doesn't take much maintenance, and anyone can just show up and do it on their own,” he said. “It's something that's beneficial to pretty much everybody.”

Eric Gorman concurred, commenting on the petition June 14, writing: “I believe that skateparks are a high-yield investment for the enrichment and benefit of the community and its residents. There may be a considerable upfront cost, but they last for decades, require minimal maintenance, and provide round-the-clock opportunity for exercise, creative self-expression, community building, and social interaction. I believe it's very important to have skate parks in our communities, because it bridges the divide between gender, sex, generation, and cultural backgrounds in a way that truly brings people of all walks of life together. There should be no question of whether or not this skatepark is put in, the only question that should be asked is why there isn't one already.”

To sign the petition visit: ipetitions.com/petition/include-a-skateboard-park-in-killington-rec-master.

Vt plastic bag use dropped 91% following ban, researchers find

In the midst of 2020 Covid measures, another change took place in Vermont: A law went into effect banning businesses from offering plastic bags to customers, with paper bags only available for a fee.

A 2023 analysis of a survey of hundreds of Vermonters found the law appeared to have worked. Plastic bag use in the state dropped 91%, and three-quarters of those surveyed approved of the approach.

Now, researchers at the University of Vermont have dug deeper into the 745-person survey conducted by the University of Vermont Center for Rural Studies.

The three-person team wanted to know more about how people had responded to the legislation, says UVM College of Agricultural and Life Sciences professor Qingbin Wang.

“I think it demonstrates a great policy outcome, and that doesn’t always happen,” said Niles.

Wang is the lead author of a new peer-reviewed paper in the journal Environmental Economics and Policy Studies that does just that.

The researchers found the law’s strongest effect, by far, was a near-complete elimination of plastic bag use following the ban’s implementation—a 91% drop.

Paper bag use, meanwhile, increased by over 6% during the same period—though this was not a statistically significant change. The researchers surmise that having the option to substitute paper bags for plastic was a stronger driver of

behavior than having to pay the new 10-cent fee.

The study also found that around 70% of respondents viewed the legislation positively, says Wang.

The survey also revealed some interesting patterns in how Vermonters now carry their purchases home. Some respondents switched readily to paper bags, substituting the easiest available alternative to plastic bags. Others who’d previously used paper bags responded more strongly to the fee, choosing to stop using them once they came with a 10-cent price tag. Some people continued using paper bags regardless of the fee. There were also respondents who had already been using reusable bags before the ban and continued to do so.

Wang attributes the ban’s success in part to what he calls the law’s “bottom-up” origins—Vermonters pushed legislators for the ban due to environmental concerns surrounding single-use plastic. Wang also believes that the law’s simplicity made its implementation more successful.

Study coauthor and UVM Gund Fellow Emily Belarmino notes that advance notice about the ban was also key to the law’s successful rollout and subsequent public approval of it.

“Yes, it was effective, and people seem to be pleased with it, but I would surmise that part of that is because of the really good communication work that the state of Vermont did before implementation day,” she said.

Wang sees a potential lesson for other states pursuing similar laws. Given the slightly increased usage of paper bags that the researchers noted in relation to the plastic bag decrease, he says states should “consider both types of bags together.”



By Frank Gruber

The average number of single-use plastic shopping bags shoppers in the U.S. use has been pegged at 365-1,500 per year.

Study coauthor and UVM Gund Fellow Meredith Niles sees value in the research’s validation of the ban’s effectiveness. “I feel like the biggest finding here is that this legislation clearly had an impact on consumer plastic bag use and, equally importantly, that there was broad and wide public support for the plastic bag ban—and the public is generally satisfied with its implementation,” Niles added, “I think it demonstrates a great policy outcome, and that doesn’t always happen.”

AOT reports this week's road construction

This weekly report is a list of planned construction activities that will affect traffic on local state highways and interstates for the week of June 23. For a full statewide list of construction this week visit: vtrans.vermont.gov.

I-89 Royalton

Construction continues Monday through Friday on the I-89 bridges near Exit 3. Traffic is reduced to a single lane. Southbound traffic will use the travel lane, while northbound traffic crosses the median and returns north past the bridges. The Exit 3 North off-ramp uses a crossover to the new ramp. Speed limits are 55 mph in work zones and 25 mph on the Exit 3 off-ramp. On Wednesday or Thursday, the speed limit on VT 107 will be reduced to 30 mph with a 14’ height restriction, and traffic will be alternately diverted with flaggers managing flow due to a deck pour on I-89.

Ludlow

Daily lane closures are scheduled for VT 100 and VT 103. Flaggers are anticipated to be controlling one-way alternating traffic patterns and to be staffed in intersections throughout the project limits. Expect delays. Sidewalk detours will be in place as needed. Pedestrians should watch for signed detour routes on VT 103 and project fencing leading around closed areas on VT 100S.

Pittsford

Motorists on U.S. 7 can expect little to no traffic impact. Flaggers may be present to allow for truck traffic in and out of the work

area.

Quechee Gorge Bridge

The eastbound lane closure and one-way alternating traffic controlled by a traffic signal will continue until mid-season when the closure switches sides to the westbound lane. The trail at the bridge underpass is closed through fall 2025. The adjacent trail is open via a signed detour through the visitor center.

Rutland

A railroad crossing project will require single-lane closures with alternating one-way traffic controlled by flaggers on West Street near Forest Street from Monday through Thursday between 6:30 a.m. and 7:30 p.m. West Street will be closed at the railroad crossing near Forest Street, with traffic maintained via detour routes from Friday at 6 a.m. through Sunday at 8 p.m. Local traffic on West Street will be detoured via Meadow Street, School Street, Forest Street, and Pine Street. Through traffic (including trucks) on West Street will be detoured via Columbian Avenue, State Street, and Merchants Row.

Woodstock

Detour signs will direct traffic to Stimets Road, an unpaved route located about 0.20 miles north of the junction with VT 12, where drivers should use caution. Flaggers will assist with truck traffic near Log Cabin Drive.

For more information, visit: vtrans.vermont.gov

Vermont to get over \$21 million in nationwide settlement with Purdue Pharma and the Sacklers

Attorney General Charity Clark announced June 16 that all 55 attorneys general, representing all eligible states and U.S. territories, have agreed to sign on to a \$7.4 billion settlement with Purdue Pharma and its owners, the Sackler family. This settlement was reached after the previous settlement was rejected by the U.S. Supreme Court. It resolves litigation against Purdue and the Sacklers for their role in creating and worsening the opioid crisis across the country. Now that the state sign-on period has concluded, local governments across the country will be asked to join the settlement contingent on bankruptcy court proceedings. As reported previously, Purdue and the Sacklers agreed to this settlement in January 2025 with a bipartisan coalition of states, including Vermont.

“Purdue and the Sackler family created and perpetuated a crisis that has stolen the lives of our loved ones, neighbors, and community members,” said Attorney General Clark. “This settlement will never undo the suffering that has touched nearly every Vermont family, but it will hold Purdue and the Sacklers accountable for causing the devastating opioid crisis.”

Under the Sacklers’ ownership, Purdue made and aggressively marketed opioid products for decades, fueling the largest drug crisis in the nation’s history. The settlement ends the Sacklers’ control of Purdue and their ability to sell opioids in the U.S. Communities across the country will receive funds to support addiction treatment, prevention and recovery. This settlement in principle is the nation’s largest settlement to date with individuals responsible for the opioid crisis.

Vermont will receive as much as \$21.85 million upon court approval of the settlement.

Like prior opioid settlements, the settlement with Purdue and the Sacklers will involve resolution of legal claims by state and local governments. The local government sign-on and voting solicitation process for this settlement will be contingent on bankruptcy court approval. Local governments will be notified of the steps they must take following the bankruptcy court hearing scheduled in the coming days.

Under the Sacklers' ownership, Purdue made and aggressively marketed opioid products for decades, fueling the largest drug crisis in the nation's history.

A Roadmap

The Vermont Legislature adjourned Monday evening, June 16, following the passage of H.454, the education reform plan. I call it a roadmap as the legislation lays out a list



By Rep. Jim Harrison

of changes that will take place over the next few years. And as various studies and reports come back in, there will also likely be adjustments, potential detours and even off ramps along the way.

The first task calls for a small group of legislators and former education officials to draw up recommendations for three new school district map options in the coming months for the Legislature to consider next session. If that doesn't happen, the other changes, including the new financing plan, will not proceed.

The bill is a compromise, which gained the backing of all six legislators on the conference committee (four Democrats and two Republicans), legislative leaders in the House and Senate and Governor Scott. The two-week break of the Legislature allowed the conferees and administration to continue their work to reach an agreement.

That is not to suggest that final passage by the House or Senate was easy. Many in the education community and parents of students expressed concern about the bill and its potential to reduce spending in certain districts and possible loss of local control. They urged lawmakers to vote "no." Some on the Right also objected to the lack of immediate tax relief. At one point on Monday, the talk in the State House was that the Senate vote may result in a tie. In the end it was approved by a 17-12 vote and a voice vote in the House, which followed with a 96-45 vote to send the bill to the governor.

There is probably something in the bill with which everyone can take issue. The measure is a compromise by any definition. But if the roadmap is followed, there will be significant changes in the years to come. I did vote "yes" on the bill, knowing that much work lies ahead and that inaction was not an

I did vote "yes" on the bill, knowing that much work lies ahead and that inaction was not an option in my view.

option in my view. We cannot ignore the fact that we have a school system built for 125,000 students and now find ourselves with just over 80,000. For a state with a total population just under the city of Boston, it's hard to justify the overhead of 52 supervisory unions. Change will not be easy, but necessary from my perspective.

In his remarks to legislators Monday

night, Gov. Scott said, "Our current system is unsustainable for students and taxpayers. This is only the first step and the work ahead will be just as if not more important than what we've done this session."

Some of the elements of the plan include:

- The number of school districts will be reduced from the current 119 to perhaps 15-20.
- The number of independent schools currently allowed in school choice towns will be reduced.
- Some towns in school choice districts could lose that option depending on how the new district maps are drawn.
- Average minimum class sizes are established with some exemptions.
- School financing will shift to a foundation formula in three years where each district will receive a fixed amount per student adjusted for certain factors (non-English, poverty, high school, etc.)
- A new property tax classification for second homes may be established when the reforms take effect.
- Districts could spend up to 10% more with voter approval (phases down to 5% in a few years).
- Statewide school calendar and graduation requirements to be established.

Other issues of interest:

- The Senate completed legislative approval of a targeted tax reduction package that includes an exemption of Vermont income taxes on military pensions for most veterans.
- Scott vetoed S.125, which was a measure supported by the Vermont state employees union (VSAE). The bill would have potentially added supervisory employees in the Judiciary to the union and increased the bar at which employees could ask for a revote to decertify their union status.
- The governor also vetoed H.91, which would have transferred much of the responsibility for homelessness to the regional community action groups. Scott feared the cost of the new approach was going to be more expensive than the current hotel voucher program, which is already significantly higher than it was pre-pandemic. The current program will continue with limits.
- A miscellaneous education bill, that included a new ban on student cell phones in schools, was approved on the last day and sent to the governor.
- An election bill approved on the last day will add a new candidate consent requirement for the candidate to be counted in the write-ins on the ballot. The measure also restricts candidates that lose in a primary from running in the general election in another party or as an independent.

The 2025 session saw the passage of 82 bills by both chambers, with four of them

Harrison → 10



By Mike Dougherty/VT Digger

Nicole Mace, seen in 2019, when she was the outgoing executive director of the Vermont School Boards Association, speaking at a Vermont Board of Education meeting. Last week, she resigned from her position on the Commission on the Future of Public Education.

Two members, including chair, resign from the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont

Say they don't believe their efforts are making an impact

By Corey McDonald/VT Digger

Two members of the Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont, including the commission's chair, announced last week they would be resigning, saying they no longer believed their efforts would make any impact.

Meagan Roy, the chair of the commission, and Nicole Mace, the former representative of the Vermont School Boards Association, both announced they would be leaving the commission in June 19 emails to fellow commissioners viewed by VT Digger.

Both members said the commission's refined role, as laid out in the landmark education reform bill approved by the Legislature last week, H.454, does not give the commission the power to inform or influence the state's efforts to reform public education policy.

"Even with the revised charge of the Commission, I cannot in good faith dedicate my professional time and energy to a body that I can't be certain will be legitimately part of the work moving forward," Roy wrote.

Likewise, Mace, who serves as the vice chair of the Winooski School District Board of Trustees, wrote in her email that the commission was "never fully embraced" by policymakers since its creation during the 2024 legislative session.

"I supported the basic framework for education reform that was built in the House-passed version of H.454," she wrote. "But what has transpired since then has revealed this process of reform will go down the same path as many failed reform efforts of the past — carve-outs for powerful interests, last-minute deals based on political expediency and not what's best for the system, and a disregard for the educators who show up every day and do extraordinary work on behalf of the children of our state."

Mace added that she "cannot continue to participate in a process that sacrifices equity and accountability in favor of power, privilege, and political games."

Roy said in a phone interview that independent schools were the only group lawmakers prioritized and protected when they crafted the bill.

"What we've witnessed is a process that's become very political and driven in that way, not driven by good education policy," she said.

The resignations come as Gov. Phil Scott waits for legislative lawyers to finalize the language in the education reform bill, which he is expected to sign. The bill calls for a radical transformation of Vermont's public education system over several years by consolidating the state's 119 school districts and creating a new education funding formula.

The Commission on the Future of Public Education in Vermont was first created as part of 2024's Act 183, the law that set the double-digit average property tax increases needed that year to keep pace with ballooning public education costs.

Mace said that she "cannot continue to participate in a process that sacrifices equity and accountability in favor of power, privilege, and political games."

Two resign → 30

GUEST EDITORIAL

The Good, the Bad & the Ugly of H.454

By Sen. Ruth Hardy

Editor's note: Ruth Hardy, of East Middlebury, represents Addison County in the Vermont Senate. She wrote the following reflection (originally posted at ruthforvermont.com) on voting "no" on H.454, the education transformation reform bill that passed last week.

On Monday, June 16, the Legislature passed H.454, the education transformation bill that was a main focus of our work this session. Although I appreciate many parts of the bill and dedicated an enormous amount of time and effort to make the bill better, in the end, I could not support it and voted "no." You can watch my speech on the Senate floor before voting on Monday, explaining my thoughts on the bill and the process.

In short, I voted against the bill because the Senate lost the trust of many Vermonters and failed public education by repeatedly putting aside the broad needs of public schools and their students in favor of the narrow desires of private schools. Since the bill puts off many big decisions until next year and beyond, it's very likely that without changes to Senate leadership and committee assignments this dynamic will happen again.

The bill commences sweeping, generational change to Vermont's K-12 education system — consolidating school districts, implementing education quality reforms, creating a foundation formula to fund schools, eliminating local school district budget votes, changing how private schools receive public funds, and initiating significant property tax reform measures.

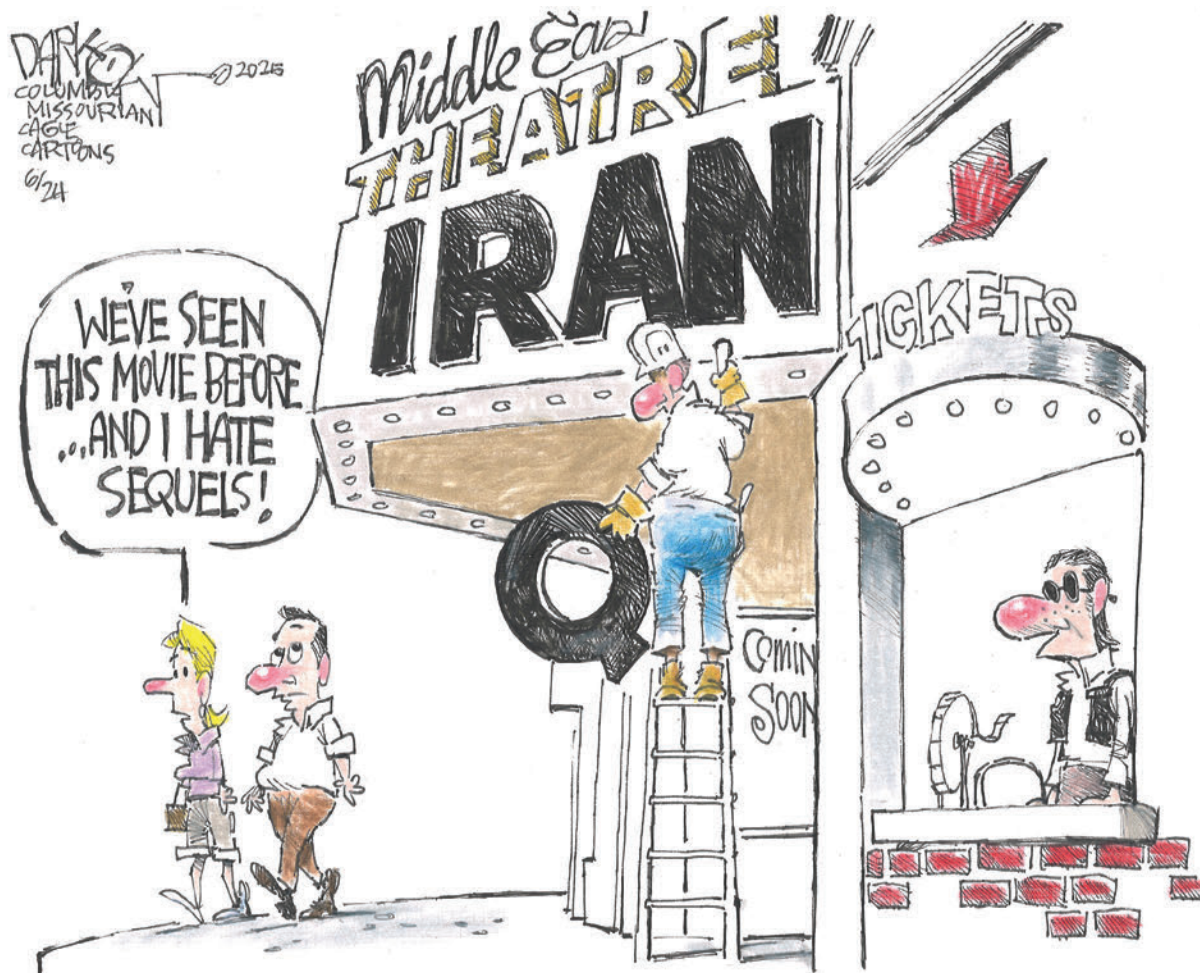
The Good

I do support many of the provisions in the bill and worked hard to improve or protect them. I especially like the tax policy changes, which is actually what many voters wanted us to focus on so their property taxes could be lower. The bill will replace the current property tax credit with a new incremental property tax exemption of house-site values up to \$425,000 for households earning up to \$115,000 annually. This should continue tax relief to thousands of Vermonters with low and moderate incomes and reduce the eligibility cliff.

The bill creates a new property tax classification, separating out non-homestead residential properties, which are generally second homes and short-term rentals. Taxes on this new classification will help pay for the property tax exemption for lower-income Vermonters, shifting taxation onto wealthier property owners. The bill establishes property assessment districts that will oversee regularly-scheduled property reappraisals to ensure towns keep their grand lists updated and prevent property tax spikes due to delayed reappraisals. While the tax policy cannot yet be sufficiently modeled to know how much it will bring down taxes, preliminary estimates are encouraging.

The new foundation formula to fund schools would provide an adequate base funding amount per pupil, plus additional funding for students with disabilities, English-language learning needs, and students living in poverty. There will also be grants for schools that are, by necessity, small and/or in sparsely-populated areas. The formula and the amounts for the base, weights, and grants, were empirically-derived, using the actual cost for Vermont schools. A foundation formula is the most common formula for funding schools in other states and is meant to both adequately fund schools and promote greater funding stability

Good, bad, ugly of H.454 → 10



I Hate Sequels by John Darkow, Columbia Missourian

LETTERS

Protect SNAP—because no Vermonter should go hungry

Dear Editor,

As a longtime anti-hunger advocate, a former SNAP recipient, and a proud Vermonter, I am deeply alarmed by proposals moving through Congress that would gut the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), known here in Vermont as 3SquaresVT. If passed, these cuts would devastate thousands of families across the Green Mountain State that rely on this vital program to put food on the table.

In May, the House narrowly passed a budget bill that would slash more than \$1 trillion from programs like SNAP and Medicaid, essential lifelines for people in need. Meanwhile, the same bill offers massive tax breaks for the wealthiest Americans and corporations. Now, the Senate is taking up this bill, and the future of food assistance hangs in the balance.

Here in Vermont, SNAP supports 66,500 residents—1 in 10 of us. More than half of those served are children, and over 53% are in families that include older adults or people with disabilities.

Nearly a third are working families doing their best to make ends meet. These are our neighbors, friends, and coworkers.

This is personal—for all of us.

Having spent nearly two decades advocating for anti-hunger policy at food banks in New York City and San Francisco, I've seen firsthand the consequences when federal food programs like SNAP are undermined. Local food shelves play a critical role, but they were never intended—and simply aren't equipped—to fill the gap left by insufficient government support. SNAP is efficient, targeted, and responsive. It lets people buy the food they need with dignity, and it strengthens our economy. In fact, every \$1 in SNAP generates about \$1.50 in local economic activity, supporting more than 700 local Vermont grocers, farmers, and retailers.

Cuts like these take food off shelves and they break a social contract, our promise SNAP → 9

The public reality of private schools

Dear Editor,

In their June 13 commentary, "The Achilles' heel of Vermont education reform," the Friends of Vermont Public Education state that, "Since the early 1990s, we have been operating two parallel educational systems — public and private." The organization calls upon the Vermont Legislature to create "one unified educational system," arguing that, "The current structure allows independent schools to operate with significantly less oversight and accountability compared to public schools."

These are curious assertions. St. Johnsbury Academy was founded in 1842, Burr and Burton in 1829, Lyndon Institute in 1867 and Thetford Academy in 1819. Putney School opened in 1935 and Vermont Academy in 1876.

Many independent schools in our state predate every public school, and their missions, educational standards and civically engaged graduates have played essential roles in every conceivable arena of Vermont life.

In their literary metaphor, the Friends of Vermont Public Education portray independent schools as significantly weakening the educational landscape because they lack "stringent transparency" and are "exempt from public meetings, financial information disclosure, budget voter approval and public records accessibility."

First, both public and independent schools in Vermont are accredited by the New England Association of Schools and Colleges. The standards are, in fact, applied and enforced equally in all accredited schools.

In Vermont, 23 public schools and 45 independent schools are NEASC accredited, with 12 public school candidates and one independent school candidate for accreditation. The Vermont Agency of Education and NEASC have worked together effectively and cooperatively for many years.

Second, every nonprofit/non-religious independent school reports its finances

Private schools → 30

CAPITOL QUOTES

'Midnight Hammer'

The U.S. launched a major military strike, dubbed "Midnight Hammer" on Iran's suspected nuclear facilities, utilizing bunker-buster bombs and Tomahawk missiles. The U.S. did so without direct provocation from Iran, or congressional approval and authority. Iran and Israel have since agreed to a ceasefire after what Trump called a "weak" retaliation from Iran and has claimed victory in what he's dubbed the "12-day war."

"There will be either peace or there will be tragedy for Iran far greater than we have witnessed over the last eight days,"

said President **Donald Trump** in an address after the bombing of Iran.

"Under the constitution, it is the responsibility of Congress—not the president—to declare war. The American people should have had a voice and an opportunity to debate this monumental act before a strike of this nature,"

said Vermont Senator **Peter Welch**.

"Every time America is on the verge of greatness, we get involved in another foreign war. There would not be bombs falling on the people of Israel if [its prime minister Benjamin] Netanyahu had not dropped bombs on the people of Iran first. Israel is a nuclear armed nation. This is not our fight. Peace is the answer,"

said **Marjory Taylor Greene** Georgia congresswoman 30 minutes prior to President Trump announcing the U.S. had bombed Iran.

"The President's disastrous decision to bomb Iran without authorization is a grave violation of the Constitution and Congressional War Powers... It is absolutely and clearly grounds for impeachment,"

said U.S. Representative **Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez** on X.

COMMENTARIES

Alternative steps for true education reform

By Jim Lengel

Editor's note: Jim Lengel, of Duxbury and Lake Elmore, started teaching in Vermont in 1972, worked for the state board of education for 15 years, and retired back in Vermont after helping schools all over the world improve the quality of teaching and learning.

Our executive and legislative branches have failed during this biennium to come up with a workable education reform. It's too late now to hash out a useful solution, but that's no reason to give up.

We need to move forward toward a public school system that provides equal and better educational quality, with community control and lower costs.

Here are a few alternative steps, along with a workable timeframe to achieve true education reform.

1. Design sustainable K-12 districts (2025-2026)

Our current hodgepodge of 251 towns, 119 school districts, 53 supervisory unions and untold numbers of merged, unified, contract and union districts is irrational, expensive, unsustainable and not in the best interests of students. Instead, a revived state board of education should design new districts around where our students live, where our schools are located and the existing organic patterns of sending and receiving schools.

Each district should include at least one high school along with its sending elementary and middle schools. Most of our public education works this way already, accounting for 90% of our students. For those few places where the K-12 pattern is confused, the board will help the communities develop a solid solution.

2. Work with communities to improve K-12 quality and equity (2025-ongoing)

The state board should define, in broad

outlines, and with deep community involvement, the elements of a quality education: the experiences and opportunities each Vermont student should enjoy at elementary, middle and high school. Most of the new K-12 districts will already meet these standards; some of the lower-spend-

As part of the funding plan, the two main drivers of increased school costs — health insurance and special education — need to be dealt with on a statewide basis.

ing ones may not.

With help from the state board, these districts will develop a plan for improvement. At the same time, a few high-spending districts may need to examine how they might lower costs with the least effect on quality. The State Board will assist them in this process.

3. Design a funding system to support these districts (2026-2027)

Once new districts are defined, we can calculate the value of property and income in each, as a first step in developing a funding system that provides enough support for each district to maintain the elements of a quality education.

We expect to find a narrower range of taxable value per student among the larger K-12 districts, thus reducing the need for statewide equalization.

As part of the funding plan, the two main drivers of increased school costs — health insurance and special education — need to be dealt with on a statewide basis.

The new governance, quality and funding system should ensure that each Vermont student, regardless of zipcode, enjoys a quality education, under community control, with an equal share of public resources.

← SNAP: from page 8

to care for each other, especially in hard times.

Thankfully, Vermont is represented by two of the most steadfast champions of this program: Senator Bernie Sanders and Senator Peter Welch. I want to thank them for their leadership and urge them to continue fighting for 3SquaresVT and for every Vermonter who relies on it. We need their voices, now more than ever.

We need to help our friends and family in other

states urge their senators to follow Vermont's lead and oppose these harmful cuts. Call your friends and family, whether they're across the country or just over the border in Maine, and urge them to contact their senators and demand a "no" vote on these devastating cuts to SNAP and Medicaid.

As a parent, I'm grateful to be raising my kids in a state where food, compassion, and a deep sense that we are responsible for one another are

all abundant. It's on all of us to defend the programs that make these values real for our families and communities.

Congress has a deadline of July 4 to finalize this bill. There is still time to stop these harmful cuts, and we must.

Cuts to SNAP threaten not only our neighbors' dinner tables, but the heart of what it means to be a Vermonter. Let's stand up for one another—and demand that Congress do the same.

Meg Davidson, Jericho

← Good, bad, ugly of H.454:

from page 8

and equity statewide.

I support most of the education reform measures as well, including a statewide school calendar and graduation standards, modest class size requirements, changes to the state board of education, and updates to some state rules governing schools.

The bill includes a lot of strong “intent” language about how the Legislature intends to enact change, and also requests many studies and reports from various entities, including the Commission on the Future of Public Education, the state board of education, the Agency of Education, the Tax Department, and the Joint Fiscal Office.

Getting data, information, and ideas is crucial if we are going to implement these measures successfully, but the fact that so much is currently unknown and yet to be decided means that these reports represent a double-edged sword.

The Bad

As such, there are parts of the bill that are really problematic. The foundation formula will be difficult for many school districts that are already working at scale and/or spending more than the average amount per pupil. These districts will likely have to make budget cuts, but may not have much “fat” to cut — possibly cutting programs that are good for kids.

With a new foundation formula controlled by the state, the bill also unceremoniously eliminates most local school budget votes. Combined with the potential for larger school districts, these measures erode the local democracy that’s a big part of Vermont’s core values.

The bill creates an 11-member task force, dominated by legislators, to recommend new larger school districts, and specifically allows those districts to be structured in a way that accommodates the current system of private school vouchers, and maintains inequitable and inefficient governance structures. This politicized and rushed process for recommending new districts also puts the Legislature in a difficult position to approve new school districts quickly next session, likely leading to even more political division and potential inaction—in an election year no less!

While the bill does create a structure for a state-level school construction program and fund, the final version of the bill removed the modest funding source that was available to seed the new school construction fund. New school buildings are already desperately needed and will be even more so under a consolidated system that seeks to combine some schools that might not have sufficient capacity to accommodate more students. Especially if we are going to create more equity in a system that has both the oldest public school buildings in the nation and sends public funding to private schools with high-end facilities, we have to be able to fund public school construction projects.

I was disheartened, to say the least, that while the bill does limit the number of private schools that can receive public funding, it does not limit the number of students who can attend these schools on the public dime, nor does it prevent communities from closing their public schools and

sending kids to private schools using public funding. It also creates a couple carve-outs in the funding system that could lead to private schools getting more money than public schools to educate high schoolers and tech center students. See below for the ugly details.

Finally, the bill seeks to do all of this work in three years, a compromise with the governor who wanted things done in two years and the Legislature who preferred four.

This shortened timeline creates complications with the timing of electing new school boards, envisioned to be in a stand-alone special election in November 2027 when voter turnout will probably be low.

It also is likely to create rushed decisions and potential chaos in schools when a weak Agency of Education and hostile federal situation are already causing alarm for schools.

The Ugly

Unfortunately, from the beginning, Senate President *Pro Tem* Phil Baruth forced us into a narrow framing of reform and the Committee on Committees (Baruth, Lieutenant Governor John Rodgers and Senator Ginny Lyons) appointed senators with little relevant policy experience to positions that allowed them to cater to narrow interests over the common good. As such, the process, and the loss of trust it created, became the ugliest part of this important bill.

Over the past several weeks, a committee of conference, made up of three senators and three representatives, negotiated the final details of the bill. The vast majority of those negotiations focused on private school interests, with repeated proposals by the senators for specific carve-outs in the bill that would advantage or exempt private schools that receive public funding. Two of the senators have direct ties to large private schools which depend on public money — Scott Beck is a teacher at St. Johnsbury Academy and Seth Bongartz was the board chair for Burr and Burton Academy for nearly two decades.

Through these connections and apparent conflicts of interest, the private schools and their high-paid lobbyists appeared to be using the negotiations to gain financial advantage and protections. (You can watch recordings of the negotiation sessions on the Senate Education Committee livestream to see this dynamic in action.)

It’s also notable that these negotiations came after I had already negotiated many of the same topics with Bongartz to finalize the details of the bill that passed out of the Senate, the very version of the bill that Senate conferees were supposed to be defending in their negotiations with the House. Instead, they repeatedly demanded provisions for private schools that were in neither the House nor the Senate’s bills, underscoring that despite my good-faith negotiations and handshake deal with Bongartz, he was absolutely willing to betray our agreement.

According to the rules followed by the Vermont General Assembly in Mason’s Manual of Legislative Procedure, members of a committee of conference are supposed to defend the provisions in their body’s version of the bill and reach an

agreement that includes only the provisions of one house or the other, or something reasonably in the middle. They are not allowed to include provisions outside of the scope of the specific sections of the bill, and if they do, any member can object to the report of the conference committee.

With H.454, this is exactly what happened: the Senate conferees demanded and won provisions for private schools that were not included in the House or Senate versions of the bill; Senator Vyhovsky objected and Lieutenant Governor Rodgers ruled in her favor, finding the conference committee report “objectionable.”

In other words, the bill we were asked to vote on had been finalized without following legislative rules. Unfortunately, most senators voted to overrule the lieutenant governor and accept the new version of the bill anyway, leading to a 17-12-1 vote on the bill in the Senate.

Public input

I heard from hundreds of educators, administrators, parents, and community members who support our public school system, asking me to vote against H.454 (and nobody asking me to vote for it). One of the common themes I heard is that they had lost trust in nearly everyone who was trying to enact education reform.

Rather than consistently support schools and implement gradual, positive reform over his nearly decade as governor, Phil Scott put his inexperienced secretary of education in charge of proposing massive, rushed reform during a very tenuous time. Rather than center on public schools that educate more than 95% of Vermont’s students and are the heart of most Vermont towns, Senate leadership ignored their interests and focused on the narrow needs of private schools. Only the House seemed to listen to and appreciate the perspective of public education, but in the end, even they gave into the bullying demands of the Senate negotiators and the political threats of the governor.

Some say that the ends justify the means or that policy is more important than process, but if the process is so bad that it leads to a loss of trust from the very people who are the subject of the reform, then a good product will be difficult to achieve. As I said to Senate Majority Leader Kesha Ram Hinsdale when she was lobbying people to vote for the bill, “Process matters, trust matters. You cannot do meaningful reform without them.”

This transformational bill includes so many decisions yet to be made. As an education policy maker, mother of three kids who graduated from our public schools, and a Vermonter, I care deeply about our educational system. I will continue to do what I can to ensure the success of H.454 even though I voted against it. But to restore the trust of others, there must be transformational change in the Senate before the next legislative session in January, with new leaders of key committees, a clearer focus on the public schools that serve 95% of Vermont kids, and a commitment to a process based in good faith, ethics, and transparency, rather than what we have seen from current Senate leadership. Only then will the type of reform we need be possible.

← Free tuition:

from page 5

to pursue Vermont’s high-demand, high-wage jobs,” Giles said. “We are thankful that Vermont’s leaders have expanded 802Opportunity to empower more students to take the next step toward a brighter future.”

The program is part of the state’s broader efforts to boost workforce readiness

and economic mobility. CCV, Vermont’s second-largest college, serves nearly 10,000 students annually across 12 campuses and through extensive online offerings.

The fall semester begins Tuesday, Sept. 2.

For more information, visit: ccv.edu/802 or vsac.org/802Opportunity.

← Harrison:

from page 7

vetoed. Given the change in political makeup, leaders did not choose to try and override any of those four vetos.

The last day of the session came on the heels of the tragic assassination of the former Speaker of the Minnesota House and an attempted assassination of a state senator there. While there were no known threats here,

Gov. Scott said, “This is only the first step and the work ahead will be just as if not more important than what we’ve done this session.”

security at the Vermont State House was tighter than usual on Monday. It served as an unfortunate reminder that political violence can happen

anywhere.

It continues to be an honor to represent the communities of Chittenden, Killington, Mendon and Pittsfield. Thank you for reading my updates throughout the session. I

will provide further information as necessary. In the meantime, enjoy the summer! I can be reached at JHarrison@leg.state.vt.us.

WORDPLAY

DIPS AND FLIPS WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards

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

AIRTIME	BARREL ROLL	COASTER	DIVE	GRAB BARS	STANDUP
ANGLED	BOOMERANG	COBRA ROLL	DROP	INVERSION	TURNAROUND
ASCEND	BRAKES	CORKSCREW	ELEVATED	LAUNCH	TWISTER
BANKING	CAMELBACK	CURVES	FLOORLESS	LOOPS	WOODEN

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Solutions → 24

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Computer manufacturer
- 5. Noted space station
- 8. Kurt Russell film "Captain"
- 11. Automaton
- 13. Everyone has one
- 14. Incline from the vertical
- 15. Fights
- 16. Dunn & Bradstreet (abbr.)
- 17. Finishes off
- 18. Places to store things
- 20. Dutch painter Gerard ____
- 21. Smaller quantity
- 22. There's a North, South and Central of these
- 25. In an early way
- 30. More spacious
- 31. Short-term memory
- 32. One who possesses
- 33. Sesame
- 38. Forbid
- 41. A way to explain
- 43. Not around
- 45. Evoke or suggest
- 47. Ancient kingdom near Dead Sea
- 49. Dekameter
- 50. Fencing sword
- 55. "Luther" actor Idris

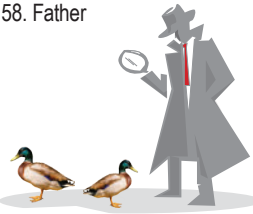
CLUES DOWN

- 1. Creative expression
- 2. Fiber from the outer husk of a coconut
- 3. City in ancient Syria
- 4. College army
- 5. More disturbed
- 6. Pays no attention to
- 7. Restored
- 8. Competitions
- 9. Lyric poems
- 10. Famed American lawman
- 12. Expression of disappointment
- 14. Scars
- 19. Satisfy
- 23. Central European river
- 24. Brass instrument
- 25. One who gets paid to perform
- 26. Propel with oars
- 27. Long period of time
- 28. Woman (French)

1	2	3	4			5	6	7			8	9	10
11				12		13				14			
15						16				17			
	18				19	20				21			
					22	23			24				
25	26	27	28	29									
30								31					
32									33	34	35	36	37
					38	39	40		41	42			
					43			44					
47	48					49			50	51	52	53	54
55						56			57				58
59						60			61				
62						63			64				

- 29. Type of plane
- 34. Pitching stat
- 35. Pointed end of a pen
- 36. Pro sports league
- 37. Body part
- 39. Inoffensive
- 40. Yellowish cotton cloth
- 41. Feline
- 42. Does not tell the truth
- 44. Set out to attract
- 45. Spiritual leader of a Jewish congregation
- 46. Abba __, Israeli politician
- 47. Repair
- 48. Genus of flowering plants
- 51. Tributary of the High Rhine
- 52. Prejudice
- 53. C. European river

- 54. Restrain
- 58. Father



H.454 local changes: from page 2

very real chance that [school] choice could go away." According to Harrison, some schools in the area will likely close due to new minimum class size requirements. He cited an elementary school in the Windsor County town of Reading as an example. "I think they have an average class size, K through 4, of eight or nine students or less," Harrison estimated. "They're not going to make it." Some high schools may also have to shut down. "We have a high school in Proctor that had a graduating class of, like, 23 this year," Harrison said. "West Rutland was like 25 or 27. Yes, they had a rich history, but the busing is not an issue when you're a couple of miles apart. If we don't make those decisions, we're going to, year after year, be paying it one way or another."

SUDOKU

Solutions → 24

How to Play

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

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

Level: Intermediate

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WED
6/25

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.

Building Strength through Wellness Conference

9 a.m.-4:30 p.m. Castleton Pavilion, 360 South St., Castleton. \$30. A full-day event for helping professionals featuring workshops on vicarious trauma, self-care, and wellness activities including yoga, chair massage, and a smash room. Scholarships available. vermontstate.edu/event/building-strength-through-wellness-conference.

Active Seniors Lunch

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

KMBC Bike Bum Race Series

2-5 p.m. (Wednesdays) Killington Resort, Rabbit Hole, 4763 Killington Road, Killington. \$200 per team or \$50 per individual. \$20 for single race individual. 10th annual 10-week Wednesday race series. Solo riders or teams of 3-5 compete in age-based divisions with one timed run each week, followed by an after-party at The Lookout. killington.com.

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.

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.

Artistree Summer Concert Series—Grey Cats

Quartet

6:30 p.m. Artistree, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Free. Weekly outdoor concerts every Wednesday through Sept. 24. Bring a blanket and picnic for an evening of live jazz, folk, and classical music in a scenic hillside setting. Field parking only; no dogs. artistreevt.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.

Seven to Sunset Concert Series: Satin and Steel

7 p.m. (Wednesdays through the summer) Main Street Park in Rutland. Free. Rutland Recreation and Parks Dept. 2025 Summer Concert Series. Bring your lawn chairs, blankets, and picnic dinner. rutlandrec.com/7tosunset.

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.

THURS
6/26

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.

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.

Trail Sit and Sips presented by Lawson's – Gear House (ROC)

4:30-7:30 p.m. The Gear House, 16 Pleasant St., Randolph. Free. Join VMBA, Ridgeline Outdoor Collective, and Lawson's to kick off the season with group rides, on-site membership sign-ups, and a raffle with prizes from Rim Saver, Bivo, Darn Tough, Skida, and more. Current or new VMBA members (ages 21+) get a free beer during the après party from 6:30-7:30 p.m. at The Gear House. Raffle drawn at 7:15 p.m. vmba.org.

Fair Haven Concerts in the Park: Extra Stout

7 p.m. Fair Haven Park, Main St., Fair Haven. Free. Vermont's premier Irish band Extra Stout returns with traditional Irish jigs, reels, ballads, and pub songs. Food and raffle available; bring a chair or blanket. fairhavenvt.gov.

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.

Group Dog Walks with Slate Valley Trails

6-7:30 p.m. Fairgrounds Trailhead, 131 Town Farm Road, Poultney. Free. Join fellow dog lovers for a weekly 2+ mile group walk. Dogs must be leashed or under strict voice command. Bring water, bug spray, and an after-walk beverage. slatevalleytrails.org.

Film Screening: 'Remarkable: Voices from the Trans Community'

6-8 p.m. Pentangle Arts, 31 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Screening of the 30-minute documentary followed by a discussion with filmmaker Logan Ward exploring trans identities, healthcare, and inclusion through lived experience. pentanglearts.org.

Sip n Dip Painting Night

6-8 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. \$35. Follow along with instructor Sally Hogan to create a sunset sail acrylic painting. Supplies included. BYO wine. chaffeeartcenter.org.

Using Cricut Maker 3: Design a Hat

6-8 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. \$25. Adult class (ages 16+). Learn to design and make a custom hat using the Cricut Maker 3 with instructor Michele Robie. Includes all Cricut supplies and a basic black hat (optional: bring your own). Must pre-register. chaffeeartcenter.org.

La Muchacha y el Propio Junte at Feast & Field

6-9 p.m. Feast & Field, 1544 Royalton Turnpike, Barnard. \$5-\$30. Colombian folk-rock artist La Muchacha performs with double bassist Miguel Velásquez Matijasevic and percussionist Camilo Bartelsman in a powerful blend of music and message. Food and drink available; preorder online. feastandfield.com.

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.

FRI
6/27

Sticker shock! Preventing underage drinking

9:30-11:30 a.m. Farrell Distributing, 200 Farrell Road, Rutland. Free. Teen volunteers will place awareness stickers on alcohol cases to remind buyers that alcohol is for ages 21+ as part of a community effort ahead of the July 4th holiday. Volunteers ages 12+ welcome. Email hbrouillard@rrmc.org to sign up. comealiveoutside.com.

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.

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.

Teen Mask Workshop: Exploring Identity

3-4:30 p.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. Teens ages 12-18 are invited to create expressive masks that explore identity and aspirations in this guided art workshop. Materials provided; registration required. rutlandfree.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.

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.

Beginning of Summer Ice Cream Party

4:30-5:30 p.m. Castleton Free Library, 638 Main St., Castleton. Free. Kick off summer with an ice cream party at the library and pick up summer reading program information. Read and earn prizes all summer long. castletonfreelibrary.org.

Shrewsbury Meeting House Concert Series: Mojo Birds

6 p.m. Shrewsbury Meeting House at 88 Lottery Road in Shrewsbury. Free. There is lots of room to spread out, dance, and enjoy the company of others. facebook.com/p/Shrewsbury-Meeting-House-Concert-Series-100066976953046/.

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.

**TOUCH-A-TRUCK
IN FAIR HAVEN**

FRIDAY @ 5:30 PM



Calendar:

from page 12



Touch-a-Truck in Fair Haven

5:30-7:30 p.m. Fair Haven Park, Main St., Fair Haven. Free. Hosted by the Itty-Bitty Committee, this family-friendly event lets kids explore unique vehicles up close. Food available for purchase. Lorraine Brown at 802-265-3545.

Content Clown at Food & Art Friday

5:30-8:30 p.m. The Sable Project, 551 Old Weston Road., Stockbridge. \$5-20. An evening of musical clowning and puppetry from Sable's resident jester Content Clown, plus a dance performance by Director of Good Food & Healthy Artists Maggie Segale. Enjoy wood-fired pizza from Fat Dragon Farm. thesableproject.org/food-and-art.

Jackson Gore Summer Music Series: Gully Boys

5:30-8:30 p.m. Jackson Gore Courtyard, 111 Jackson Gore Road, Ludlow. Free. Kick off the 10-week summer concert series with regional band Gully Boys. Enjoy BBQ, drinks, raffle prizes, and family fun at the Adventure Zone. Pets allowed on leash; no cash payments accepted. okemo.com.

Porcupine Bikes Group Mountain Bike Ride- Pizza Night

6-8 p.m. Lake St. Catherine Country Club, 2725 VT-30, 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.

Community Potluck at the Billings Farm Garden

6:30-8 p.m. Billings Farm community garden, 5 Old River Road, Woodstock. Free. A potluck meal, garden tour, and an update on fall's Barnard Brook bank restoration project. Bring a dish to share and picnic essentials. No bathrooms on site. sustainablewoodstock.org.

Film Screening: 'Elio' (PG)

7:30 p.m. Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green, Woodstock. \$10-\$12. A boy with a big imagination is mistaken for the leader of Earth in this animated cosmic adventure about identity, connection, and unexpected heroism. pentanglearts.org.

'Elio' & 'Captain America: Brave New World' Double Feature

9 p.m. Bethel Drive-In, 36 Bethel Drive, Bethel. \$12 adults, \$8 children (ages 5-12), Free under 5. Cash only. "Elio" (PG) followed by "Captain America: Brave New World" (PG-13). betheldrivein.com.

SAT
6/28

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.

Slate Valley Rotary Annual 5K Run/Walk

9-10 a.m. Fair Haven Park, Main St., Fair Haven. \$20 adults, \$10 children under 12. Registration begins at 8 a.m. Proceeds support the Slate Valley "Back to School" Clothing Program. Contact Joanie at 802-558-0229.

Rug Hooking Guild "Hook-In"

9 a.m.-3 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 So. Main St., Rutland. Free. Join the Green Mountain Rug Hooking Guild for a summer hook-in with live demonstrations, how-to sessions, and a tag sale. Open to the public and rug hooking artists of all levels. chaffeeartcenter.org.

Cirque Series Trail Run

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.

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.

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.

Community Yard Sale

9 a.m.-3 p.m. Rutland Elks Lodge, 44 Pleasant St., Rutland. 20 vendors come together for this community yard sale event.

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.

SVT x VMBA Learn to Bike Clinic

9 a.m.-4 p.m. Fairgrounds Trailhead, 131 Town Farm Road, Poultney. Free. Adults 18+ can join certified instructors for free biking clinics tailored to all skill levels—beginner to intermediate. Two sessions available: 9-11 a.m. and 1-3 p.m. Bikes available for use; registration required. slatevalleytrails.org.

The Poop Museum

10-11 a.m. Rutland Free Library, 10 Court St., Rutland. Free. Join poop expert Susie Maguire for a fun, science-filled hour exploring fascinating facts about human, animal, and insect poop—complete with laughs and surprises. rutlandfree.org.

Mayflies and French Fries

10 a.m.-noon. White Cottage Snack Bar, 823 W Woodstock Road, Woodstock. \$20. Join a VINS educator for a hands-on river exploration and macroinvertebrate survey of the Ottauquechee River to learn about aquatic life and local ecology. vinsweb.org.

Pour Painting

11 a.m.-12:30 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. \$30. Learn the pour painting technique with instructor Lorrie Amerio Maniery. Includes all supplies. Must pre-register. chaffeeartcenter.org.

Watercolor Class for Beginners

11 a.m.-1 p.m. Kaleidoscope Art Supply, 37 Center St. 2nd Floor, Rutland. \$25. Artist Kara Boulden leads a beginner-friendly watercolor class focused on painting simple flowers and birds. All supplies included. Ages 9-99. kaleidoscopeartsupply.square.site.

"On Mission" Concert at the Odeon

11 a.m.-2 p.m. Mission Farm, 316 Mission Farm Road, Killington. Donations appreciated. Enjoy live music in a scenic setting during this special summer concert event. missionfarmvt.org.

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/.

Summer of Love Fundraiser

5-9 p.m. Elks Club, 49 Park St., Springfield. \$20 or 2 for \$30. Live music, dancing, a silent auction, food for sale, and a cash bar—all to support local families facing food insecurity and housing challenges. Hosted by Springfield Family Center and Springfield Supported Housing Program. events.com/r/en_US/tickets/sshp--sfc-summer-of-love-fundraiser-springfield-june-981074.

Independence Day Spectacular & Fireworks

6 p.m. Devil's Bowl Speedway in West Haven. \$20 adults, 12 and under Free Devil's Bowl presents its Independence Day fireworks spectacular—the biggest fireworks display in Central Vermont. Fireworks after racing. Sportsman Modifieds 44 laps. devilsbowl Speedwayvt.com.

Film Screening: 'Elio' (PG)

7:30 p.m. Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green, Woodstock. \$10-\$12. The animated cosmic adventure about identity, connection, and unexpected heroism. pentanglearts.org.

Pond Hill Ranch Rodeo

7:30 p.m. Pond Hill Road, Castleton. \$15 adults, \$10 kids (6-11). Pond Hill Pro Rodeo Company events include bareback bronc riding, calf roping, steer wrestling, team roping, saddle bronc riding, girls' barrel racing, girls' break away roping, and bull riding. Rain or shine. pondhillranch.com.

Saturday Night Ghost Tours

8-8:45 p.m. (Saturdays through the summer) The Woodstock Inn

& Resort, 14 The Green, Woodstock. Free. Join local guide Richard Adams for a 45-minute walking tour of haunted sites and ghostly tales in historic downtown Woodstock. Family-friendly. Sign up at the inn's front desk. woodstockinn.com.

'Elio' & 'Captain America: Brave New World' Double Feature

9 p.m. Bethel Drive-In, 36 Bethel Drive, Bethel. \$12 adults, \$8 children (ages 5-12), Free under 5. Cash only. "Elio" (PG) followed by "Captain America: Brave New World" (PG-13). betheldrivein.com.

SUN
6/29

Pancake Breakfast

7:30-10:30 a.m. Castleton Fire Association, 378 Route 4A, Castleton. \$4-\$8. Eggs, pancakes, sausage, juice, and coffee. castletonvermont.org.

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.

Bike Safety Day

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Upper Valley Aquatic Center, 100 Arboretum Lane, White River Junction. Free. Hosted by the Hartford Police Department and Upper Valley Aquatic Center, this family-friendly event includes an obstacle course, road safety tips, gear demos, raffles, and more. Bring your bike and helmet. uvacswim.org.

Pride Drag Brunch at Bailey's Place

10:30 a.m.-noon. Bailey's Place, 13 Evelyn St., Rutland. \$20. Celebrate Pride with performances by Amy Leigh Celestial, Bethadone Clinique, Carmen Gettit, and DonnaRhea. Doors open at 10:30 a.m.; show starts at 11:30. Full menu and drink specials available. 21+ event. facebook.com/BaileysPlaceVT.

Bowman Mansion Website Launch Open House

Noon-2 p.m. Bowman Mansion, 1325 Northam Road, Shrewsbury. Donations. Explore the historic Bowman Mansion, mausoleum, and conservatory during this open house celebrating the launch of the new website, with support from dedicated volunteers. Parking at the Olde Barn. bowmanmansion.org.

The Strong Women of Western Vermont During the American Revolution

1-2 p.m. Hubbardton Battlefield State Historic Site, 5696 Monument Hill Road, Hubbardton. An illustrated talk by site administrator Elsa Gilbertson highlights the stories and contributions of resilient women and girls from western Vermont during the Revolutionary War. historicites.vermont.gov.

Dick Weis Presentation: What if? Painting and the Creative Process

3-4 p.m. Stone Valley Arts, 145 East Main St., Poultney. Free. Vermont artist Dick Weis shares insights into his evolving creative process and explores how different approaches in painting can express complex ideas. stonevalleyarts.org.

Film Screening: 'Elio' (PG)

3 p.m. Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green, Woodstock. \$10-\$12. A boy with a big imagination is mistaken for the leader of Earth in this animated cosmic adventure about identity, connection, and unexpected heroism. pentanglearts.org.

2025 Sundays on the Hill: Mowitz-Hong Duo

4-5 p.m. Old Parish Church, Rte. 100, Weston. \$10. Enjoy an engaging piano and cello concert featuring Zachary Mowitz and Sahun Sam Hong performing works by Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann, Leos Janacek, and Johannes Brahms as part of the Sundays on the Hill Concert Series. sundaysonthehill.org.

Yoga in the Canopy

4-5:15 p.m. Vermont Institute Natural Science (VINS) Forest Canopy Walk, 149 Natures Way, Quechee. \$26. Experience a unique slow-flow yoga class among the treetops, incorporating sun salutations, balance poses, and meditation. Open to all levels; ages 13+ with adult. Registration required. vinsweb.org.

Calendar: Email events@mountaintimes.info.....
from page 13

'Jaws' Swim Party for Youth 11–17

5-7 p.m. Whites Pool, 94 Park Ave., Rutland. Free. Enjoy swimming, pizza, and an optional screening of "Jaws" at this youth-only event. Lifeguards on duty. Swimsuits required to swim; no rafts or floatation devices allowed. RSVP required. rutlandvermont.com/#.

Partner Dance and Lessons at Artistree

5-7 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. \$15. Enjoy Texas Two-Step and Line Dance lessons followed by a pay-what-you-wish open dance session featuring swing, salsa, tango, and more. All are welcome—no partner needed. artistreevt.org.

An Evening of Magic at Prouty's Parlor

6-8 p.m. Prouty's Parlor, 62 Merchants Row, Rutland. \$40-\$60. Enjoy an up-close magic performance by magician Steve Finer. Includes complimentary non-alcoholic beverage; cash ice cream bar. Seating is limited—reserve at proutysparlor@gmail.com. proutysparlor.com.

'Elio' & 'Captain America: Brave New World' Double Feature

9 p.m. Bethel Drive-In, 36 Bethel Drive, Bethel. \$12 adults, \$8 children (ages 5-12), Free under 5. Cash only. "Elio" (PG) followed by "Captain America: Brave New World" (PG-13). betheldrivein.com.

MON
6/30

End of Session Wrap-Up Legislative Breakfast

7:30 a.m. Southside Steakhouse, 170 S Main St. #3, Rutland. \$25. Includes muffins, assorted pastries and bagels, cream cheese, and fruit salad, plus juice, coffee, and tea. Join Governor Phill Scott for a legislative wrap up breakfast sponsored by Omya. facebook.com/RutlandChamberandEconomicDevelopment.

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, Poultney. 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
7/1

Handcraft Gathering

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

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.

Tuesdays: Summer Concert Series - Mojo Birds

6-8 p.m. Pittsford Village Farm, 42 Elm St., Pittsford. Free. Modern roots music. Bring a blanket or lawn chair. Concerts are outdoors and weather dependent. Donations appreciated. pittsfordvillagefarm.org.

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.

'The Librarians' (Free Screening + Discussion)

7-9 p.m. JAM – Junction Arts & Media, 5 S Main St., White River Junction. Free. Watch the Sundance documentary "The Librarians" exploring the rise in book bans and the librarians fighting back, followed by breakout discussions led by local librarians. uvjam.org.

VSO Summer Festival Tour: 'Summer of Love' – Castleton

7:30 p.m. Vermont State University Castleton Pavilion, 360 South St., Castleton. \$33-\$40. Vermont Symphony Orchestra's 2025 Summer Festival Tour: "Summer of Love." This year's program blends global and genre-spanning favorites, including selections from "Romeo and Juliet," "West Side Story," the "Star Wars" theme, and pop classics like "I Put A Spell On You" and "Nature Boy." Mezzo-soprano Nikola Printz joins as guest vocalist. Concert includes access to the Musical Petting Zoo, where attendees can explore orchestral instruments before the show. paramountvt.org.

ONGOING

4th Annual West Windsor Music Festival

June 27-June 29. West Windsor Town Hall, 22 Brownsville-Hartland Rd., West Windsor. \$12-\$15. Free for children under 13. Pianist Sakiko Ohashi curates four concerts featuring Nick Sanders, Amadi Azikiwe (viola), and Joanna Maurer (violin). Includes a free children's concert Saturday at 11 a.m. Air-conditioned and accessible venue. westwindsorvtmusicfestival.com.

'Almost Heaven: John Denver's America'

Through 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.

Expressive Fibers

Through July 19. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Free. Artistree's first-ever all-fiber-arts exhibit, showcasing work by Vermont and New Hampshire artists that uses traditional techniques to explore expressive, non-functional forms. artistreevt.org.

Film Screening: 'F1'

7:30 p.m., June 27-July 10, Playhouse Movie Theatre, 9 So. Main St., Randolph. \$7-\$10. Brad Pitt stars as a former racing phenom returning to the track to save a struggling team in this high-stakes drama set in the world of Formula 1. playhouseflicks.com

Film Screening: 'Windshipped'

All day, June 25-27. Virtual. Free. Stream this documentary following the fossil-free sail-powered schooner Apollonia as it delivers goods sustainably along the Hudson River. Hosted by Sustainable Woodstock and Pentangle Arts. Register at eventbrite.com/e/film-screening-windshipped-tickets-1112750900899. Donations welcome. pentanglearts.org/donate.

Amateur Radio Field Day

2 p.m. June 28 to 5 p.m. June 29, Rutland High School stadium broadcast booth, 22 Stratton Road, Rutland. Join the Green Mountain Wireless Society for a public demonstration of emergency communication capabilities as part of the nationwide ARRL Field Day. Learn how ham radio works in crises and how to get involved. jptilley50@gmail.com.

'The Sound of Music' at King Farm

Through June 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.

Stone Bench Carving Workshop

June 23 - July 3. Carving Studio & Sculpture Center. 636 Marble St., West Rutland. The Carving Studio and Sculpture Center will offer local young people (age 13-19) the chance to carve and build a stone bench to be installed in Rutland County, gaining a solid skill basis in lettering, architectural and sculptural stone working, as well as an appreciation for the industrial history of the Marble Valley region. carvingstudio.org.

UPCOMING

Killington Uncorked Wine Festival

July 18-19. Killington Resort, 4763 Killington Road, Killington. \$95-\$150. This two-day festival features an estate wine tasting at the Peak Lodge on Friday and a grand tasting with wines, spirits, artisan vendors, and live music at the K-1 Lodge on Saturday. Must be 21+ to attend. killingtonuncorked.com.

Tuesdays
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Concerts are outside on the Village Farm grounds. For extreme weather, concert is canceled. Check PittsfordVillageFarm.org. This event is free and open to the public. Donations appreciated.

July 1 – Mojo Birds

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[MUSIC Scene]

By DJ Dave Hoffenberg
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WED 6/25

LUDLOW

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

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

QUECHEE

5 p.m. Quechee Club – Nick Bredece

RUTLAND

7 p.m. Bailey's Place – Karaoke 101 hosted by Tenacious T

7 p.m. Main Street Park – Seven to Sunset Concert Series with Satin and Steel

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

SOUTH POMFRET

6:30 p.m. Artistree – Grey Cats Quartet on the Hillside

THUR 6/26

BARNARD

5:30 p.m. Fable Farm – Feast & Field: La Muchacha y el Propio Junte

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. The Lakehouse – Aaron Audet

BRANDON

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

BRIDGEWATER

CORNERS

5 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Jacob Green

KILLINGTON

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

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

PITTSFIELD

6 p.m. Clear River Tavern – Liz Reedy

POULTNEY

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

QUECHEE

5 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music with Jim Green

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 p.m. Outdoors on King Farm – BarnArts presents "The Sound of Music"

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Jim Yeager

FRI 6/27

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Blue Cat Bistro – Liz Reedy

6 p.m. Bomoseen Dog – Music by Cooper

6 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Breanna Elaine

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 – Nick Bredece

6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Cooie Sings

6 p.m. The Foundry – Aaron Audet

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

LONDONDERRY

6 p.m. New American Grill – Sammy B

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Cry Baby

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live jazz with Peter and Friends

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – John Lackard

RUTLAND

6 p.m. Stonehedge Indoor Golf – Duane Carleton

SHREWSBURY

6 p.m. Meeting House – Mojo Birds

STOCKBRIDGE

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

WOODSTOCK

6 p.m. Outdoors on King Farm – BarnArts presents The Sound of Music

SAT 6/28

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Mike Schwaner

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mills Comedy Club – Comedy Show with Co-headliners Michael Good and Farzin Moradi

BRIDGEWATER

CORNERS

4 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Singo

KILLINGTON

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

6 p.m. The Foundry – Sammy B

6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Zach Yak

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – George Nostrand

QUECHEE

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Bobby Sheehan

6 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music With Start Again

RANDOLPH

6 p.m. Chet's Barn at Wayside Farm – Eric Koskinen with special guests Sons of Williams

STOCKBRIDGE

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

WOODSTOCK

6 p.m. Outdoors on King Farm – BarnArts presents The Sound of Music

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Theta Waves

SUN 6/29

BOMOSEEN

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

BRIDGEWATER

CORNERS

2:30 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Nick Bredece

KILLINGTON

2 p.m. Umbrella Bar at Snowshed – Liz Reedy

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tboneicus Jones

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

8 p.m. Jax Food & Games – Nick Bredece

QUECHEE

2 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music with Rose Hip Jam

RUTLAND

7 p.m. Main Street Park – Summer Concert's with Rutland City Band

STOCKBRIDGE

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

WOODSTOCK

4 p.m. Outdoors on King Farm – BarnArts presents "The Sound of Music"

MON 6/30

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – David K Roberts

KILLINGTON

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

6 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Mandatory Mondays for Name That Tune Bingo with DJ Dave and Dave Parnell

LUDLOW

4 p.m. Eight Oh Brew – 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 p.m. Colburns Tonic – Free line dance lessons with Britt Compton

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Bobby Sheehan

TUES 7/1

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – James Joel

CASTLETON

7:30 p.m. Vermont State University Castleton Pavilion – Vermont Symphony Orchestra: "Summer of Love"

PITTSFORD

6 p.m. Pittsford Village Farm – Tuesday Concert with Mojo Birds

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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The Infamous Stringdusters.....	Wednesday, March 18	7:30 PM

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Courtesy FB

West Windsor Music Festival Director Sakiko Ohashi will perform on Friday, June 27, and Saturday, June 28.

World-class musicians gather in West Windsor for Vermont Music Festival

June 27-29—WEST WINDSOR — Now in its fourth season, the West Windsor Vermont Music Festival returns this weekend with four live performances showcasing acclaimed classical and jazz musicians in an intimate historic setting. The festival will once again be held at the West Windsor Town Hall, an accessible, air-conditioned venue with on-site parking.

Under the artistic direction of pianist Sakiko Ohashi, the 2025 program features a blend of solo and collaborative performances. Ohashi will be joined by jazz pianist Nick Sanders for the opening concert on Friday, June 27, at 7 p.m. and again for a free children's concert on Saturday, June 28, at 11 a.m. That evening

at 7 p.m., violist Amadi Azikiwe will perform alongside Ohashi. The festival concludes on Sunday, June 29, at 3 p.m. with violinist Joanna Maurer.

The festival has garnered a loyal following in recent years, earning praise for its exceptional musicianship and welcoming atmosphere. "Vermont's most charming little festival," wrote Lynn Danz of Franklin, Massachusetts.

Tickets are affordably priced at \$15 for general admission (ages 13+), \$12 for seniors (65+), and free for children 12 and under. The Saturday morning children's concert is free for all attendees. Tickets are available at the door or online via Eventbrite:

eventbrite.com/e/west-windsor-vermont-music-festival-tickets-1280905666329

For more information, visit: westwindsorvtmusicfestival.com.



Mowitz-Hong Duo to open 27th season of Sundays On The Hill in Weston

June 29 at 4 p.m.—WESTON—The acclaimed Mowitz-Hong Duo will open the 27th season of the Sundays On The Hill concert series in Weston at the historic Parish Church, located at 144 Main St. The duo— pianist Sahun Sam Hong and cellist Zachary Mowitz—will perform works by Clara Schumann, Robert Schumann, Leos Janáček, and Johannes Brahms.

Known for their rich musicality and dynamic interplay, Mowitz and Hong are co-artistic directors of ensemble132, a collective of soloists and chamber musicians dedicated to reinventing the chamber music experience. Ensemble132 is recognized for its innovative, artist-crafted arrangements and genre-blurring programming that brings new energy to classical concert halls across the country.

Presented in a charming, intimate venue with

no reserved seating, Sundays On The Hill offers audiences a unique opportunity to experience high-caliber performances in a welcoming community setting. Admission is just \$10 for adults, with free entry for children 12 and under. Doors open at 3:30 p.m., and tickets are available only at the door.

This one-hour concert marks the start of a season that, according to organizers, "honors the past, celebrates the present, and looks with excitement to the future." Whether you're a returning patron or a first-time attendee, this performance promises an inspiring afternoon of chamber music in the heart of Vermont.

To learn more about the performers' larger collective, visit: ensemble132.com.

For more information, visit: sundaysonthehill.org.



Submitted

The Mowitz-Hong Duo (left to right): Sam Hong (piano) and Zachary Mowitz (cello) will open the Sundays On The Hill concert series on June 29 at 4 p.m.

'28 Years Later' rises above its genre, providing a fascinating look at how people move forward after an apocalypse

Twenty-two years after director Danny Boyle and writer Alex Garland's surprise hit apocalypse film, "28 Days Later" (2002), entered the lexicon of zombie movies, they return with "28 Years Later." Sure, the math doesn't quite add up, but it's an alternate-future sci-fi anyway, and aside from the same setup and world-building, there aren't any characters that connect the two films, so I suppose it could have been called "48 Years Later" for all that's worth. There was a sequel to the original movie called "28 Weeks Later." I didn't see it, and it wasn't the hit the first entry was. But Boyle and Garland weren't the director and writer of that one, and their return is one of many reasons why "28 Years Later" triumphs.

To set the record straight: I am not the world's biggest fan of the zombie movie genre. I like apocalyptic dystopian just fine, but zombies kind of burn me out. Haven't we covered everything already? After umpteen endless seasons of "The Walking Dead" and HBO's "The Last of Us," which, after only two seasons, is already wearing floss thin, I was hardly in the mood to see "28 Years Later," but great filmmaking will get me every time, and this film has it in gore-drenched buckets.

A prologue scene from circa "28 Days Later" is all the setup required for the uninitiated. A mutated virus spreads through England, laying waste to millions and people into insane zombies. These zombies appear easy enough to kill, but not all zombies are alike. There are slow zombies, fast zombies, intelligent zombies, strong zombies, and sometimes a combination of quick, smart, and strong that the survivors, nearly three decades later, called Alphas.

The world "28 Years Later" inhabits is one where the virus is contained, and an unclear amount of England (perhaps just the British Isles) is under indefinite quaran-

tine. The quarantine zone contains the zombies and an undetermined amount of uninfected inhabitants. There is a functioning village set off an otherwise remote coastal island, accessible by a causeway that is underwater for half the day during high tide and open during low tide. Does the outside world know about this island? Do they care?

Perhaps, in the quarantine zone, it's better just to leave things as they are.

For the most part, this little island community is functioning, although there are hints of odd behavior and elements of folk horror sprinkled in. After 28 years out of the loop, society has a way of carrying on through traditions and superstitions. One tradition is teaching the young how to hunt and forage on the mainland. It is here that we embark on the main plot, where a father, Jamie, played by Aaron Taylor-Johnson, prepares his 12-year-old son, Spike, for his first mainland rite of passage. Spike, played by

newcomer Alfie Williams (who delivers one of the best child performances in many a decade) is smart, curious, and a bit scared by it all. However, he is someone the audience immediately roots for, and his journey will be the focus of most of the film's runtime.

Spike's mom, played by Jodie Comer, is suffering from a mysterious illness that worsens with each day. When Spike learns of a mainland hermit doctor who might be able to help his mom, Spike eventually makes a daring return trip to the world of zombies to make contact with the doctor in hopes of saving her.

That's about all of the plot details I feel comfortable sharing. You want to know what happens? Great news! "28 Years Later" is currently playing in theaters, and you can catch it. Both the Nugget Theater in Hanover and the Lebanon Six

Screens & Streams →19



Screens and Streams

By James Kent

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Rockin the Region with the Mojo Birds

The Mojo Birds don't come around often. Most of them hail from Colorado, with one member residing in North Carolina and one local member from Shrewsbury. If you have the chance to see them, I highly recommend doing so. I got to see them last summer at the Killington Block Party. They put on a banger of a show. Their eclectic mix of music is amazing, with something for everyone.

This summer, they'll be touring Vermont for a week with several area shows, including Friday, June 27, at the Shrewsbury Meeting House at 6 p.m. and Tuesday, July 1, at Pittsford Village Farm at 6 p.m. They'll finish their tour on July 4 at the Clear River Tavern in Pittsfield at 7:30 p.m.

The band describes themselves as, "A funky flock. Roots rock, soul music—inspired by the likes of The Band,

a touch of Al Green, and a healthy dose of Afro-Peruvian mojo." Joining Jay Harootunian (guitar/vocals/Peruvian flute) and Silas Hamilton (upright bass/vocals/fiddle) are Alexi Leon (vocals/percussion), Brian Aherne (guitar/slide guitar/vocals/harmonica), Ted Moore (drums/vocals/percussion), and Alex Taub (keys/vocals/melodica). This lineup of the band has been together for a year. The block party was Hamilton's first gig with them. Mojo started a year

before Hamilton joined. You can find them on Facebook and Instagram under their band name Mojo Birds. or visit: mojobirds.com.

Hamilton spoke about the band as "roots groove," adding, "We do a dynamic show. We're a dance band."

"The live experience is what makes it fun and different. Alexi is really infectious. She gives positive energy.

For me, a big inspiration is The Band with Levon Helm. We all love hanging out with each other, we're having a great time on stage. Hopefully, that is conveyed to the audience: celebrating getting to play music with each other," said Harootunian. "It definitely is, you can see the fun they're having."

"There's a lot of soul going on. Having Alex on keyboard really brings in that soul aspect," added Hamilton.

Hamilton has always played the upright bass. He said he can play the electric, but he's more "comfy" on the upright.

Mojo Birds traveled to Nashville to record their first album, which will receive a vinyl release. They hope to have the album out later this summer. I listened to it, and it made me a big fan. "Good Things" gives you a good time listening to it. I can see myself dancing to that. "Blame it on the Day" is a soulful number. Harootunian's lead vocals are sweet, but what makes this song is

Rockin' →18



Rockin' the Region

By Dave Hoffenberg

VERMONT SYMPHONY
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of Love**

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Rockin':
from page 17

the music of the band and the harmonies. It's such a cool-vibe song. "Las Callas" features Taub singing in Spanish. "Someday," led by Harootunian, is another feel-good favorite of mine. The band really shines with "Arrow V3," especially Taub. Every track was awesome. My favorite music is music that moves you, and Mojo Birds do just that.

Jay said, "That's the fun of our band," said Harootunian. "Everybody writes, and we bring it together. We'll try out songs live and see what happens. This Vermont trip is really awesome for us. We built in some downtime. We'll just post up in Shrewsbury or Plymouth, where there are no distractions, and write together. The same thing happens out in Colorado when Silas is here; we just sit down and start from scratch. We sing, write, and play together."

At their live shows, they most often improvise without a setlist. Harootunian will have a song list to remind him of the options he has.

"We just call audibles and feel what the audience is doing," said Harootunian. "We've done it enough that we know what tunes to put where. The fun part is sometimes you throw in a tune that doesn't seem like the best one to put in at the moment, but it works, so now you have a good time learning why you were able to put a song in at an odd time in the set."

Even though they're both originally from Vermont, Hamilton and Harootunian met in Colorado. Hamilton was out there with the bluegrass band Tone Dog. They were neighbors. One day, Harootunian noticed Hamilton's Vermont plates, so he asked where he was from. Hamilton told him, "From a little town you've never heard of." But Harootunian had heard of it. He responded, "I knew it real well."

Before Hamilton joined, "Moon Birds" was discussed as a name because of a curious fact: back in the day, people believed birds would fly to the moon. They liked the word "bird," and "mojo" had a nice ring to it.

"The name represents the band. We're all a flock of birds. We're songwriters, we all work together, it's a real band, with equality being a big part of it. Sharing the work and having a good time together. Mojo represents magic, and there's so much magic in music," said Harootunian.

Hamilton encouraged people to come out and catch one of their upcoming shows in Vermont.

"I would go see this band if I weren't in it," said Hamilton.

"I like being able to throw energy into something and get even more energy back," Harootunian said, "There's some shows where you literally feel like you're floating. There's no other feeling like it. It's excitement, adrenaline. You're with your friends on stage. The audience is what we feed off of. If it's a good night and everyone's dancing and having a good time, it's just a celebration. The audience really does affect the music fully. The real answer is, it's simply fun."



By Maeve Graham

The Mojo Birds will perform several upcoming shows in Vermont, including the Shrewsbury Meeting House on June 27.



Courtesy FB

Left to Right: Aaron Taylor-Johnson and Alfie Williams attempt to escape from hungry flesh-eaters in Danny Boyle's "28 Years Later," a sequel to "28 Days Later," now playing in theaters.

← Screens & Streams: from page 17

Theater are playing it. What I want to discuss next is why this film surpasses almost every other zombie film that has come before it, save perhaps "Dawn of the Dead." It's all about the filmmaking.

Danny Boyle, the Academy Award-winning director of "Slumdog Millionaire" and acclaimed films such as "Trainspotting," and "127 Hours" knows how to tell a story, and with frequent collaborator Alex Garland "Civil War," and "Ex Machina" scripting, the two build a world worth exploration, characters you care about, and a plot that avoids the many tropes it skirts with, but takes in different directions.

Also back in the fold is Boyle's go-to cinematographer, the award-winning Anthony Dod Mantle. Back in 2002, when they made "28 Days Later," they crafted a visual look born out of necessity. With scarcely a budget to work with and a need to depict a deserted London, Boyle and Mantle shot the entire film using small, portable Canon Mini-DV cameras. The look of that film was decidedly home video, but the two worked with whatever visual shortcomings the technology provided and doubled down on the immediacy of the format, which provided a disorienting look that audiences found unsettling and scary.

As I mentioned at the beginning, it's 23 years later since the first film's release, and home video technology has come a long way. iPhones are nearly pocket film cameras, and Boyle and Mantle test the limits of the format by shooting almost the entire film on iPhone 15 Pro Max cameras. I'm sure they surrounded those phones with lenses and technology the average home filmmaking enthusiast would not own. Still, I'm delighted to report that the visuals they create are inventive, daring, and, at times, jaw-droppingly beautiful. A scene where Jamie and Spike must return to home base as the causeway begins to disappear under high tide, while being chased by an Alpha zombie during the evening, is flat-out breathtaking filmmaking. The look of that scene, and many like it, probably couldn't or wouldn't be achievable in any other way. And that is one of many reasons why this film succeeds to such a high level. It doesn't resemble any other dystopian film or any other type of movie, for that matter. I'm sure it will look equally as fine watching it at home, but to see it on the big screen is something special.

The editing is another winner that deserves a shout-out. Everyone who comes to the zombie genre would be lying if they weren't there, on some level, for the zombie kills. A zombie film with no gory kills is like watching a beach movie set on the Hoth system; it wouldn't make much sense. Boyle doesn't disappoint here. The kills are as inventive as every other aspect of the movie. Boyle freezes the frame, just for a split second, allowing the kills to be seen, with all its blood splatter intact. He and Mantle ratchet up the camera movements to increase the intensity, and as an audience, we feel it. I don't know how scary this movie is (I don't get scared by these types of films), but it's definitely an intense experience.

There are so many things I haven't told you about this film, and that leaves you with a lot to discover. Trust me when I say there are a lot of goodies waiting for you, including a setup for an already-shot sequel that has me counting the days till its release in January 2026.

James Kent is the arts editor at the Mountain Times.

Join Killington's Fourth of July parade, pie contest

Rec dept to celebrate 50 years, sign up by July 2

Killington Parks and Recreation Department is still accepting registrations for the Fourth of July Parade and the inaugural Pie Baking Contest.

The theme for this year's parade is "50 Years of Johnson Recreation Center."

"Gather your friends, colleagues, and family and enter as a float or walking group," said Emily Hudson, town rec director. "All floats must be family-friendly, but participants are encouraged to get creative!"

"Your float or group theme does not have to match the parade theme," Hudson added.

Those interested in participating in the parade are encouraged to register by Wednesday, July 2.

The recreation department is also hosting an inaugural Pie Baking Contest for participants to compete for the title of "Best Pie Baker" in Killington. Pies (along with your name and a list of ingredients) should be dropped off at the Johnson Recreation Pool House prior to 12 p.m. on Friday, July 4. Participants are encouraged to use disposable pie dishes. Competing pies will be judged by a panel of judges prior to be putting out for the public to enjoy.

Additional awards will be awarded for: Most creative pie, prettiest crust, best fruit pie, and best non-fruit pie. Winners will be announced by 3 p.m. on July 4th.

For more information or to register for parade participation and the pie baking contests, visit: killingtonrec.com.

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killington market

Killington Market

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

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Lookout Tavern

A place for fun, friends and good times here in Killington! Everything from soup to nuts for lunch and dinner; juicy burgers, fresh salads, delicious sandwiches and K-Town's best wings. Your first stop after a full day on the Mountain for a cold beer or specialty drink and a great meal! lookoutvt.com, 802-422-5665.



Back Country Café

The Back Country Café is a hot spot for delicious breakfast foods. Choose from farm fresh eggs, multiple kinds of pancakes and waffles, omelets or daily specials to make your breakfast one of a kind. Just the right heat Bloody Marys, Mimosas, Bellini, VT Craft Brews, Coffee and hot chocolate drinks. Maple Syrup and VT products for sale. Check Facebook for daily specials. 802-422-4411.

CHOICES

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Upscale casual and family friendly Choices Restaurant & Rotisserie has been a Killington, VT favorite for over 35 years. We offer a 40-item menu that features fish and seafood, hand-cut steaks and fillets, sandwiches and home-cut fries, and house-made fettuccine. Try an item from our Rotisserie menu that includes chicken, tri-tip steak, and stuffed pork with prime rib on most weekends. Join us at our wraparound bar with 20 wines by the glass, signature cocktails, and craft beers. Finish off your dining experience with our baked in-house desserts. choicestvt.com, 802-422-4030



Vermont Craft

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



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Sugar and Spice

Stop on by to Sugar and Spice for a home style breakfast or lunch served up right. Try six different kinds of pancakes and/or waffles or order up some eggs and home fries. For lunch they offer a Filmore salad, grilled roast beef, burgers and sandwiches. Take away available. www.vtsugarandspice.com 802-773-7832.



Liquid Art

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



Inn at Long Trail

Looking for something a little different? Hit up McGrath's Irish Pub for a perfectly poured pint of Guinness, live music on the weekends and delicious food. Casual dining at Rosemary's Restaurant. Visit innatlongtrail.com, 802-775-7181.



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Submitted

Children will design their dream house this summer during the Dream House Design camp at the Community Art Garden in Chester.

Community Art Garden launches creative summer classes and camps in Chester

CHESTER—This summer, the Community Art Garden is offering a colorful lineup of art classes and creative camps for families, teens, and adults at its studio on Main Street. Designed to nurture imagination and connection through hands-on experiences, the offerings will run from June through August and take place both indoors and outdoors, including near Cobleigh Field and the stream behind the studio.

The Make & Create classes will begin in June with sessions for all ages, teens and adults. Family classes will be held Thursday, June 26, and Saturday, June 28, from 10–11 a.m., offering a chance for kids and caregivers to create together. Teen Make & Create workshops (for ages 12–18) will take place on select Fridays throughout the summer. Adult sessions featuring monthly crafts and open-ended projects are in the works, with details to be posted on the Community Art Garden's website: communityartgarden.com.

In addition to classes, the Community Art Garden is hosting four themed summer camps (\$220–\$250 per camp), each offering a three-day creative experience from Tuesday through Thursday at 287 Main St.

Nature Arts Camp (July 1–3) will combine outdoor fun with creative projects, including warm water felting, potion-making, flower pressing, and raft building. Campers will explore the nearby stream and use natural materials in their work.

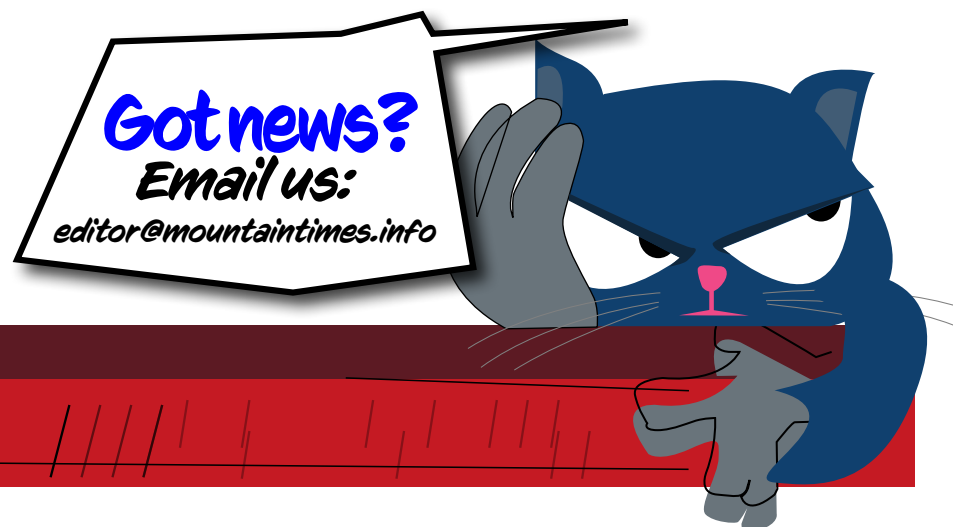
Tree Forts & Fairy Houses (July 15–17) invites children to construct tiny homes for nature creatures using tree “cookies,” peg dolls, and foraged materials. This camp is ideal for kids who love tinkering outdoors.

The Dream House Design Camp (Aug. 5–7) provides each child with a full-size wooden IKEA dollhouse and a peg doll family. Campers will design their dream homes using paint, wallpaper, mosaic, and more—blending interior design and imagination into a lasting art piece.

Drama Arts Camp (Aug. 12–14) gives children a hands-on introduction to theater through puppet-making, mask creation, and even set design. Campers will have the option to write and perform a short show, all within a relaxed, play-based setting.

Each camp is designed for children ages 5–12 and emphasizes choice-based creativity. From mural painting to sensory tables and a “sensory kitchen,” the Community Art Garden fosters exploration and self-expression in a supportive environment.

For more information and updates on registration, visit: communityartgarden.com.



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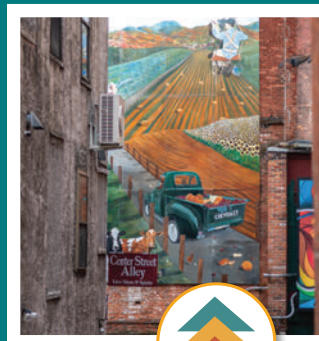
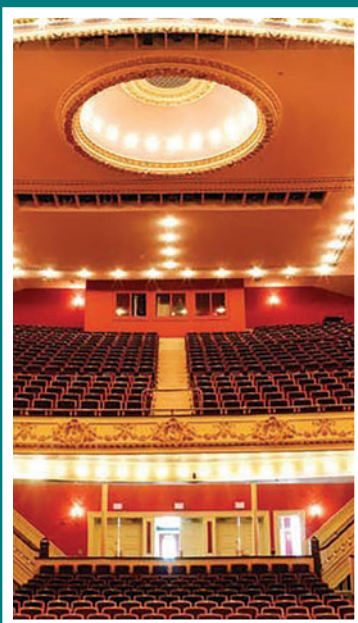
Shop

Our diverse downtown offers an assortment of small businesses to explore and shop from art supplies, records, thrift and consignment to menswear, women clothing, gift shops, books, and so much more. Spend a full day strolling through our vibrant downtown.



Dine

Downtown Rutland is home to a wonderful selection of cafes, bakeries, lunch and dinner spots, bars, specialty food shops, and more. Visit our website to learn more and discover all the great offerings from our historic district.



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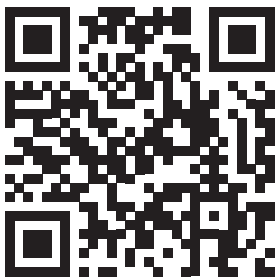
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Located at 38 Wales St. in Downtown Rutland.

Check out their website at willowbeeexchange.com



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Solutions

From page 11

Crossword

A	C	E	R			M	I	R			R	O	N			
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Sudoku

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

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Ghost—3-year-old.
Neutered male. Domestic
shorthair.



China—2 ½-year-old.
Spayed female. Mixed breed.



Tori—8-month-old.
Spayed female. Domestic
shorthair.



Nugget—. Male. American
guinea pig.



Candy—1-year-old.
Spayed female. Domestic
shorthair.



Ivy—4-year-old. Spayed
female. Domestic shorthair.



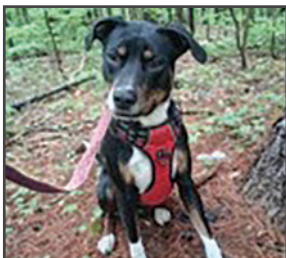
Sheldon—2 ½-year-old.
Neutered male. Domestic
shorthair.



Tank—5-year-old.
Neutered male. Pitbull mix.



Hulk—1 ½-year-old.
Neutered male. Great Dane
mix.



Tippy—2 ½-year-old.
Spayed female. Rottweiler mix.



Gloria—7 ½-year-old.
Spayed female. Pitbull terrier.



Daffodil—. Female.
Hamster.

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Eden—3 1/2-year-old spayed female terrier mix.

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Peekaboo—Sassy, 1-2-year-old tortie.

Cosmic Catalogue



Aries
 March 21 - April 20

If your home life isn't how you want it to be, then ask yourself why is that? Heal what needs to be healed. Change what needs to be changed. Take responsibility for what you need to be responsible for. Also, in the process, don't forget to dream the ridiculous dream. Things can change and become what you want them to become. It will just take some effort and vision to manifest them.



Leo
 July 21 - August 20

Just because things aren't feeling as vibrant as usual doesn't mean you don't have access to a vast amount of energy. You do! The catch is that you don't need to be looking externally for the validation or appreciation you seek. You'll find all that and so much more within. Do be grateful for the little compliments or little wins you experience along the way, especially at work. You are more appreciated than you realize.



Sagittarius
 November 21 - December 20

So much can go right for you now if you're willing to address issues you'd prefer to avoid. This could be a financial issue or even an emotional one that you know needs healing. Whatever your issue, there is a wonderful cosmic balm that can help. All you have to do is to believe and make different choices. Plant a seed this week that will provide the future fruits of your dreams. Make a wish. You won't regret it.



Taurus
 April 21 - May 20

Things could be really wonderful for you right now. If they aren't, then you may need to reconsider certain things. If you're exposing yourself to data, information, or content online that isn't making you feel good, then don't. You have the right to feel good. When you focus on that, life does get better. Think good, and it will be good. It really can be that simple!



Virgo
 August 21 - September 20

Opportunities sometimes land in your lap. Other times, you have to work for them. Right now, it's a combination of both! You could float along and see what eventuates. Another option is to double down on your efforts and achieve more than you think is possible. Hedge your bets and apply yourself. There is very little that you cannot achieve right now! Believe in what you do, and what you do will believe in you!



Capricorn
 December 21 - January 20

Things can improve just in the way we hope they will. Sometimes, things improve, not so much in the interim, but later down the track. Things are either going swimmingly well in a relationship, or the cracks are only widening. Things will get better; that's a guarantee. They'll get better by how much you're willing to chill out a bit and let things flow. Avoid the temptation to force things. Be real, but also dream.



Gemini
 May 21 - June 20

If there ever were a time to fully land completely back yourself, now would be the time! The more you believe in yourself, the more abundance of all kinds you'll attract. If you've been in a state of self-doubt for too long, banish it! Whatever it is that you truly desire, call it in! There is so much fortune coming your way. Be ready to receive it. Also, be ready to create it!



Libra
 September 21 - October 20

Everything you do comes back to you. So if your overall life direction and career are on the up, then good for you. If things aren't where you want them to be, then you may need to make some adjustments. Perspective counts for a lot. You don't have to radically reshape your life, but if you believe and have faith that things will get better, then they most likely will! Effort and faith really are an unstoppable combination. Tap into both.



Aquarius
 January 21 - February 20

Life is about to get busy for you. This week, you have a choice to either spin your wheels or move in the direction you really want to go. Meaning and purpose in all that you do will help keep you inspired even if you have to do things you don't want to do. Whether things get better or worse will largely depend on your perspective. Luckily, perspectives are reasonably easy to shift.



Cancer
 June 21 - July 20

We each experience phases in life where things just feel a little easier than usual. If you haven't already, you should start to notice that the road is rising to meet you. A little effort will go a long way in manifesting your dreams, goals, and desires. If you're not sure of what they are, this week is perfect for you to refine them. Decide what you want, and you'll be surprised by how easily you'll receive it.



Scorpio
 October 21 - November 20

On the one hand, you may be motivated to socialize and be among friends, groups, and various communities in your life. While on the other, you may have reached the point where there are just some people you have to cut ties with. It's not always an easy choice, but sometimes it's necessary. Sometimes, closing the door on a situation opens up others that will get you into the rooms you'd rather inhabit.



Pisces
 February 21 - March 20

Clear your calendar this week! If it's not fun, then don't do it! If you'd rather not, then don't! You get the picture. Start planning for more happiness, more things that make you smile, and more experiences that create wonderful memories. If there is something your soul has really been longing for, then do be sure to oblige. More joy, even just the little things, makes for a rich and abundant life!

Reset, refocus, realign



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall

You could take a look around and see that everything is going wrong. You could also take a look around and see that everything is exactly how it's supposed to be.

Whining, complaining, and pointing fingers will get you nowhere. When you're pointing your finger, there are three pointing back at you.

The more you can turn your energy and attention within, the happier you'll be. This isn't about dismissing, bypassing, or having a Pollyanna attitude. It's about having the wisdom to water your own grass. Ultimately, that's all any of us can do.

On the spiritual plane, the more of us that can water and nourish our backyards, the more real change we will begin to initiate individually and collectively. No real or meaningful change can happen when you're constantly looking at what isn't right. The world doesn't need more emotional projection.

This week provides a rare and remarkable opportunity to refresh and reset. Energy flows where your attention goes. Do be very intentional where you put your energy. Be aware of whom or what seeks to distract from what really matters. Great things are possible if you believe they can be so.

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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.

Life in a shell: eastern box turtle

As a budding naturalist growing up in the concrete-heavy environs of Boston, I would regularly thumb through my family's collection of nature books and day-dream about the creatures within.

One species I was particularly drawn to was the eastern box turtle. These charismatic terrestrial turtles have high-domed shells festooned with colorful yellow or orange markings and stout legs built for walking. Notwithstanding their similarities to tortoises, box turtles are part of the "water turtle" family Emydidae, which includes species like the eastern painted turtle and spotted turtle. Box turtles also have a hinged plastron (bottom shell) that allows them to close up shop in the front and rear, creating a "box" that protects their entire body from predators.

Formerly, the eastern box turtle's range extended from southern Maine and New Hampshire across to the upper Midwest and then down to Texas and North Florida. Today, their foothold in northern New England is tenuous, with no known populations remaining in Maine or Vermont and only a handful of breeding groups in southern New Hampshire. Small pockets of turtles persist in Massachusetts and the Hudson Valley in New York.

In the southern part of their range, eastern box turtles are active year-round, whereas in the north, the window of activity narrows to six or seven months, from early spring to early autumn. During the cooler spring and fall months, box turtles are often active throughout the day, alternating between basking in the sun and foraging. In the warmer summer months, they may burrow under logs or into the substrate during the midday hours to avoid overheating. Their activity peaks in May and June when males are spurred into action by amorous thoughts, and mated females go searching for nest sites. When a female has found a nice sandy location, she digs a hole and deposits four to seven eggs, buries them, and leaves them to their fate.

Ten years ago, on a cool late spring morning, I stumbled across a batch of recently emerged baby box turtles. Five of these tiny turtles, each about the size of a quarter and a perfect replica of an adult, were crawling around the dewy grass at the edge of an agricultural field. The babies had just dug their way to freedom after hatching the previous fall and overwintering within the nest. They now propelled themselves through the towering grass, struggling to make it to the relative safety of the shrubby forest edge. Survival prospects for baby box turtles are grim – less

than 1 in 100 will survive to adulthood—and many become bite-sized snacks for local predators, including an array of birds, mammals, and snakes. It was no surprise that the baby box turtles were in a rush to get out of the open and under cover.

Eastern box turtles can be found in many habitats, including damp meadows, deciduous woodlands, pine-lands, shrublands, and even suburban landscapes. Adults are opportunistic omnivores, dining on the food items *du jour*: plant matter, insects, worms, snails, amphibians, eggs, the odd bit of carrion, and mushrooms. There are claims that eastern box turtles can safely consume poisonous

mushrooms and may be able to incorporate the toxins into their tissues, thereby making the turtles noxious to potential predators, but this anecdotal speculation needs more thorough research.

Despite their remarkable anti-predator traits and flexible diets, these turtles are declining across their range due to several factors. Habitat loss and fragmentation from development may be the biggest threat, but mortality from vehicle strikes, emerging infectious diseases such as ranavirus, and elevated rates of nest predation due to burgeoning raccoon populations also play a role. Box turtles also have to contend with illicit collecting from the wild for the pet trade and black-market cuisine. Many states that are home to eastern box turtles have conferred some degree of protection upon them, and several state agencies and herpetological societies are interested in reporting eastern box turtle sightings. If you happen to come across one while doing yard work, out on a hike, or along a road, check to see if your state has a form to report your observation.

Loren Merrill is a writer and photographer with a PhD in ecology. 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 Loren Merrill



Pack up your troubles

The longest day of the year has officially come and gone, which means we are now on the slow, downhill slide toward winter.

Given that the days are currently long and the temperatures are nearing their peak, my family has opted for the traditional summer beach vacation. This is nothing new since we've rented a beach house annually for nearly two decades. We've changed locations and houses, but one thing that has remained consistent is the oceanside, which we like to keep as close as possible to our back door.

This past weekend, I packed up the family car with the majority of our gear, including beach chairs, umbrellas, suitcases, golf clubs, and food. I then loaded my mother and mother-in-law into the car, entered the location into the GPS, handed the wheel over to my wife, and sent them on their way. My plan was to follow a couple of hours later.

It's always helpful to have a second vehicle on vacation since it allows for more options. But more importantly, driving separately gives me the opportunity to have three-plus hours of peaceful contemplation and podcast serenity at the start of my holiday.

I've come to love going on long drives alone. When I was younger, these outings would have aggravated me. I used to view any trip over half an hour as drudgery. In a phrase, I was focused on the destination and not the journey.

Of course, it was different if I had people with me. I used to love road trips with friends back in the day. Multiple times during the summer, we'd corral two to three carloads of friends and then head out to a festival somewhere in the mountains or out of state. We'd set up our tents and camping gear and then spend the rest of the weekend grooving to the music, partying, and making the most of our time together.

Those events drifted away when kids started to enter the picture. As fun as festivals are, they aren't the best place to bring an infant or toddler, given how unpredictable things can get. That's when we started to connect with other couples who had children of the same age, knowing that this would likely add to the enjoyment of everyone involved. Plus, the kids could play together, meaning more time for the parents to relax!

We did these trips until the kids activities started to completely corral our lives. It's amazing how many weekend baseball

tournaments a 12-year-old can have over the summer. Consequently, there ended up being only one or two weeks that opened up for vacations.

At this point, our parents were retired and looking for things to do, so it made sense to drag them with us. Luckily, my mother and mother-in-law have always gotten along famously, so vacationing together has never been an issue. Not to mention, one parent loves to cook, and the other one loves to clean, so it's like having a chef and a butler tag along on your holiday.

And now we're at the point where our son has grown old enough that on this year's beach vacation, we've broken new ground: He's brought along a girlfriend. My wife and I were fine with this since we've come to like this young woman very much, but it does change the dynamics of the week. Gone are the days when he is the focus of our attention.

While they are spending some time with us, they are basically living on a different schedule. While the middle-aged and retirees are up early and being active before the sun starts pounding, the youngsters are sleeping in and wandering to the beach

later in the afternoon. And while the older set is having cocktails on the porch and making an early dinner, the "kids" are fishing, taking afternoon naps, and then heading out on the town to party late into the night.

But at least they're with us, and that's all that matters. And before you know it, they'll have the babies, we'll be the retirees, and the grandparents will be the focus of countless stories that will keep them alive in our hearts.

Speaking of interesting stories, this week's feature, "The Life of Chuck," is a thought-provoking account about an average, ordinary man. However, this story is not typical in either its narrative structure or the unfolding of the main character's life.

I didn't know what to expect from this film other than that it was receiving solid reviews and a bit of industry chatter. And I certainly wasn't entirely sure where it was heading through most of its two hours, partly because of the disjointed chronology and partly because of the unique integration of side characters. Nevertheless, this film ultimately hit a soft spot with me. It's endearing on many levels and solid on the contemplative vibes.

A reflective "B" for "The Life of Chuck," now playing at theaters everywhere.

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



The Movie Diary
By Dom Cioffi



No patch left unskied

I'm calling it.

I drove around the long way, hoping to catch one last glimpse of the patch before we actually began hiking up into The Canyon. Partly because I wanted to see what I was getting into and partly because I wanted to make sure she was still there. I honestly wasn't sure if I was happy or disappointed to see the smallest patch of white still hiding in the crotch of The Canyon as I came around the turn on East Mountain Road.



Living the Dream

By Merisa Sherman

Who am I kidding? I would have been absolutely crushed to find her gone without having said a proper and respectful farewell to what could be called the greatest patch of all time—or at least the 24 years since I've been patch skiing here at Killington. We've had secret little patches, like the one leftover from the Dew Tour in 2012. After the tour, a film company piled all the leftover snow into one big booter on Lower Bear Claw, and it lasted until July 4. It was glorious.

But it didn't have the personality of the Downdraft Patch. This patch was steep, making it tricky to put your skis on, especially if you had touring bindings. It made hop turns a bit more difficult as you slid with each landing. On an easier pitch, you can get more turns per distance. The patch was perfect.

Or it was, until Monday. I had work to do, so we didn't start hiking in until around 11 a.m. The temps had started to rise, and the air was so heavy it felt like someone was pressing us into the ground. My pack weighed the same as every other time, but I felt my body condensing into the ground. It was

almost difficult to stand up straight or lift my legs; the air was so heavy.

But there was so and so we go.

It's a brutal leap of faith walking up to a snow patch in 90-degree weather. We literally couldn't see the patch the entirety of the walk, which was extremely disconcerting. What would we really find when we got there? It had looked so good from far away—but as Bette Midler taught me in middle school, from a distance, life always looks better. I could feel myself getting faster and lighter as we got to the final pitch. It was a bit wonky journey-wise as we avoided the poison hemlock.

And... it was broken. In the time it had taken to hike up to the patch from when I saw it from afar, the damn thing had disintegrated into three precarious little patches. A flood of emotions hit me all at once—well, damn it, I should have taken more runs yesterday, I should have woken up earlier and bailed on my work, I should have not even bothered, I should... wait a minute.

As I kept walking, I saw my line and found a way to connect the three patches by turning the middle patch. It could work, I convinced myself, and I kept going. From behind me, I heard my friend Dave shout, "I don't think I'm coming up with you tomorrow," and I just burst out laughing. Why was I taking this so seriously? It's June 23, and I'm hiking up to the smallest amount of leftover snow that I have ever skied. It might not have been the plan, but we ski what we can when we can. And today, we could.

And so we did. Lap and lap, we lapped what was left of the snow. Connecting the patches but also skiing them one at a time and laughing as we struggled to get into our skis or skied longer vert through the mud at the bottom than we had snow. It was silly, it was stupid, and we couldn't stop laughing. A precision turn, a super sketchy hop turn. We made it work. The



By Dave Dixon

Merisa Sherman prepared for her final run of the season.

base lodge and the mid-mountain lodge were open. The lift was running, with fans cheering us on from above. We built a whole silly scenario.

Then, it was time. We were out of water, out of time, and out of snow. With one last run, we said farewell to the snow and began our dance party down the mountain. There's a little more than 100 days left until the snowmakers start to get their guns ready.

Thank you, Killington, for making snow in The Canyon this year when you really didn't have to. For trying to go the extra mile or an extra 26 feet. Who could have anticipated having to close on May 10 only to have a patch that made it to summer? It was a great run, and we're here for it. No patch was left unskied.

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

What's in a name?

There's nothing like a talk show to spark an idea for a column. Hosts Kelly Ripa and her husband, Mark Consuelos, recently discussed how people's first names often serve as clues to the decade in which they were born. Some names that are rarely chosen today were popular in previous decades.

The given name that is chosen by parents can have an influence on a child's personality over time. When you meet someone new, your name is probably the first thing they learn about you. The name that they hear can reflect how they perceive you. Over time, the perception of your name by others can play a role in how you emerge as an adult.

Since you aren't the one to choose your name (unless you have a reason to change it later in life), you better hope that your parents pick a good one!

In my case, it was decided that I would be named after one of my grandmothers. Both first names were Mary. My paternal grandmother's middle name was Ann, and my maternal grandmother's name was Ellen. My mother was the "winner" of that conflict! Since both Mary and Ellen have meanings related to "light" or "torch," I decided that those names must symbolize me as being the "light of their life." When I was born, my father was 50 years old,



Looking Back

By Mary Ellen Shaw

and my mother was 40. I am an only child and couldn't have asked for better parents. I hope that I have lived up to the meaning associated with both my first and middle names!

As I looked back at the first names of my neighborhood friends' parents, I have come to the conclusion that names beginning with the letter "E" were definitely popular. There were Evelyn Myers, Edna Clark, Etta Haigh, and Esther Webber. There were a couple of "G" names, Gladys Burke and Gertrude O'Neill.

Let's take a look at what these first names mean. Evelyn is a "desired child." Edna is a "delight or pleasure." Etta is "ruler of the home." Esther is a "star." Gladys is a "princess or ruler," and Gertrude is "steadfast and enduring."

The two women I knew best from that group were Edna and Gertrude. Edna was truly both a delight and a pleasure, and Gertrude was steadfast, especially in her later years when she was a widow and lived alone next door to us.

I guess only the families of the other women can tell you if they were "true" to the meaning of their names! Of course, in reality, most mothers pick a name based on the way it sounds when said with their last name. But it's also fun to know the meaning.

The husbands' names of the women mentioned above are not particularly indicative of that time period, so let's look at a few names that are.

George is associated with a farmer or earth worker. After my grandmother's first husband died, she re-married a man named George. He lived up to his name as he raised

Looking Back → 31

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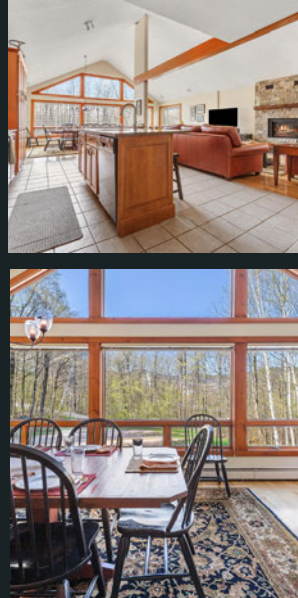
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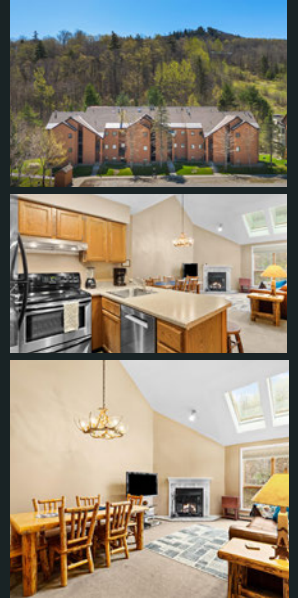
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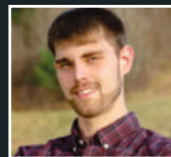
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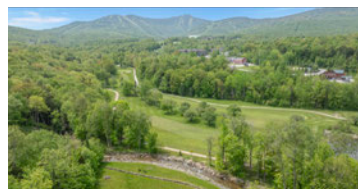
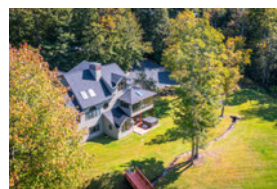


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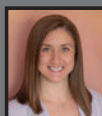
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Third, independent schools state their missions publicly and clearly articulate what they expect from themselves and from their students. Few institutions, public or independent, can be "all things to all people." Independent schools are required to be honest with the public about what they can — and cannot — accomplish with their kids.

Finally, independent schools are held to their publicly stated missions and practices by the most stringent standard possible. If they do not achieve their educational goals they will close. Attendance at these schools is voluntary and students and families who find their expectations disappointed will withdraw. Independent schools must answer for their aspirations with their actual achievements. And with their existence.

The question of whether or not students and their families can use taxpayer funds to attend independent schools presents complex issues.

Given the obvious differences among

citizens in a democracy, it is fair to ask if families have the right to choose schools that meet their needs or their philosophies. Given the limited public resources available, it is fair to question if using some of this money to fund families' choices detracts from the rights of other students. Given the realities of Vermont's geography, our historic town autonomy and the long and successful history of independent schools, it is fair to ask if a "universal" education system is a practical possibility and a philosophical necessity.

Many independent schools in Vermont have operated for more than a century. Their standards both on paper and in their living graduates could not be a more public declaration of their capacity to educate effectively.

The answer to a complex question is sometimes complex. Both independent and public schools can meet the aspirations we all have for our kids. A system that seeks ways to work cooperatively rather than antagonistically makes the most sense in this state.

Jay Stroud, Quechee

Editor's note: Stroud is past president of the Board of the New England Association of Schools and Colleges and the former director of the NEASC Commission on Independent Schools.

Two resign: from page 7

The law established the 13-member body, composed of lawmakers and education officials, and tasked it with studying Vermont's public education system and making recommendations to reduce costs while ensuring equal educational opportunities for all students. The commission must create a final report due this past December.

But the commission, Roy wrote in her resignation letter, was "undercut" in January when Scott released his own sweeping proposal calling for the consolidation of Vermont's 119 school districts down to as few as five regional administrative districts.

From then on, the commission lacked buy-in from all sides of the political spectrum, and members were uncertain of the point of the commission, according to commission members.

In H.454, lawmakers gave the commission room to "work closely" with the state's School District Redistricting Task Force, which is expected to begin meeting in August to craft new school district configurations, according to the bill.

The task force is expected to utilize the

commission's public engagement efforts "to maximize public input regarding the development of the proposed new school district boundaries," the bill states.

The bill also tasked the commission with making recommendations to the Legislature about what roles and powers should remain at the local school district level versus what should move to the state level. The commission, the bill reads, should also recommend "a process for a community served by a school to have a voice in decisions regarding school closures and recommendations for what that process should entail."

In an interview, Roy said these remain critical questions to answer, but "we don't have evidence to suggest that the General Assembly actually wants our opinion."

It was not immediately clear who would replace Roy and Mace, or serve as the chair. Their positions on the commission are listed as vacant on an agenda for a future meeting.

Roy in her resignation letter said she will be "focusing my professional energies on supporting school districts and school leaders as they navigate the uncertainty to come."

← Looking Back: from page 27

chickens and loved working in his gardens.

Walter reflects a man who has power and is a ruler.

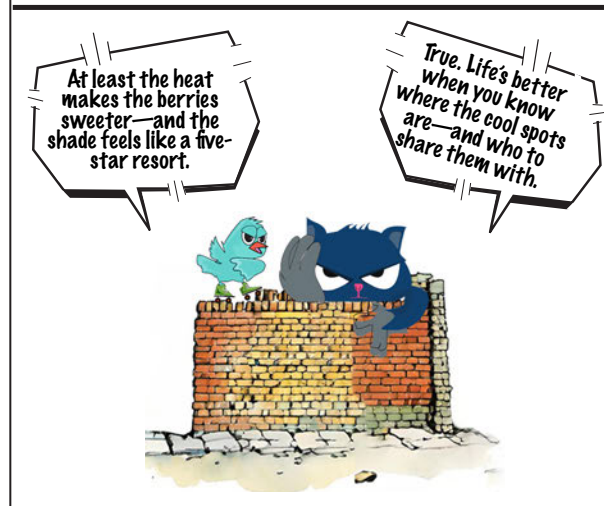
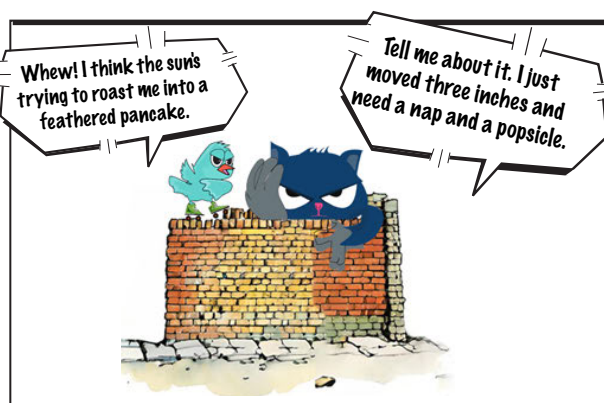
Leon has courage and strength.

Eugene is associated with a noble and well-born man.

If you know anyone with these names, see if their personalities match the meanings associated with them.

When it comes to first names, I bet a child named "Mary" or "John" is much quicker to learn how to spell and write their names than Esmeralda!

So, "What is in a name?" More than you might think!



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