



JUNETEENTH

Thursday, June 19, dubbed "Juneteenth" marks the official end of slavery in the U.S. and is a federal holiday.



SUMMER SOLSTICE

Friday, June 20 marks the official start of astronomical summer and is the longest day of the year in the Northern Hemisphere.



WORLD MUSIC DAY

Saturday, June 21. Randolph will celebrate with a 12 hours of music and festivities.

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RUTLAND CELEBRATES

Celebrate Pride month in Downtown Rutland this Saturday.

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Legislature passes education reform

Includes new tax brackets, larger consolidated districts

By Polly Mikula and Ethan Weinstein/VTDigger

The Vermont Legislature on Monday, June 16, passed the year's landmark education reform package, setting in motion years of transformation to the state's public school and property tax systems.

The governor is expected to sign the bill, H.454, this week.

The bill promises to radically alter Vermont's education funding and gov-

ernance landscape over several years, consolidating school districts from 119 to a few dozen (max) and shifting the balance of power over district budgets from the local to the state level. Once enacted, new larger districts will be allocated funds according to their population of students using a foundation formula.

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By James Kent

Inventive signs and costumes were on display throughout the crowd of 1,500 No Kings protestors gathered in Rutland on Saturday, June 14.

No Kings protest draws 1,500 in Rutland

By James Kent

At 10 a.m. on Saturday, June 14 — the traditional Flag Day, the date of the U.S. Army 250th Anniversary Parade and the 79th birthday of Donald Trump — a long line formed at the counter of Jones' Donuts on West St. Perhaps, too long a wait for Donuts at this time, and perhaps luck would be better served a little closer to Jones' noon closing.

The line at Jones' was no surprise, judging by the even longer line forming around the corner. At Gazebo Park, on North Main Street and the

corner of West, the line of protestors began and stretched along Route 4 several blocks, as far south as the Christ the King Church. Organizers of the No Kings rally in Rutland placed an official count of 1,500 people.

Citizens from all over the city and surrounding towns came out on Flag Day to show support for the U.S. Constitution, specifically the First Amendment, which guarantees the rights of free speech and lawful assembly. These rights, protesters

said through a variety of clever slogans, are under attack by the current Federal administration.

While in Washington, D.C., on the same day, a display of the nation's might took place celebrating the 250th anniversary of the U.S. military, which also coincided with the birthday of the current president. Never before in our nation's history has the country seen a military parade of that magnitude, which experts estimate to have cost taxpayers

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VT hospitals to take \$1.7 billion hit under ‘Big Beautiful Bill’

Congress is considering massive cuts to Medicaid that could devastate healthcare providers. Hospitals in Vermont would see a \$1.5 billion reduction in spending over the next decade under the budget reconciliation proposal passed by the House of Representatives that the Senate is now considering, according to a new analysis from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and Urban Institute.

At the same time, Vermont hospitals will be hit with a \$200 million increase in uncompensated care—or care that they are required to provide to people without insurance but are not paid for. When you combine the projected spending cuts with the increase in uncompensated care, Vermont hospitals could see a \$1.7 billion financial hit from this bill over the next decade.

Analysts say this double burden of decreased spending and increased demand for uncompensated care could force some hospitals to close their doors and hurt access to care for entire communities.

Overall, the budget reconciliation bill would reduce healthcare spending in the U.S. by \$797 billion over the next decade, with more than

one-third (36%) of the cuts occurring in California, Florida, Texas, and New York, the new analysis shows. Drops in medical spending would run more than \$20 billion in nine additional states (Arizona, Georgia, Illinois, Indiana, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon,

Pennsylvania, and Washington).

Prepared by the Urban Institute with support from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation, the analysis finds that hospitals would face an overall cut of \$321 billion in spending from reconciliation, while physicians would face an \$81 billion cut. Spending on prescription drugs would decline by \$191 billion from 2025 to 2034.

At the same time, U.S. hospitals would face a \$63 billion increase in uncompensated care over the next decade—services sought by the uninsured that hospitals and other providers are required to deliver but are not reimbursed.

Some experts say costs of uncompensated care are ultimately passed

on to insured patients through higher healthcare prices.

“The Medicaid cuts Congress is considering would be the largest funding reduction in the program’s history, and it is hard to overstate just how devastating the impacts would be,” said

Analysts say this double burden of decreased spending and increased demand for uncompensated care could force some hospitals to close.

Katherine Hempstead, senior policy adviser at the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation. “Such drastic changes to Medicaid financing would have ripple effects that go well beyond people covered by the program, further squeezing hospitals, limiting access to care for entire communities, and destabilizing state and local economies.”

“As Congress considers significant cuts to the Medicaid program and ACA Marketplaces, this analysis can help state and local policymakers and stakeholders consider the potential adverse effects on healthcare coverage, access, and affordability, and the financial vulnerability of certain providers in their state,” said Fredric Blavin, senior fellow at the Urban Institute.

Vermont-NEA wants to get more educators into politics
Union says it’s essential to boost the ranks of educators in legislature, city councils, and school boards

As lawmakers and the governor continue to insist on “doing something” about education before the end of next week, the state’s largest union will begin training educators to become elected officials.

“Nobody knows the needs of students and those who work in our schools better than my fellow educators,” said Don Tinney, a high school English teacher who serves as the president of the 13,000-member Vermont-NEA. “We have seen that clearly this year, as four educators-turned-lawmakers are key players as the debate over the governor’s plans for public schools rages on.”

Sen. Anne Watson, D/P-Washington; Rep. Kate McCann, D-Washington; Rep. Erin Brady, D-Chittenden; and Rep. Leanne Harple, D-Orleans are all public-school educators who are tireless advocates for the state’s students — and the people who teach and support them.

“While some folks assert they know what’s best for our state’s public education system, those of us who have taught and worked in our schools bring a special knowledge to the current debate,” Watson said. “It is important that our voices as educators are heard.”

McCann, who is serving her second term, said that any educator who is interested in knowing how to run for elective office should attend this training program. “Teaching

is hard, so my fellow educators already have a head start in becoming an elected official,” she said. “Learning how to campaign and win an election is the first step to raising our collective voice in the halls of the State House.”

The Vermont-NEA Educator Candidate School will launch in the fall. Its aim is to train and support educators on important skills necessary to successfully run for office at the local and state level in Vermont.

“We know many Vermont-NEA members already serve their local communities in elected positions, but more union educator voices are needed to advocate for change in Vermont,” Tinney said.

Brady agreed. “I’m anxious to have my fellow educators join me in the State House,” she said. “It’s time that our ranks within elected bodies grow as the needs of our students and schools continue to become more complex.”

The candidate training will only be open to Vermont-NEA members and will provide a comprehensive introduction to organizing, fundraising, and messaging and how they translate into a winning campaign.

“As a proud union member, I know the value of organizing,” Harple said. “With more of us trained and ready to serve in elected office, we can ensure that the voices of educators and students are heard loud and clear.”



By Emily Pratt Slatin

Runners prepared to race at the Start/Finish line of the Strawberry Jam Fun Run in Middletown Springs.

Showing up is the win: Middletown Springs celebrated its 4th annual Strawberry Jam Fun Run

By Emily Pratt Slatin

Middletown Springs laced up and leaned into tradition Saturday morning as the fourth annual Strawberry Jam Fun Run welcomed runners of all ages beneath a soft, overcast sky that kept things cool and mercifully unscorched.

Now in its fourth year, the event raises money for local education—and gives the town a chance to gather, cheer, and celebrate summer with sneakers

“The whole town shows up...everyone’s just here for the good of it,” said Heering.

and strawberries.

With the scent of ripe berries in the air and cheers echoing off the surrounding hills, participants took on either a 5K or 10K course, both winding through Middletown Springs’ rolling backroads—routes where cows outnumber cars, and probably always will. The turnout was strong, with dozens of runners, walkers, and enthusiastic onlookers lining the quiet stretches of road, many decked out in strawberry-themed gear.

“This is what Vermont is all about,” said volunteer organizer Matt Heering, who helped with timing and logistics.

“The whole town shows up—runners, families, fire department volunteers from Middletown Springs and Timmouth, people handing out water—everyone’s just here for the good of it.”

In the women’s 5K, Katie Presau clocked a blazing 19:54, clearly more focused on her stride than the free fruit at the finish. Cara Bailey followed with a time of 24:45, trailed closely by Eva Friend at 25:43.

On the men’s side, Sam Filloramo took first at 23:03. Paul Sussman placed second at 26:24, and Ed McGann rounded out the podium at 30:53.

Those who braved the longer 10K faced a tougher climb—both literally and figuratively. Zaley Deleonardis-Page led the women with a time of 54:21, followed by Jessica Billingsby at 57:26 and Nadia Tarbell at 1:11:45. Among the men, Stephen Davies posted the fastest time of the day: 52:01. Ben Eden and Matt Poi followed closely at 56:24 and 56:35, respectively.

Kids sprinted barefoot across the grass, dogs flopped under the shade of the registration tent, and neighbors passed around water cups and local gossip like it was just another Saturday.

“This isn’t about competition,” one volunteer said, offering a high-five and

a paper cup to a winded runner. “It’s about community and showing up for the school.”

The Fun Run started years ago as a modest fundraiser for local education. It has since grown—not into a spectacle, but into something more enduring. Parents jogged alongside their kids. Retirees walked with calm resolve. Teenagers ran full tilt just for the joy of it while old friends shouted encouragement from lawn chairs and porch swings.

By noon, the road had emptied out. The signs came down. The Bluetooth speaker went quiet. But in Middletown Springs, where nothing is disposable and everything is personal, the echoes linger.

The Strawberry Jam Fun Run continues to be less about the distance covered and more about who shows up—and why. Because here, showing

“It’s about community and showing up for the school,” said a volunteer.

up is the win.

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 RescueGirl557.com.



By Emily Pratt Slatin

A volunteer posed at the start area of the Strawberry Jam Fun Run in Middletown Springs on Saturday, June 14.

← No Kings:
from page 1

ers between \$25 and \$45 million.

At a time when the message from the federal government is programs and services must be slashed, such a price tag for a military parade was sure to draw some ire.

A reported 6 million Americans thought so and took to their local towns and cities in protest of the current administration's actions since Jan. 20 of this year.

In a movement dubbed "No Kings," these citizens set out to serve a reminder that our government is supposed to be "Of the people, by the people," and not at the directives and whims of one man.

In Rutland, the crowd's mood was jovial. There was a sense of community and bonding over this act of civil liberty. Would the message be received? It's unclear, but it may not have been the point. The morning's protest appeared more symbolic in nature. Until someone deems it unlawful for citizens to carry out their fundamental First Amendment rights, there will be people who will rise to the occasion to exercise those rights.

Not everyone agreed on Saturday morning. A male passenger of a passing car shouted out to those lining the street, "The election is over! The election is over!" That is an astute observation, and yes, elections do have consequences. However, the majority of cars passing along a busy Route 4 showed support through honks and waves.

The only signs of civil disobedience on display this morning were people jaywalking across the streets. Try as volunteers might, it seemed a lost cause keeping pedestrians from waiting until the walk sign before crossing over to join the end of the protest line.

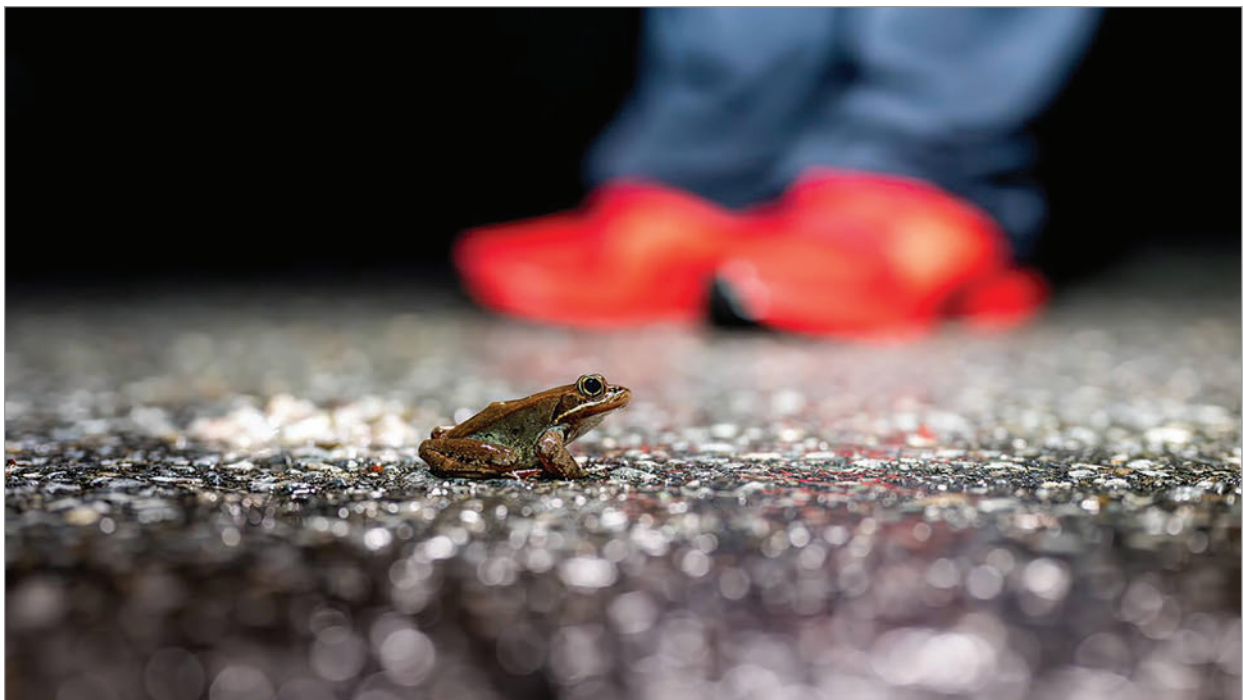
Judging by the many colorful and inventive signs held by the people who showed up on Saturday, the prevalent message was that America doesn't want a king. Call it New England understanding, but 249 years ago, this country declared itself a *Democracy, not a Monarchy*, and Vermonters set out to remind everyone that it would be a great idea if it stayed that way.

At 11:30 a.m., it was time to try Jones' Donuts again. There were only a couple of people in line by this point. However, the supply of donuts was dwindling, and the choices were limited. A man was in the process of ordering a mega supply of donuts. If he was going for a baker's dozen, it sure looked like he was bringing home enough donuts for a dozen or more bakers. It was as if this person had made it his mission to take every last donut on the shelf that his box would fit. Catching sight of the emblem on the side of this man's shirt, the distinctive MAGA logo appeared. Amongst a sea of protesters, in which teachers, healthcare professionals, veterans, young and old, lined up in opposition to the man who would be king, this lone donut snarfer appeared to show them that he who grabs the most remaining donuts wins.

The man left the counter, clutching his dough-filled bounty, satisfied with his treasure. The front of his shirt bore the image of the commander in chief, as the AI-generated robot famously portrayed by Arnold Schwarzenegger, and the words, "The Trumpinator." Was the connotation that the current president is an unstoppable force who will not cease until he's destroyed everything in his path to achieve his goal? Unclear. Did that make the 1,500 lined up outside a whole bunch of John and Sarah Connors? Unclear. The only clear thing: So long as the levers of democracy still hold, some will not go quietly into that good night.

The other thing that was clear is that the donut variety was gone, but there were still enough donuts left to buy a few.

The only signs of civil disobedience on display this morning were people jaywalking across the streets.



Courtesy UVM

New UVM research highlights cost-effective solution for protecting salamanders, frogs, and other vulnerable species by restoring habitat connections across roads.

Amphibian road mortality drops by over 80% due to wildlife underpasses

By Joshua Brown, UVM

Editor's note: This story is via Community News Service in partnership with Vermont State University Castleton.

A new UVM-led study shows that wildlife underpass tunnels dramatically reduce deaths of frog, salamanders and other amphibians migrating across roads.

Frogs, salamanders, and other amphibians around the world face mounting threats from a devastating fungus, climate change, habitat loss—and road mortality. Among these, roads pose a uniquely immediate danger by cutting through critical migration corridors, allowing vehicles to crush millions of animals each year.

Now, a new, first-of-its-kind study offers powerful evidence that a simple intervention—wildlife underpass tunnels—can dramatically reduce these amphibian deaths and help preserve ecosystems.

In research spanning more than a decade, scientists and citizens from the University of Vermont, the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources, and the local community assessed the effectiveness of two wildlife underpasses installed under a road in Monkton, Vermont. The results were striking: an 80.2% reduction in amphibian deaths.

"It was surprising. I knew that underpasses would work, but I didn't think they would be that effective," said lead author Matthew Marcelino, an ecologist at UVM. "And when we took climbing amphibians out of the picture—which in our context are

primarily spring peeper frogs—we noticed a 94% decrease in mortality in the treatment areas."

The study was published online in the *Journal for Nature Conservation* and will be printed in the August edition of the journal.

Before and after design

Using a rigorous "before-after-control-impact" (BACI) study design, the citizen scientists and researchers monitored amphibian road mortality over five years before the construction of the underpasses (2011–2015) and seven years after (2016–2022). They compared three zones: one with underpasses and wing walls (treatment); one covering the area at and beyond the end of wing walls away from the tunnels (buffer); and a control area far from the infrastructure changes.

The study team conducted standardized surveys during the amphibians' brief spring migration windows, walking the road each rainy evening and recording every amphibian—alive or dead—across 12 species of frogs, toads, and salamanders. They found 5,273 amphibians including 1,702 spotted salamanders, nearly half of which were dead, and 2,545 spring peeper frogs, nearly 70% of which were dead. The death rates were much lower in the treatment areas—and the buffer areas too, showed that the animals were using the tunnels and not just being displaced to the ends of the walls.

This research provides the first long-term, peer-reviewed evidence that amphibian-specific wildlife un-

derpasses in the northeastern U.S. are highly effective. It also highlights that the design details—like wall height and angles, tunnel layout, and material—really matter.

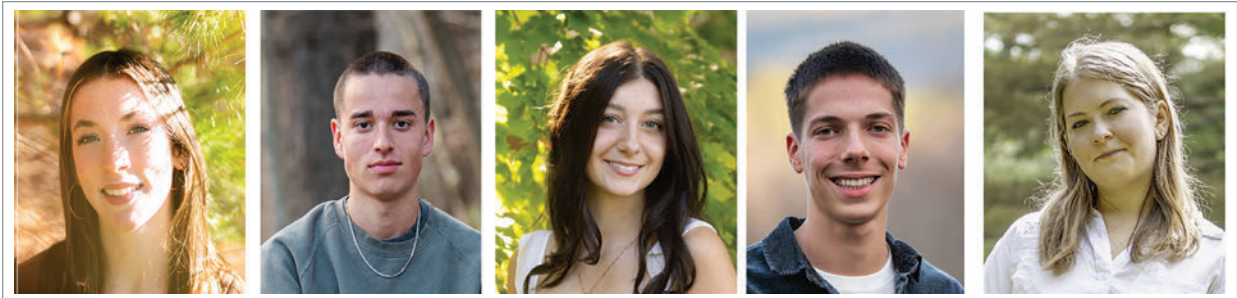
Roads kill

Amphibians—frogs, toads, and salamanders—play vital roles in ecosystems and are highly sensitive to environmental disruption. In Vermont and much of the northeastern United States, many amphibians spend the majority of their lives hidden in upland forest soils or streams, fattening up and surviving long winters underground. But in early spring, they emerge en masse on warm, rainy nights to migrate from upland woods to ponds, wetlands, and flooded meadows to breed.

"It's usually sometime between late March and late April," explained study senior author and UVM professor Brittany Mosher. "Many species will breed in the same ponds. So it's not just a single species migrating—it's many, many species. And oftentimes, we see hundreds or thousands making this movement all at the same time."

Unfortunately, roads are often built right between these forested uplands and aquatic habitats—exactly where amphibians must cross. "Planners—state and federal transportation planners—often build roads between these steeper forested upland habitats and nice flat aquatic habitats," said Mosher, an ecologist in UVM's Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources. "So the roads are placed

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By Green Mountain High School staff
Green Mountain High School recipients of 2025 Ludlow Rotary Club scholarships, left to right: Autumn Fales, Andrei Solzhenitsyn, Linsey Miles, Evans Kirdzik, and Lucy Palmer. Photos from Windsor and Compass were not available.

Ludlow Rotary awards \$14,000 to area seniors

Continuing its commitment to support local students, the Ludlow Rotary Club has announced its 2025 scholarship recipients, awarding a total of \$14,000 to graduating seniors from the club’s service area, which includes Ludlow, Plymouth, Mt. Holly, and Cavendish.

“This year’s awards continue a proud Rotary tradition,” said Tim Faulkner, scholarship committee chair. “Since its inception, the club’s scholarship program has provided over \$284,000 to local graduates pursuing higher education.”

The 2025 Ludlow Rotary Club scholarship winners are:

From Green Mountain High School:

- Andrei Solzhenitsyn – Daniel E. Kesman Memorial Scholarship, \$2,500
- Lucy Palmer – Robert W. Kirkbride Memorial, \$2,500
- Linsey Jane Miles – Ralph D. Hogancamp Memorial Vocational Scholarship, \$2,000
- Evan Kirdzik – Joseph “Jay” Girouard Scholarship, \$2,000
- Autumn Fales – Traditional Scholarship, \$1,500

From Windsor High School:

- Brianna Barton – Traditional Scholarship, \$1,500

From Compass High School:

- Lola Saccardo – Marty Nitka Scholarship, \$2,000

Scholarship funds are primarily raised through the Ludlow Rotary Club’s annual penny sale, a spring tradition that brings the community together in support of education.

The Ludlow Rotary Club congratulates this year’s recipients and wishes them success in their academic and career pursuits.

Amphibians: from page 4

exactly in the wrong spot if you were an amphibian planner.”

Because amphibians are small and slow-moving, they are especially vulnerable to vehicle collisions. Unlike larger mammals that might dart across a road in seconds, frogs and salamanders can take several minutes to cross—and with hundreds migrating at once, mortality rates can be staggering.

In Monkton, Vermont, local residents witnessed this firsthand. In 2006, community members from the Monkton Conservation Commission and the Lewis Creek Association went out to observe a known migration corridor. What they saw shocked them.

“They counted over a thousand dead animals on the road in just two nights,” Mosher said.

Takes a village

That community concern helped launch a collaboration between residents, conservation groups, UVM scientists, and state agencies—led by long-time Monkton resident, State of Vermont wildlife biologist, and study co-author Steve Parren. The collaboration eventually led to the construction of two amphibian underpasses beneath a 1.3-kilometer stretch of road in Monkton. These structures, designed to allow amphibians to pass safely under the road during migration, were installed in 2015 with the support of the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Dept. and the Town of Monkton. The project cost \$342,397—far less than large mammal overpasses and underpasses, which can range from \$500,000 to nearly \$100 million per crossing.

The Vermont design features two 4-foot-wide concrete tunnels with wing walls to guide amphibians to the tunnels and safely under the road. Using wildlife cameras, the Lewis Creek Association counted 2,208 amphibians using one of the underpasses in the spring of 2016. (It turned out that other animals were happy to use the tunnels too: the cameras captured bears, bobcats, porcupines, raccoons, snakes, and birds using the underpasses—suggesting they broadly benefit ecosystem connectivity.)

While the reduction in mortality for climbing amphibians like spring peepers was not statistically significant, it did decrease by 73%. Non-arboreal amphibians—those that travel along the ground—benefited the most from the underpasses, with consistent use and drastically fewer fatalities.

The research team emphasizes that the findings should serve as a model for road planners and policymakers across the country. “This study provides strong evidence that

The Vermont design features two 4-foot-wide concrete tunnels with wing walls to guide amphibians to the tunnels and safely under the road.

wildlife underpasses work,” Marcelino said. “We hope this will encourage transportation departments to include them in future plans, when building or repairing roads.”

Mosher added that these structures are not just helpful for amphibians—they are a signal that communities can come together

to protect their local wildlife. “This story began with local community members who were engaged and concerned,” she said. “And it provides a view for how other communities can protect their amphibian populations too.”

The study highlights the critical role of long-term research, community engagement, and targeted infrastructure investment in supporting biodiversity. “Conservation takes commitment,” Marcelino added. “But when we invest in good tools and take the time to do it right, the payoff for ecosystems and wildlife can be enormous. These are beautiful creatures—so beautiful, so ancient.”

Killington Women’s Club awards scholarships to local students for academic excellence and service

Two local graduating seniors were recently honored by the Greater Killington Women’s Club (GKWC). GKWC Treasurer Lisa Magliano presented the annual awards, each worth \$1,000, which recognize one student for academic achievement and another for exceptional community service.

Killington resident Joffre Legayada received the 2025 Sherburne Academic Scholarship, awarded to a Killington or Pittsfield student with the highest weighted GPA at Woodstock Union High School. Legayada, a former student of Killington Elementary, completed nine AP courses and was an active member of the Scholars Bowl team. His academic accolades include the AP Scholar Award, the Seal of Biliteracy in French, and a Rochester Institute of Technology Computing Award. Outside the classroom, Legayada played clarinet in the symphonic band and worked at Killington Resort, where he earned the “You’ve Been Noticed” Award for outstanding guest service. He will attend Villanova University this fall.

Pittsfield resident Olivia Grasso was named the 2025 recipient of the Pat Zack Community Service Award, which honors a Killington or Pittsfield student who has demonstrated notable service to the community. Also a graduate of Killington Elementary, Grasso volunteered for three years with US Youth Top Soccer, a program supporting youth with physical and intellectual disabilities. She participated in the National Honor Society, Earth Beat Club, and varsity soccer and ski teams. She will attend St. Lawrence University in the fall.

The GKWC recognized both students for embodying the values of academic excellence and civic engagement. “These two young people represent the best of our community,” the organization said in a statement. “We are proud to support their next steps.”

Founded more than 60 years ago by Killington Mountain Resort co-founder Susanne Smith and local community members, the Greater Killington Women’s Club—formerly



Courtesy Greater Killington Women’s Club
GKWC awarded its Community Service Award to Olivia Grasso and its Academic Scholarship award to Joffre Legayada.

known as the Sherburne Women’s Club—continues to support area schools, nonprofits, and community programs through fundraising and volunteerism.

For more information, visit: gkwcv.org.



Courtesy Vermont Foodbank

Laughing Child Farm in Pawlet, Vermont, is among the many local organizations helping.

Scott signs Vermonters Feeding Vermonters program into law

Vermont Foodbank applauded the work of the Legislature and Governor Phil Scott for the passage and signing of bill H.167, into law on May 27 creating Act 34 of 2025 to establish a Vermonters Feeding Vermonters grant program at the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets. With food and economic insecurity increasing in recent years, this commitment will help ensure access to fresh, local food for neighbors experiencing food insecurity, and support to Vermont farms, at a time when federal funding is uncertain.

Vermonters Feeding Vermonters, a program of Vermont Foodbank, works with more than 300 farms of all sizes to provide local food from Vermont farms to neighbors across Vermont. The Foodbank purchases directly from farms and provides funding to partner food shelves and meal sites to purchase from local farmstands, farmer's markets, and CSA shares. This program has already invested more than \$9.5 million in Vermont's agricultural economy and distributed 5.75 million pounds of fresh, local food since the program began.

"This program is about investing Vermont dollars in the future of our state, together, as well as addressing food insecurity. Since 2018 Vermonters Feeding Vermonters has purchased nutritious, locally grown food from Vermont farms and helped that food get to neighbors across the state who access food through Vermont Foodbank and our partners. Act 34 codifies our partnership with the State of Vermont to ensure this program will continue to support a more resilient and sustainable agricultural economy, while feeding our neighbors," said John Sayles, CEO of Vermont Foodbank.

"Our Food Shelf participants simply appreciate the opportunity to have fresh local food. They know about proper nutrition. A single mother of 3 children shared, 'When I come and can select fresh foods from local farms, I feel like I am nourishing my children, not simply feeding them,'" shared the South Burlington Food Shelf, a Vermont Foodbank network partner.

Since 2021, the State of Vermont has allocated funds to support the work of Vermont Foodbank. Each year, a portion of the state allocated funds support Vermonters Feeding Vermonters. In 2024, Vermont Foodbank was able to use \$700,000 of its \$1.3 million state appropriation to support the program. In its FY26 budget, the State appropriated \$500,000 to support continued investment in Vermonters Feeding Vermonters. The passage and implementation of Act 34 and FY26 budget allocation signify an ongoing investment in local food to increase food access for neighbors who may struggle with food insecurity.

Bill sponsor Representative Esme Cole (Windsor 6) offered support ahead of the bill's passage and shared, "Vermonters Feeding Vermonters has a proven track record. This program keeps our dollars in-state, while reducing barriers for Vermonters' access to fresh, local foods. Everyone deserves access to nutritious local, Vermont-grown food. We are lucky to have so many remarkable food producers in Vermont. It's time to connect the dots."

Representative Cole continued, "As policymakers, I believe that it is our job to help create market factors that support farms of all sizes, including small farms, and our food system. If we don't act, we will continue to see the consolidation and erasure of the small farms that bring so much value to our state. Vermonters Feeding Vermonters is an important step in the right direction, offering a "quadruple-win" by supporting our local economy, producers, consumers, and the environment."

In her testimony before the Senate Agriculture Committee, House bill reporter Representative Michelle Bos-Lun (Windham-3) shared ways this program meets the needs

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A new law opens up unpaid leave for Vermont workers

By Charlotte Oliver/VT Digger

Starting July 1, a new law is set to expand unpaid parental leave for Vermonters — and for the first time, guarantee employees can take off work after the death of a family member. It also defines family relationships more broadly under the law, naming its intention to equitably include LGBTQ+ Vermonters.

The law is designed to let employees take care of personal and family matters without fear of losing their jobs, said Rep. Emilie Krasnow, D-South Burlington, the bill's lead sponsor. "It may seem like a small step, but it is very mighty because often our previous laws were trying to catch up with the world that we're in today," Krasnow said.

Once the law goes into effect, employees can take up to 12 weeks of unpaid time off after childbirth, miscarriage or to take care of a new adopted or foster child. Vermonters will also be able to take off after the death of a family member for up to two weeks total, with no more than five consecutive days off.

The law also introduces safe leave, which lets someone take up to 12 weeks off work if they or a family member are experiencing domestic or sexual violence.

Oftentimes, survivors seeking help are "experiencing some of the worst times in their life and are not able to continue their lives as usual," said Charlie Gliserman, the director of policy for the Vermont Network Against Domestic and Sexual Violence. The law could allow survivors in crisis the ability to access legal or medical services without fear of losing their jobs, Gliserman said.

The law only applies to businesses with 10 or more employees who work more than 30 hours a week — and lawmakers attempted to strike a balance between offering employee benefits and being practical for business owners, Krasnow said.

The law directly states an intention to include LGBTQ+ families and nontraditional family structures. "Everyone should have the same time off benefits regardless of who they are and who they love and who their family is," Krasnow said.

It will allow someone to take family leave

for a child who isn't biologically related as long as they have parent-like responsibilities. Vermonters can also take family leave for a domestic partner who isn't a spouse as long as the relationship is "of a spousal nature."

Gov. Phil Scott signed the bill into law on May 22. His administration supports the bill "because of its good-natured intent."

"We're hopeful this will have a positive effect on workforce retention in Vermont," said Amanda Wheeler, the governor's press secretary, in a written statement.

Before the governor's approval, the bill garnered near-unanimous approval in both the House and Senate. House lawmakers approved an earlier version of the bill in late March, before Senate lawmakers made a few amendments.

In response to concerns from Megan Sullivan, who handles government affairs for the Vermont Chamber of Commerce, lawmakers in the Senate Committee on Economic Development, Housing and General Affairs reduced the number of days employees can take for bereavement leave. Now, the law only allows five consecutive days off instead of two full weeks off.

"It's almost impossible to temporarily fill that (position)," Sullivan said, and for some business owners, that vacancy can be tough. She pushed lawmakers to make the change.

Senate lawmakers also followed Gliserman's recommendations on expanding safe leave. After an amendment, the law lets people take off work to meet with a state's attorney or law enforcement officer. The changes to the bill better "cover the situations that we see with survivors in our legal clinic and at our member organizations" Gliserman said.

"We're very supportive and excited about the bill," Gliserman said, but unpaid leave will always be out of reach for most survivors. Most people her organization supports can't afford to miss a paycheck, she said.

Krasnow sees the bill's passage as an overdue win. She hopes it keeps the conversation going, and she plans to continue to advocate for paid family and medical leave, she said.



By Glenn Russell/VT Digger

Members of the House of Representatives work on legislation at the Vermont State House.

H.454 passes: from page 1

The specific dollar amount of the foundation formula (the baseline per-pupil funding level) is not explicitly stated in the current bill summaries or fiscal notes, though it was a major point of disagreement between the chambers.

After many months of disagreement and debate, it looked as though the bill may fail to pass even as late as Monday. But in the end, the final vote was anticlimactic.

The Senate passed it 16-13 with most of the chamber's Democratic caucus voting in opposition. Senate Democrats voted 7-yes to 9-no, while Senate Republicans voted 10-yes, 2-no with one absent.

Locally, all three Windsor County Senators (Alison Clarkson, Joe Major and Becca White, all Democrats) voted "no;" while all three Rutland County Senators (Brian Collamore, David Weeks and Terry Williams, all Republican) voted "yes."

After it passed the Senate, the bill went to the House where it passed before many knew it had. Reportedly, when no one immediately stood up to begin debate, House Speaker Jill Krowinski, D-Burlington, called the vote by voice. That meant individual House legislators did not have their positions tallied, and no rank-and-file members spoke for or against the legislation on the floor before the vote.

"There was only a smattering of 'nays," according to Benjamin Brickner, chair of the Pomfret Select Board who watched the proceedings, Monday.

After the 'yeas' and 'nays' rang out, representatives appeared surprised by what they'd just done.

"We didn't even understand what had happened until the Speaker called the question of whether to message our actions to the governor," wrote Elizabeth Burrows, who represents Windsor, West Windsor and Hartland, in an email to a Windsor listserv. "Had this been a bill, someone could have called for a 'reconsideration of the vote' — this had been done earlier in the session — but this was a Report on the Committee of Conference, which has different rules.

"At that point, Rep. Troy Headrick stood up and asked for a roll call on the question of whether to suspend rules to message our actions to the governor. That roll call was what the press is reporting about this morning," she continued. "Many people left the room in disgust or voted in favor of it on the roll call because it did not matter whether they voted for or against — the vote already existed, whether or not we messaged it to the governor ... Several people gave floor speeches between the call for roll call on whether or not to message our actions. I, myself, found myself too angry about the process to give the floor speech I had worked on," Burrows explained.

Heather Surprenant, representing Pomfret, Barnard and Bridgewater, spoke from the floor, saying: "I am voting 'no' to

"I am voting 'no' to uplift the many voices I heard throughout my community, and I am ashamed at leadership for how they led members astray in the process of this vote," said Rep. Heather Surprenant.

uplift the many voices I heard throughout my community, and I am ashamed at leadership for how they led members astray in the process of this vote."

Rep. Leanne Harple, D-Glover, a teacher, also stood to express her "unapologetic" opposition to the bill she said would lead to the closure of small rural schools. "I've heard the word equity to justify this bill, but I believe that word is being misused," she said. "There is nothing equitable about putting a child on the bus for two hours a day."

Fiscal impacts unknown

While Gov. Phil Scott has said the bill will save "hundreds of millions," the exact financial implications are impossible to predict without knowing what future school districts will look

like. The plan relies on a yet-to-be-determined restructuring of school districts, so the effect on educational quality and tax rates specifically cannot be known.

However, some generalities are predictable as the foundation formula promises to level out spending extremes supported by local taxpayers year after year — high budgets will be lowered, low budgets will be increased, with correlating tax impacts resulting for those towns.

Estimates of H.454's tax rate impact from the Joint Fiscal Office indicate that every town in Rutland County is likely to see a tax increase once the foundation formula takes effect. This is because the new foundation funding is higher than current taxpayer-supported per pupil spending. School budgets in Rutland County, however, may become newly flush with increased funding.

Conversely, in Windsor County, school budgets are predicted to be decimated since taxpayers had supported per pupil spending well above any estimate for the set state foundation per student. Tax rate will decrease for some in Windsor County, including many in towns that are not clamoring for them but who instead prefer stronger local schools.

Still, the bill's supporters insist it will bring stability to districts and bend the cost curve that's caused property taxes to rise rapidly in recent years.

Charlie Kimbell, House representative for Woodstock, Reading and Plymouth, explained why he would be voting "yes" in a letter to community members and fellow legislators just before the vote. "I believe it is an important step forward in improving the financial stability of our education system and facilities, and gives us an opportunity to proactively plan for the future education of our students," Kimbell wrote.

The bill also includes the creation of three tax classifications for the education property tax, Kimbell noted, "homestead residential (primary homes), non-homestead residential (second or non-primary homes), and non-homestead non-residential (everything else, including apartments buildings, industrial, commercial, land, seasonally habitable dwellings, etc...). The language includes the intent of using the non-homestead residential tax rate to pay for the cost of the new homestead exemption, which replaces the existing property tax credit (PTC)," Kimbell explained.

Education community reactions

The bill drew ire from the associations representing Vermont's education community, and over the weekend, superintendents and school board members went public with their opposition.

In an interview, Don Tinney, president of the state teacher union VT-NEA, criticized how H.454 consolidated power in Montpelier. "I think that we know that the best decisions for students are made by people who know their students," the union leader said. "Our local school boards currently make those budget decisions, policy decisions for kids within their community, and so the centralization of power within the education system to Montpelier gives real cause for concern."

Tinney argued the state doesn't need to change how much it pays for education, but rather how it levies taxes. To that effect, the teachers union has called for funding schools with an income tax rather than a property tax, an idea that received little air time this year.

"I would ask any policymaker, any legislator to spend a week in the school, to substitute in classes, to work in the cafeteria, to ride the school buses for a week, and at the end of the week, decide where all the fat is in the budget," he said.

What's in the bill?

Though the legislation proposes generational change, the bill is replete with caveats and contingencies, requiring years of further work until the biggest transitions begin in 2028.

Lawmakers describe H.454 as working toward two broad

The bill is structured so that if certain future requirements are not fulfilled, the transformation falls apart.

goals: expanding educational opportunity across the state, and making public education more affordable for taxpayers.

To that end, the bill would consolidate Vermont's 119 school districts into larger, regional bodies, and move the state to a new education funding formula.

The state would gradually pivot to funding its education using a foundation formula beginning in fiscal year 2029. The method — used in most states across the country — moves primary authority over how much school districts can spend from the local to the state level. That's a huge change from the current system, which gives the vast majority of authority to local administrators, boards and the local voting public.

Under the foundation formula, districts would receive mon-

ey based on the number of students enrolled, with additional dollars for students who are more expensive to educate, such as English learners and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Districts could choose to spend more — but

not less — than the formula provides.

To ease the transition to the new formula, lawmakers proposed phasing in the new system. As intended, that process would slowly pull back funding from districts that spend well above average now, and ramp up spending in historically low-spending areas.

Lawmakers, with the help of Scott's team, devised a new income-sensitized property tax discount. The framework would allow Vermonters making \$115,000 or less to exempt a portion of their house value from property taxes, with the possibility of increasing the income threshold in the future. The exemption creates a sliding scale, with lower-income homeowners eligible for bigger exemptions. Up to \$425,000 in home value is eligible for the discount for those that qualify for the highest exemptions.

The bill would put into effect average class-size minimums in 1st grade through high school for certain core classes. The minimum for 1st grade would be 10 students; grades 2-5, 12 students; grades 6-8, 15 students; and grades 9-12, 18 students. Specialty courses, pre-K and Kindergarten, CTE courses and others would be exempted from the class size minimums, according to Rep. Kimbell.

Also, school districts would only face the possibility of repercussions for being out of compliance after three years of not meeting the minimums. Plus, a waiver process would allow schools to petition for an exemption.

Agency of Education is also charged with establishing a uniform statewide school calendar and graduation requirements.

Many unknowns remain

Despite the sweeping changes outlined, almost as many details need to be hashed out. The bill's biggest unknown is what future consolidated school districts could look like. A task force will hash out not more than three possible configurations this summer that the Legislature would need to vote on as soon as next session.

New school district targets will be between 4,000-8,000 preK-12 students. The official report is due by Dec. 1, 2025, and new districts are to take effect along with the new funding formula, on July 2028.

Other key, outstanding details include how to handle existing district debt and different teachers' contracts in new, consolidated districts. Lawmakers also need to figure out how to pay for — and bring down the cost of — special education, and how money would be allocated to career and technical education and pre-Kindergarten.

The bill is structured so that if certain future requirements are not fulfilled, the transformation falls apart. The foundation formula is contingent on creating consolidated school districts. Several aspects rely on future studies and the outcomes of those analyses.

GUEST EDITORIAL

Health care failure: Half-steps aren't going to cut it

By Patrick Flood

Editor's note: Patrick Flood, of Woodbury, is former commissioner of the Vermont Dept. of Mental Health and the Department of Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living, and former deputy secretary of the Agency of Human Services.

Because of failed leadership and misguided waste of Vermonters' money, our health care system is on the verge of collapse. This did not need to happen.

Once again, Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont is requesting unaffordable rate increases. This is largely because the high cost of care has drained the carrier's reserves to the point that the organization is on the brink of bankruptcy. If BCBSVT goes bankrupt, our health care system will collapse, since its customers will be unable to obtain care and providers will be unable to receive payments.

We know why this is happening and how it could have been avoided. The people in charge of Vermont's health care system, and many public advocates who pay close attention, have known for years what the problem is: most of our health care dollars have gone to hospitals to pay for unnecessarily high administrative costs and avoidable care. (Two studies commissioned by the Green Mountain Care Board and research by the Vermont Healthcare 911 coalition have demonstrated this conclusively.)

Meanwhile, primary care, mental health, home health and other providers of care have been starved for funding. The result is that costs have soared while access to care has worsened and many physician practices have closed or are facing closure.

It is shameful that our leaders have let this train wreck develop over the past decade when we all knew what the real solution was:

- Strengthen primary care so every Vermonter has ready access to a doctor;
- Strengthen mental health services to keep people with mental health issues stable and out of emergency rooms;
- Strengthen services like home health to keep people out of the hospital and get them home sooner when they do go;
- Ensure there is a network of long-term care services, including quality nursing homes, to meet the needs of an aging population.

Had we taken those steps, Vermonters would be healthier and overall costs would have been lower, especially hospital spending resulting in lower premium increases.

Instead, over the past decade we got woefully misguided initiatives like OneCare Vermont and the "all payer model," which failed miserably to contain costs and wasted huge amounts of money. Administrative costs for OneCare alone were approximately \$100 million.

Until recently, hospitals pretty much got what they asked for in budget increases. The one bright spot recently has been the oversight of the current Green Mountain Care Board to constrain hospital budgets. Sadly, without further bold actions, the Board's efforts may turn out to be too little too late.

So, what can we do now? Half-steps are not going to cut it. The solution, as I see it, has three integrated parts.

First, GMCB needs to significantly reduce what hospitals can charge. The Board can approve different rates for each hospital so that those most responsible for the crisis,

Healthcare crisis → 12



RATT
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A Matter of Time by Ratt, PoliticalCartoons

LETTERS

No room for Grandpa in H.454 education transformation bill

Dear Editor,

I hear someone calling me, "Grandpa, where are you?" My heart starts beating faster. I hear them again, "Can you help us?"

I'm alert now; I call on my old bones to once again lift me out of my old chair; my Grandchildren need my help; I can't get to them fast enough. As I stumble into the kitchen, I am greeted by the faces of my Grandchildren, surrounded by their school books and papers. Here comes that feeling again; it can only be caused by my Grandchildren. I can't stop smiling, and yup, my eyes are watering again because I know they are my second chance in this lifetime. I'm so proud I just might explode. "GRANDPA"!!!!

Oh shoot, I'm daydreaming again. We are having trouble with history. Can you remember stuff, they ask? I drop into a chair, and together, we sift through the memories of a lifetime, three-quarters complete now, memories that I hope help them understand that "stuff" they are looking

for. I'm not alone in my local community; most of my generation here are Grandpas tempered by Grandmas. All of us hanging on to these opportunities to provide our Grandchildren with a source of affection, encouragement, and understanding as they face the challenges, and triumphs of school. Oh, by the way, Grandma says your old friend George called yesterday to remind you that the local school staff are bringing the children to our town's Homestead senior living center for a visit tomorrow.

This feeling infects our entire community, like when two of us old codgers got together at our local school to show the children how to make apple cider. Two Grandpas sharing a smile because the children were so excited, drinking the cider as fast as we made it!

Grandpas getting together to build strong and positive connections with their local schools centered around their roles in

Grandpas → 11

Take time before drastically changing our state

Dear Editor,

About H.454...

As a college student, I've pulled many all-nighters. And I find that, oftentimes, I will look at my midnight scribbles a few days later and question my very sanity.

Now, I'm worried that the Vermont Legislature is pulling all-nighter after all-nighter, and in a year when they look back, they will regret the very urgency compelling them forward.

Because I've realized that meaningful work can't be done overnight, or even in a few days. It takes time and consideration.

Last night, at 12 a.m., I was sitting in my room reading hundreds of pages of information on H.454, the education transformation bill. After a while, I realized something.

I don't know what in the world this bill is doing.

I mean, I agree with and understand some aspects, but some of it is spinning my head in circles. Further-

more, this bill is a Band-Aid that doesn't address the real cost drivers, such as health care. It's trying to fix something in a few weeks that is decades deep into

For as much as I love and dedicate my life to education, I have no idea what H.454 is about anymore.

Vermont's soil.

So after consideration, I'm asking the Legislature one thing: take your time. If you're at all — as policy-makers — confused and angry about H.454, imagine the students, teachers, parents, and community members on the ground who feel this way.

We don't all have time to read through the 100 pages or listen to testimony, or even give testimony. But maybe it's because we haven't been given the tools to understand the root causes of this system's issues.

Instead of rushing to pass
Take time → 10

CAPITOL QUOTES

Assassination in Minnesota

On Saturday, June 14, an armed assailant disguised as law enforcement went to the home of Minnesota Senator John Hoffman and shot him and his wife. The suspect proceeded to Minnesota House of Representative Speaker Emerita Melissa Hortman, where he shot and murdered her and her husband. Senator Hoffman and his wife survived the shooting. After the single largest manhunt in Minnesota history, authorities arrested Vance Boelter. Boelter was in possession of several firearms and a list of 45 elected officials, all Democrats, that he planned to assassinate.

“Such horrific violence will not be tolerated in the United States of America. God Bless the great people of Minnesota, a truly great place!”

said President **Donald Trump** in a Truth Social post.

“Horried at the events unfolding in Minnesota. Kimberley and I are praying for the loved ones of the state lawmaker and her husband who were assassinated and the state senator and his wife who were also injured in this assassination attempt,”

said Senate Majority Leader **John Thune**.

“This is what happens when Marxists don’t get their way,”

said Utah Senator **Mike Lee** on social media before the arrest of Vance Boelter, whom Lee incorrectly aligned with the political Left.

“This rhetoric from elected officials is beyond dangerous and incites even more violence. It is reprehensible, and it must be called out on both sides of the aisle,”

said Sen. **Dick Durbin** (D-Illinois) said Monday on the Senate floor, referring to remarks made by Senator Lee and others who may have jumped to conclusions about the shooting.

COMMENTARIES

The evolution of our public education system

By Nicole Mace

Editor’s note: Nicole Mace, of Winooski, is vice chair of the Commission on the Future of Public Education and vice chair of the Winooski School District board of trustees. She has previously served as the general counsel and executive director for the Vermont School Boards Association and the director of finance and operations at the Winooski School District. She currently serves as the dean of administration for the Community College of Vermont.

The past stalemate in Montpelier over the fate of H.454 belied the strong consensus on the need for Vermont’s public education system to evolve and the urgency with which we must approach that effort.

Based on my years of service in public education at the state and local level, I think the answer is all of the above.

Vermont’s education fund is projected to allocate more than \$2.3 billion this year to educate 80,000 students and fund a variety of legislative initiatives. Our outcomes are not equitable. Our school buildings are falling into disrepair. The status quo is not sustainable and the fate of our public education system hangs in the balance.

Despite near-universal agreement with the above problem statement, Vermonters are not on the same page about what to do about it. Some believe we need to add income tax revenue to the education fund to take the pressure off the property tax; others believe we should close small schools; some say we need to fix our health care system (or housing system, mental health system, etc);

many think we need to control spending and cost centers at the state level; others believe we just need fewer superintendents and central offices.

Based on my years of service in public education at the state and local level, I think the answer is all of the above. Changing the funding system alone will not lower costs for Vermont taxpayers. Neither will closing schools or creating larger districts. But a coordinated and carefully paced plan to address funding, governance, and quality in concert could make a positive difference.

Changing public school governance and finance at the same time significantly increases the complexity of the task and the risk of doing damage to our public schools. H.454 lays out a path for the state to take careful steps in the evolution of our public education system.

The bill, developed in partnership with education leaders and subject matter experts, recognizes the need for cost drivers to be addressed and paces the implementation of funding changes to align with governance change, class size minimums, school building improvements, and multi-tiered systems of supports. The House’s proposed funding formula provides sufficient resources more equitably than our current system, grounded in research and the Vermont context.

Our public education system has been evolving over the past several decades to respond to the realities of our demographic decline. The legislature has attempted to address concerns over increasing costs

In support of H.454 → 11

The town of Reading has my heart; Small schools, big questions for Vt

By Jessica Savage

Editor’s Note: Jessica Savage is the director of Programs and Strategic Initiatives at the Vermont Council on Rural Development

We almost missed the turn. Even though my GPS was telling me to take that right, it came up sooner than expected. The first thing I saw was a person standing outside a running excavator, looking at boulders and scraped earth, scratching his head in what I know to be a problem-solving stance. Was the machine stuck? Were the rocks not stacking up, right?

A little further on, we pulled into the Greenhouse in Reading. Rock walls, a long line of plants and greenhouses, and the best sight ever: a big black dog, the kind that could look scary, but you know it isn’t because he’s the Greenhouse dog. He

came right up, accepted his scratches, and accompanied us inside. From the moment we stepped foot into this small town, people were friendly, curious, and excited. We were the VCRD team here on May 16 to facilitate a community conversation about the future of Reading.

Having facilitated or participated in community events in many of Vermont’s smallest towns over the years, I have come to expect a few things: people who know where to find needful things, people who are surprised and delighted to hear how far you have come to be there and people who want to carry things for you. In Reading, I found people who were ready to do all that and more, from making the food to setting

Reading has my heart → 11

CARTOONS

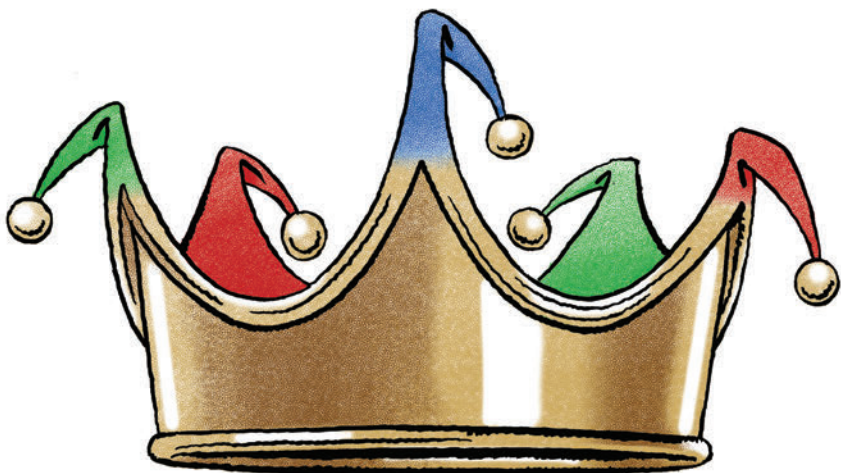
BillDay Caglecartoons.com

The King's Throne



The King's Throne by Bill Day, FloridaPolitics

NO KINGS



JUST CLOWNS

No Kings, Just Clowns by Ratt, PoliticalCartoons



Happy Birthday Mr. President by Taylor Jones, Politicalcartoons

When it is hard to know what to believe in, believe in the power of connection — and summer camp

By Sultana Khan

Editor's note: This commentary is by Sultana Khan of Randolph, executive director of YWCA Vermont and Camp Ho-

chelaga, an inclusive girls+ camp on the shores of Lake

At camp, you can learn to change the world.

Right now, so many of Vermont's small, wonderful communities are struggling to combat divisiveness, financial hardship, the impacts of climate change and so much more. During times of uncertainty, it often seems easier to turn inward than to reach out. But when it is hard to know what to believe in, believe in the power of connection. And summer camp.

Summer camp is the antidote to so many of the systemic causes that erode young people's self-esteem and sense of adventure. In my new role as the

Champlain, I am once again immersed in the joy and wonder that is camp.

Summer camps have rich, historic traditions of creating spaces where young people can experience the awe of a world where they are not constrained by the rules society creates to keep them in their place. Where they can build deep, lasting relationships with other youth who have also been seeking a place where they can be their weirdest, most authentic

Camp → 12

Take time: from page 8

a full bill without the time and care it requires, let's spend the summer and fall working in coalition with communities to understand education reform and search for the collective answers we seek.

A bill must pass, that much is true, but perhaps some of it can wait for a larger conversation. That is up to the Legislature. All I am asking is for you to consider the detrimental effects of urgency.

Only together, only with time, and only with compassion can we push education reform in Vermont. Maybe, just maybe, we should take some time to rest and reconsider before drastically changing our state.

Because for as much as I love and dedicate my life to education, I have no idea what H.454 is about anymore.

Addie Lentzner, a Middlebury College student, originally from Bennington, is engaged in education reform work in Vermont

Feeding Vermonters: from page 6

of people in Vermont, as well as the goals set forth by several plans commissioned by the legislature to create pathways to food and farm security.

"The Vermonters Feeding Vermonters program empowers the Vermont Foodbank in partnership with the Department of Agriculture and Markets to contract with Vermont farm producers to make their products available to people who otherwise would have limited or no access to these products. Vermonters Feeding Vermonters aligns with long term goals for farm and food stability in Vermont including the Vermont Food Security Roadmap to 2035, and also the Vermont Agriculture & Food System Strategic Plan to 2030," offered Representative Bos-Lun.

In advocating for this bill with the Senate Agriculture Committee, Ryan Fitzbeauchamp of Evening Song Farm in Rutland County offered, "The Vermonters Feeding Vermonters program is an incredible asset for our farm: a good percentage of our farm's wholesale outlets go towards small organizations that purchase our produce through this program: senior centers, food shelves, BROCC, Rutland County Parent Child Center, the Salvation Army. It's allowed us to grow more crops we're good at, and it is an excellent outlet for any unforeseen overproduction on our farm: this program really tightens up the economic viability of our farm's operation. When we deliver to these sites, the staff and recipients are always so grateful to be getting beautiful Vermont grown produce. We've seen firsthand how this program strengthens the viability of local farms and knits together our communities."

Vermont Foodbank distributes food to all 14 counties in Vermont through a network of 300 community partners. They serve an average of 70,000 people across Vermont each month. In 2024, Vermont Foodbank distributed 14.5 million pounds of food statewide.

About Vermont Foodbank: Vermont Foodbank is the state's largest hunger-relief organization and Vermont's only food bank. They provide nourishing food to neighbors across Vermont through a network of more than 300 community partners, including food shelves, meal sites, schools, hospitals, and housing sites. Food and financial insecurity have increased in recent years. Vermont Foodbank and its network work to ensure everyone in Vermont has the food they need to thrive. Each year, Vermont Foodbank provides 12-15 million pounds of food to people throughout the state. As a member of Feeding America, Vermont Foodbank is nationally recognized as one of the most effective and efficient nonprofits and food banks in the nation.

For more information, visit: vtfoodbank.org.

In support of H.454:

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and inequitable outcomes using a variety of different policy levers — Acts 60, 68, 153, 156, 46, 173 and 127. We have a lot of lessons to learn from the implementation of those policies.

One lesson is that Vermonters care deeply about their public schools. Students and families have strong connections to the community that is built around their school. If communities feel that decisions about funding, curriculum, and programs are being made without regard for their priorities, assets and needs, support for our public schools will erode. It is important that through the process of reform, communities feel they have a voice and a stake in a reimagined public education system.

Another lesson is that policy interventions that tackle

one component of our system in isolation and without strong leadership and support from the Agency of Education will falter.

Despite the policy goal in Act 46 of leveraging larger districts to achieve efficiencies and improve quality, there was inadequate technical assistance provided by the Agency to school districts post-merger on how to do so.

The same is true for Act 173. The special education funding model changed, but resources to change instructional practices have been insufficient; some of the rules promulgated by the State Board seem at odds with the act's purpose. A lack of cohesion and support from the state means

H.454 recognized the complexity of the task ahead.

But clarity should not come at the expense of thoughtful, research-based policy that gives elected officials and the educators of this state time to involve the public in the design of these changes, and the on-the-ground support required to get it right.

H.454 recognized the complexity of the task ahead and responsibly moves us toward a more equitable and sustainable public education system.

critical policy objectives are not achieved.

Vermont could not afford to have this legislative session end without clarity on how our public school funding, governance and quality assurance systems will evolve.

Grandpas:

from page 8

supporting their Grandchildren, and their communities. Who would have known that sharing lifetime experiences and knowledge, that sparks curiosity would be so much fun.

The results are obvious: when an event takes place at the school, I have to get there early because I won't find a parking place. Grandpas and Grandmas understand the importance of quality education and are motivated to support their local schools as a vital community institution.

Grandpas' fondness for local schools stems from their desire to support their grandchildren's development, contribute to their well-being in their community, and build meaningful connections across generations. I don't have the words to adequately describe a Grandpa's pain should this connection be broken. Vermont H.454 is expected to change how schools are funded and managed, impacting how grandparents can support their local schools. The bill will reduce

community engagement and the connection to local schools. This would mean fewer opportunities for grandparents to participate in school activities, volunteer, and advocate for their local schools, brushing away us old Grandpas as nothing more than an unintended consequence. Forgiveness won't come easy this time.

Jay Denault-Franklin; Paul Normandeau-Dummerston; Bruce Maclean-Peacham; David Schoales-Brattleboro

Reading has my heart:

from page 9

up the chairs to signing people in: they had thought of everything it takes to host their neighbors in a fun and inviting atmosphere.

As the evening progressed and more people arrived, our co-hosts from the Reading Community Trust and the Future is Reading were obviously pleased.

Children were running in and out, grabbing cup after cup of lemonade (one boy filled his cup no less than five times in my observation, each time carefully sipping the overflowing liquid on his way to join his friends in the free childcare provided in the library: I worried about the effects on his bedtime routine!). A band of storms came through, and the huge and sudden puddles became an instant splash pad in the school parking lot, squeals and splashes of water the backdrop for our conversation.

The adults and some of the older youth warmed up to a visioning session and asked to imagine Reading in 10, 20, or 50 years: what would it feel like to walk down Main Street? What values as a community would they share?

Almost immediately, people began discussing the school, the heart of their community. Their vision for the future centered on and included the school and a town where families could live affordably and well. As we moved in to dinner, parents and grandparents shared stories about the school, the wonderful arts teacher, and how people looked out for each other. Kids were under the watchful eye of adults, parents or not, and free to roam in ways I remember from my youth in the early eighties.

We moved into forum discussions on three topics: Keeping Youth and Families Engaged, Buildings and Infrastructure, and Economic Vitality. In each forum, residents identified assets, challenges, and opportunities for action. Some emerging themes, including youth engagement, community gathering spaces, childcare, and revitalizing local businesses, came up in each breakout session. As a facilitator, I was struck in the Economic Vitality session when one participant said, "How can we have economic vitality without the school?" Participants shared that being under a dark cloud of possible school closure is overwhelming their ability to imagine a vibrant future.

I left Reading in love: I am pining for this

place, not because it's any more or less special than other places, but because it left me wanting more. Yearning to have certainty that this town where families young and old support each other, where they can be free to dream up a Main Street with more than one business on it, where Trooper the Greenhouse dog can greet kids walking home from their local elementary school, that this place goes on and on.

Reading and so many other places wrestle with how to stay alive while their schools are in tenuous situations. Small towns and villages are asking how they can have affordable homes, enough children to fill their schools, and the right amount of community vitality to make it all possible. We have seen this in Windham, Roxbury, Gilman, and so many other places. At the Village Meet Up in Reading last week, a conference where people from small towns around Vermont gather to learn about what it takes to sustain their vitality, every single hand went up when I asked, "Is the conversation about school closures and the policy discussion around education transformation relevant to you?"

Back at the event in May, as I carried boxes to my car at the end of the night, kids were pouring into the parking lot on bikes, in rain boots, and barefoot—a murmur of chaos and delight. And just like that, they were gone, swooped up into the evening by adults calling them home.

Weeks later, and I'm still thinking of Reading. I am so glad they have local groups like the Reading Community Trust and The Future is Reading which are going to work together with the community to bring many of the ideas we heard about to action. VCRD, the Preservation Trust of Vermont, and the Vermont Community Foundation, through our Village Trust Initiative, stand ready to support them in what comes next.

I am lucky that my work allows me to see what becomes possible when we center youth and community voices, identify collaborative local leadership, and couple that with external partners and resources for all of our small towns. Can we collectively bet on our smallest towns as we debate and change our educational funding system? VCRD already is, and I implore our state leaders to do the same.

H.454, locals balk:

from page 1

chair, sent out several written explanations of ways in which H.454 would result in higher costs, higher taxes and steep cuts to educational programming resulting in lowering the quality education provided for local students.

Windsor Southeast Supervisory Union's superintendent Christine Bourne, Ascutney School Board member Bill Yates, and Nicki Buck, Hartland School Board chair, distributed a May 19 email condemnation of the Senate's bill.

Points in their presentation echoed those sent out by Sousa and Bristow:

Administration would be centralized in Montpelier — local control would be non-existent, including district residents' ability to vote on their own budgets.

Funding would be significantly reduced, forcing "deep staffing cuts" and fewer educational programs.

The bill ignores the major causes of budget increases — soaring healthcare costs, increased need for attention to student mental health, and perpetuates unfunded mandates that contributed to last year's devastating education property tax increases.

Education spending is pegged at 2025 levels, with a fixed inflation index that doesn't reflect annual double-digit healthcare premium increases [negotiated by the state].

The bill ignores Vermont's dire housing shortage that negatively affects likelihood that student numbers will rise sufficiently to

reduce per-student spending.

The Senate's "foundation formula," which educators find "fragmented and incoherent," is predicted to reduce many districts' share in the state's distribution of funds — Hartland, for example, may lose over \$2 million; MVSU may lose more than \$6 million.

If a district uses a bond to finance school construction, the bill will include bond payments in the district's per-student spending limit. Many see the transformation as a death knell for small schools.

Legislators and some educators feel education reform is being "rushed under pressure" from the governor, who is adamant that education reform is passed this session.

"I'll call [the legislators] back — and we'll keep calling them back — until we get something accomplished. We can't go home without this transformation," Gov. Scott said.

The campaign against H.454 initiated by educators and parents has also put a powerful squeeze on legislators.

Bryce Sammel, formerly on the MVSU board from Barnard, has submitted ideas for education reform to multiple listservs within the district. He opined that school closings would inspire residents to leave a small town for a better education opportunity elsewhere, resulting in part-time residents' purchasing local homes (often for inflated prices) which makes neighboring homes' market value rise along with their tax bills.

← **Healthcare crisis:**
from page 8

primarily UVMMC, can be assigned the greatest reductions.

Such reductions can stabilize BCBSVT while broader reforms are put in place. UVMHN has huge reserves that will allow it to weather such a change for a year or two. A crisis like this current one is why reserves exist; now is the time to use them.

Second, lower the rates the Medicaid program pays to UVMMC and use the savings to raise the rates Medicaid pays to primary care, mental health, home health and nursing homes. This is possible because the state of Vermont sets the rates in our Medicaid program. Raising rates for community providers would allow those providers to immediately begin to hire more staff and provide more prevention services, thus keeping people out of hospitals and reducing hospital spending.

A study commissioned by the GMCB showed that up to 30% of hospital spending is “avoidable,” meaning it could have been prevented if alternative services were in place. Even 10% of our total hospital spending would amount to over \$300 million, enough to fully cover the costs of what needs to be done for primary care and other key services.

Third, begin working immediately on a comprehensive statewide health plan to determine what services we need in each



part of the state to have the most efficient and effective health care system. This plan should be in our hands no later than Jan. 1, 2026.

Yes, this means our hospitals will have to make major changes. But it is far better for Vermonters to take a clear-eyed, data driven, thoughtful, systemic approach to planning than to have each hospital making decisions in their own financial interest.

Rest assured that there is more than enough money in our health care system to provide basic health care services to every Vermonter at an affordable cost. But we are wasting it in avoidable ways in hospitals, primarily at UVMMC. This can be changed quickly to save our system.

Or we can wait and let the bankruptcies start and watch more and more Vermonters drop their insurance coverage because they can no longer afford it.

← **Camp:**
from page 10

selves. Where they can see models of kindness, acceptance and generosity.

Camp can be a place where you are able to more clearly see your part in our natural world. As humans have created technologies that make our lives more comfortable (and with climate change, more liveable), we have distanced ourselves from the impact of those technologies. By controlling the climates within our homes, we have made the outdoors a place to be tolerated rather than understanding that the outdoors is our home.

Camp Hochelaga is a rustic camp — campers and counselors sleep in cabins that don’t have electricity. With the windows open, you can hear the scurrying and chittering of the creatures that share our spectacular environment on the shores of Lake Champlain. You can observe deer, foxes, snakes, eagles, fish, chipmunks and so many other inhabitants who share our

earth. Sometimes, significantly less pleasantly, you can also smell skunks.

Understanding humanity’s power and responsibility to care for the world we think of as solely our own is essential to supporting the next generation in fighting against the destruction of our planet through relentless consumption.

More importantly, camp is a place of connection. At a time when Americans feel increasingly isolated and lonely, camp offers a place for girls to bond over experiences and values that social media seeks to undermine through conformity and a sustained focus on materialism. Camp offers an alternative proposal to finding happiness in owning things that impress others. Camp offers a way of living that prioritizes community over consumption.

At camp, you can wear your beloved ratty shirt without teasing. You can

produce weird plays that make everyone laugh (or cry!), or sing off-key to songs that have been sung for

Camp offers a way of living that prioritizes community over consumption.

more than 100 years.

You can cry about the world and find a loving shoulder of someone who has been exactly where you are, trying to find brightness amid the challenges of life. You can jump off a dock for the first time, holding the hand of a friend who has done it before, encouraged by the cheers of your cabinmates.

At camp, you can learn what it means to be yourself while being a part of a greater whole. At camp, you can live a full, joyful life, supported by adults who know how valuable it is to be told you can do anything with a little hard work and a supportive community.

At camp, you can learn to change the world.

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Water heating is a home’s second-highest energy expense. The good news: you can reduce energy costs by about 50% when you swap out old equipment for a qualifying electric heat pump water heater.

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Act soon – this funding is available for a limited time only!

*Incentives are subject to availability and eligibility.



Learn More

WORDPLAY

SPARKLING WORD SEARCH

Find the words hidden vertically, horizontally, diagonally and backwards

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

AERIAL	BROCADE	COMET	EFFECTS	FOUNTAIN	NOVELTY
ASSORTMENT	BURST	CONE	FINALE	FUSE	PYROTECHNIC
BARRAGE	CAKE	CRACKLE	FIRECRACKERS	GLITTER	SHELL
BRICK	CANDLE	DUD	FIREWORKS	MORTAR	SPARKLERS

CROSSWORD PUZZLE

Solutions → 30

CLUES ACROSS

1. Type of bread

5. Range of mountains

10. Ended

12. Musical forms with a recurring theme

14. On the nature of being

16. Law enforcement agency

18. Australian flightless bird

19. Subway rodent

20. More dried-up

22. A beaver might build one

23. Suggestive of the supernatural

25. Art __, around 1920

26. American rocker Snider

27. Not or

28. Earliest human: __-Magnon Man

30. Firearm

31. Tough outer skin of fruit

33. Alternative form of a gene

35. Low shrub some call "fat pork"

37. Plants in the chamomile tribe

38. Revolutionary War era spy

40. Portion of a book

41. Hoover's office

42. Title of respect

44. Tax collector

45. Cool!

48. Real estate

50. Boy's name

52. Airborne (abbr.)

53. Strongly recommends

55. Hit lightly

56. Bar bill

57. Atomic #54

58. Devotes again

63. Fish sauce

65. French stock market

66. Things that consist of two elements or parts

67. Tense

CLUES DOWN

1. Retired game show host Sajak

2. Equal (prefix)

3. Israeli city __ Aviv

4. Loved

5. A type of analyst

6. Ad __

7. Gasteyer and de Armas are two moving

9. Opposite of yes

10. Diffuse clouds of gas

11. Mentioning one by one

13. Instruments used to dilate

15. Freshwater fish

17. Remote-

ly-manned flying objects

18. Doctor of Education

21. Renews

23. Not the start

24. Pitching stat

27. Small water buffaloes

29. Ceramic jars

32. I (German)

34. Something to toss on a fire

35. The process of flowing in

36. A series of night club acts

39. Egg of a louse

40. Inquire too closely

43. Travelers

44. Drink

46. Behave in a way that degrades

47. Electronic music style

49. Northern Ireland city

51. Upset

54. Stiff structure resembling a hair

59. Father

60. North Atlantic fish

61. 8th month (abbr.)

62. Make an effort

64. Commercial

SUDOKU

Solutions → 30

How to Play

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

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

Level: Intermediate

GUESS WHO ?

I am a musician born in England on June 18, 1942. I met one of my future bandmates on the school bus and then joined another friend's band. I would go on to be part of one of the most successful musical groups of all time, until its dissolution in 1970. Afterwards I had a successful solo career.

Answer: Paul McCartney

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WED
6/18**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.

NSAA Downhill Bike Park Summit

9 a.m.-3 p.m. Killington Grand Resort & Conference Center, 228 E. Mountain Road, Killington. \$250-\$475. Final Day of annual summit hosted by the National Ski Areas Association offering workshops, discussions, and networking on downhill mountain biking operations, safety, trail design, and technology. Registration includes sessions, meals, and materials. nsaa.org.

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.

'Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus: The Musical!'

4-5 p.m., Weston Village Green, Main St., Weston. Free. A high-energy, family-friendly musical based on Mo Willems' beloved book. Join the Weston Young Company for this laugh-filled outdoor show featuring catchy songs and Pigeon's over-the-top antics. Bring chairs or a blanket. Reservations required. westontheater.org/pigeon.

Figure Drawing with Live Model

5-7 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. \$20. Monthly figure drawing session with live model. Bring your own supplies. Sign up for one class or four-week session (\$60). Minimum of four students required. chaffeeartcenter.org.

Book Group: Silent Reading Session

5:30-6:30 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. Free. This month's book group features a silent reading session—bring your own book, sip tea, enjoy sweet treats, and unwind. RSVP required by noon on June 17. Book group members receive 20% off at Phoenix Books. 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.

Creative (Scrap) Book Art – Adult

6-8 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. \$30. Create a unique and expressive journal or book using mixed media with instructor Michele Robie. All supplies included. Minimum 5 participants. Must pre-register. chaffeeartcenter.org.

Artistree Summer Concert Series—Sam Lewis

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. artistreetv.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.

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
6/19**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.

'Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus: The Musical!'

11 a.m. & 4 p.m. Weston Village Green, Main St., Weston. Free. A high-energy, family-friendly musical based on Mo Willems' beloved book. Join the Weston Young Company for this laugh-filled outdoor show featuring catchy songs and Pigeon's over-the-top antics. Bring chairs or a blanket. Reservations required. westontheater.org/pigeon.

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 riding season with group rides, on-site membership signups, and a raffle featuring 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.

Farmhouse Groundbreaking

5-7 p.m. Pittsford Village Farm, 42 Elm St., Pittsford. Free. Celebrate the start of the Farmhouse restoration with refreshments, a special wine tasting by Shelburne Vineyards and tours of the building; everyone is welcome. pittsfordvillagefarm.org.

Michelob ULTRA Golf League

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

Windsor Community Dinner in Memory of Jill Lord

5:30-6:30 p.m., 44 Main St., Windsor. Free. The June 19th Community Dinner, hosted by the MAHHC Rehabilitation Unit, honors the late Jill Lord and her legacy of community care and service. A passionate supporter of the Windsor Community Dinner and the Windsor Food Shelf, Jill's birthday will be remembered with this in-person gathering. Food donations for the Windsor Food Shelf are being collected at 10 local sites through June 19. All are welcome.

Feast & Field Family Night: Cate Great & Cold Chocolate

6-8:30 p.m. Fable Farm, 22 Orchard Hill Road, Barnard. Free. Enjoy a night of family entertainment with award-winning circus artist Cate Great and Boston-based band Cold Chocolate blending folk, funk, and bluegrass. barnarts.org.

Pour Painting – Adult

6-8 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. \$40. Learn the pour painting technique with instructor Lorrie Amerio Manieri and leave with a finished painting. All supplies included. Minimum 5, maximum 12 participants. Must pre-register. chaffeeartcenter.org.

FRI
6/20**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.

What Are These Weird Mud Layers?

11 a.m. Fletcher Memorial Library, 88 Main St., Ludlow. Free. Holly Sullivan presents her research on flood sedimentation from Amherst Lake in Plymouth, analyzing layers from 2023, 2011, and 1973. Learn how mud tells the story of flooding. Remote access available via Zoom Room 857 345 004. fmlnews.org.

Bone Builders

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



**FREE BIKE DEMO
DAY AT ASCUTNEY
OUTDOORS**

SATURDAY @ 9 A.M.

Calendar:

from page 14



BBQ & BREW FEST

SATURDAY @ NOON

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.

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.

Using the Alchemy of Natural Materials to Create Emotion through Art

5-7:30 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. Free. Local artist Jason Bemis will give a free talk and lead an interactive session on the transformation of organic materials into expressive art. Includes light refreshments and access to the Chaffee's "THREADS... featuring Fiber & Fabric" exhibit and Vermont Sampler showcase. Donations appreciated. chaffeeartcenter.org.

Expressive Fibers Exhibit Opening

5:30 p.m. Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. Free. Celebrate the opening of 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. Exhibit runs through July 19. artistreevt.org.

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.

Porcupine Bikes Group Mountain Bike Ride – Pizza Ride

6-8 p.m. The Trail House, 131 Town Farm Road, 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.

Play Every Town: 252 Community Concerts for a Cooler Climate

7 p.m. Stone Valley Arts, 145 E. Main St., Poultney. Free. Pianist David Feurzeig's 83rd concert in his 252-town climate-conscious series features violinists Heather Munch and Lana Weltman, and saxophonist Maximus DiDomenico. The genre-spanning performance celebrates Poultney's history with works from Beethoven, Haydn, Liszt, and more. Donations benefit the Poultney United Fund. playeverytown.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.

Shawn Colvin & Rodney Crowell Together On Stage

7:30 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$49-\$59. Grammy winners Shawn Colvin and Rodney Crowell unite for a unique evening of Americana and storytelling through song. paramountvt.org.

The Magic of A Cappella Harmony

7:30-9:30 p.m. Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green, Woodstock. \$10-\$25. Presented by the Barbershop Harmony Society (BHS Hanover), this a cappella concert features the North Country Chordsmen, Vox Stars, the VTones Octet, and other local quartets performing pop and barbershop harmonies. pentanglearts.org.

'Elio' & 'The Amateur' 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 "The Amateur" (PG-13). betheldrivein.com.

SAT

6/21

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.

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.

Paper Shredding and Computer Recycling Event

9 a.m.-Noon Mascoma Bank Operations Center, Sykes Mountain Ave., White River Junction. Free. Dispose of up to three boxes of paper and recycle up to five desktops or laptops and five hard drives. No other electronics accepted. Donations welcome for the Haven and HIV Resource Center. mascoma.bank/mascoma-experiences/community-shred-day.

Free Bike Demo Day at Ascutney Outdoors

9 a.m.-3 p.m. Ascutney Outdoors Center, Brownsville. Free. The Boot Pro teams up with Specialized for its second annual bike demo day featuring free test rides of full suspension e-bikes and mountain bikes. Guided group rides leave every 30-45 minutes. All skill levels welcome; registration on-site with credit card deposit required. thebootpro.net/blogs/shop-talk/free-bike-demo-day-at-ascutney-outdoors.

Mount Tom Farmers Market

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

Vermont Farmers Market

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

Make Music Day – Randolph

10 a.m.-11 p.m. Various locations in Randolph. Free. Celebrate Make Music Day with over 12 hours of live performances, family-friendly activities, a kazoo parade, and a headliner performance by the Villalobos Brothers at Chandler Music Hall followed by a DJ dance party. Donations accepted to support youth music programming. Reservations encouraged for the evening concert. chandler-arts.org.

Birds & Blooms Fundraiser

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Proctorsville Green, 1 Depot St., Proctorsville. Free. Support Cavendish Streetscapes at this annual fundraiser featuring a silent auction, garden accents, BBQ, kids' art activities, and a chance to win \$100 cash plus lottery tickets.

Pop Up: Aura Photography with Aura Insights

10 a.m.-2 p.m. Putnam's vine/yard, 188 South Main St., Hartford. \$55. Discover the colors of your energy field with a private aura photography session in the Secret Garden. Includes image and summary report; cash payment due on-site. putnamsvineyard.com.

Antique Appraisals, Arts & Crafts Fair

10 a.m.-3 p.m. S.L. Griffith Library, 74 S. Main St., Danby. Free. Bring antiques for appraisal, browse local arts and crafts vendors, enjoy live music, and explore the Mt. Tabor-Danby Historical Society's collection during this community festival.

Forest Fairy Hunts

10 a.m.-3 p.m. Vermont Institute of Natural Science (VINS), 149 Natures Way, Quechee. Included with admission. Join a whimsical scavenger hunt through the woods to find hidden fairy friends, then build your own fairy house using natural materials. Wings encouraged; ideal for ages 4+. vinsweb.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/.

Rutland County Pride Festival

11 a.m.-5 p.m. Center St. & Merchant's Row, Rutland. Free. The Third Annual Rutland County Pride Festival celebrates the theme "Diversity is Resilience" with live music and performances, drag, dance, spoken word, guest speakers, hands-on activities, vendor booths, food trucks, and a Juneteenth Strut co-hosted by the NAACP at 11 a.m. from the Rutland Free Library. ASL interpretation provided at main stage events. rutlandcountypride.org.

Make Music Day with 12 Hours of Live Performances

11 a.m.-11 p.m., various venues around Randolph. Free. Randolph marks the Summer Solstice with a day-long celebration of music as part of the global Make Music Day event. Live performances will take place at restaurants, shops, and public spaces, including family-friendly activities at the Trillium lot and a headline performance by the Villalobos Brothers at Chandler Center for the Arts. A live DJ dance party will follow. chandler-arts.org.

BBQ & Brew Fest

Noon - 6 p.m. Vermont State Fairgrounds, 175 S Main St., Rutland. \$5-\$60. Official qualifier for the Jack Daniels Invitational BBQ World Championships. bbqandbrewvt.com.

Pittsfield Ice Cream Social

Noon-2 p.m. Pittsfield Village Green, Pittsfield. Free. Enjoy free ice cream treats while the town honors Ray Colton for 50 years of service and recognizes the contributions of local volunteers. 802-746-8170.

Mandala Painting – All Ages

12:30-2 p.m. Chaffee Art Center, 16 S. Main St., Rutland. \$25. Family-friendly mandala dot art class with tea and sweet treats included. All supplies provided. Children under 6 must be accompanied by an adult. Must pre-register. chaffeeartcenter.org.

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

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

Converge: Three Voices, One Space

2-4 p.m. Stone Valley Arts, 145 E. Main St., Poultney. Free. Opening reception for a group exhibition featuring painters Derek Huntington, Donna Ciobanu, and Tom Merwin, each at different stages in their artistic journeys. 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.

Hollywood Nights: The Bob Seger Experience

7 p.m. Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$29-\$39. Tribute to Bob Seger and the Silver Bullet Band featuring a 9-piece New Jersey-based ensemble. paramountvt.org.

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

Juan Nieves & Orquesta Legado Concert + Salsa Lesson

5:45-8:30 p.m. Artistree, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret. \$30. Kick off the evening with a free salsa dance lesson at 5:45 p.m., followed by a 7 p.m. concert featuring Latin-American salsa classics and original compositions by Juan Nieves & Orquesta Legado. Space for the dance lesson is limited; reservation encouraged. artistreevt.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.

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.

Cavendish Village Ghost Walk

8 p.m. Cavendish Historical Society Museum, Main St., Cavendish. Free. In celebration of the summer solstice, join the annual ghost walk to meet the spirits of Cavendish with stops at the Stone Church and Cavendish Cemetery. Bring a flashlight and wear comfortable shoes. Rain or shine; rescheduled only for lightning or flooding (updates at facebook.com/cavendishvt). 802-226-7807 or margocaulfield@icloud.com.

‘Elio’ & ‘The Amateur’ 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 “The Amateur” (PG-13). betheldrivein.com.

SUN
6/22

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.

Swedish Midsommar and Kitten Shower at St. Paul Lutheran Church

9 a.m. St. Paul Lutheran Church, 1 Gibbs St., Proctor. Free. Celebrate the start of summer with a Swedish Midsommar service and festivities including maypole dancing and traditional refreshments. The event also includes the church’s annual kitten shower to benefit Rutland County Humane Society—donations of kitten food welcome. randalldew@comcast.net.

Movement Improvisation Lab

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

Dairy Celebration

10 a.m.-5 p.m. Billings Farm & Museum, 69 Old River Road, Woodstock. Included with general admission. Celebrate Dairy Month with cheese tastings from Vermont creameries, butter and ice cream making, wagon rides, pasture walks, dairy history tours, and live music by Ali T (11 a.m.-1 p.m.). Cocktails by Vermont Mobile Spirits and food from Sustainable Eats available for purchase. billingsfarm.org.

BBQ & Brew Fest

Noon - 6 p.m. Vermont State Fairgrounds, 175 S Main St., Rutland. \$5-\$60. Official qualifier for the Jack Daniels Invitational BBQ World Championships. bbqandbrewvt.com.

‘Don’t Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus: The Musical!’

1 p.m. Ascutney Outdoors, 449 Ski Tow Road, Brownsville. Free. A high-energy, family-friendly musical based on Mo Willems’ beloved book. Join the Weston Young Company for this laugh-filled outdoor show featuring catchy songs and Pigeon’s over-the-top antics. Bring chairs or a blanket. Reservations required. westontheater.org/pigeon.

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

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

Carol Scott Retirement Open House

2-4 p.m. Fair Haven Free Library, 107 No. Main St., Fair Haven. Free. Celebrate retiring librarian Carol Scott and her 28 years of service at an open house hosted by the library’s Trustees and Friends. Guests are encouraged to bring a memory to share. fairhavenlibraryvt.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.

‘Elio’ & ‘The Amateur’ 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 “The Amateur” (PG-13). betheldrivein.com.

MON
6/23

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.

Catching People’s Stories

7-8 p.m. North Chittenden Grange Hall, 3 Middle Road, Pittsford. Free. Jane Beck, founder of the Vermont Folklife Center, reflects on her decades of recording oral histories in Vermont. The talk explores why people tell stories, what they reveal about values and identity, and how they’ve been used in exhibits and publications. Presented by Vermont Humanities. vermonthumanities.org.

Classicopia House Concert

7-9 p.m. Home of Andrew Bauman, 221 Newton Lane, White River Junction. \$40. Enjoy an intimate house concert in an acoustically rich setting with food, drinks, and music. Hosted by Dr. Andrew Bauman. Seating is limited and registration is required. classicopia.org or 802-369-0856.

TUES
6/24

Met Opera: ‘Il Barbiere di Siviglia’ (Encore)

1-4:10 p.m., Paramount Theatre, 30 Center St., Rutland. \$20. Enjoy a screening of Rossini’s comic opera as part of the Met’s Live in HD Encore Series. Featuring Aigul Akhmetshina as Rosina and Jack Swanson as Count Almaviva. paramountvt.org.

Handcraft Gathering

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

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 – Panhandlers

6-8 p.m. Pittsford Village Farm, 42 Elm St., Pittsford. Free. Steel drum band plays a mix of calypso, reggae, and samba. Bring a blanket or lawn chair. Concerts are outdoors and weather dependent. Donations appreciated. pittsfordvillagefarm.org.

LIVE From Playa del Carmen: Festival Paax GNP 2025

7-9 p.m. Town Hall Theatre, 31 The Green, Woodstock. Suggested donation: \$15 adults, \$10 seniors/members, Free for students. Part of Pentangle’s “Live From...” series, this HD broadcast features conductor Alondra de la Parra leading works by Bach, Enhco, and Stravinsky, streamed live from Festival Paax GNP in Playa del Carmen. pentanglearts.org.

Gather Together with Social Tinkering

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

ONGOING

‘Almost Heaven: John Denver’s America’

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

Quechee Hot Air Balloon Craft & Music Festival

June 20-22, Quechee Green Park, Quechee. \$25-\$350. Watch hot air balloons launch over the Upper Valley and explore artisan booths, live music, food vendors, and family-friendly activities. Weekend passes included with admission; balloon rides available with premium ticket packages. quecheeballoonfestival.com.

‘The Sound of Music’ at King Farm

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

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.

‘Threads...’ Fiber & Fabrics Exhibit

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

UPCOMING

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.

Cirque Series Trail Run

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



[MUSIC Scene]

By DJ Dave Hoffenberg
Have a music scene coming up? Email djdavehoff@gmail.com

WED
6/18

LUDLOW

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

POULTNEY

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

QUEECHEE

5 p.m. Quechee Club – Nick Bredice

RUTLAND

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

SOUTH POMFRET

6:30 p.m. Artistree – Sam Lewis on the Hillside

THUR
6/19

BARNARD

5:30 p.m. Fable Farm – Feast & Field: Cate Great/Cold Chocolate

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 – Sammy B

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

5 p.m. Clear River Tavern – Nick Bredice

POULTNEY

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

QUEECHEE

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

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

RUTLAND

6 p.m. Speakeasy Cafe – Trivia Night

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

SOUTH POMFRET

7 p.m. Artistree – Open Mic Night

WOODSTOCK

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

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Alec Currier

FRI
6/20

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Aaron Audet

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 Bredice

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

6 p.m. The Foundry – Rhys Chalmers

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

PITTSFORD

8 p.m. Hilltop Tavern – Glow Party with Sunset Entertainment

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Jamie Snook

QUEECHEE

5:30 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music with The Preacher and The Teacher

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Kind Bud

6 p.m. Quechee Balloon Fest – Jim Yeager's Magic Box Band

ROCHESTER

3 p.m. Farmers Market – Liz Reedy

RUTLAND

6 p.m. Stonehedge Indoor Golf – Duane Carleton

STOCKBRIDGE

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

WOODSTOCK

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

7:30 p.m. Town Hall Theatre – The Magic of A Cappella Harmony

SAT
6/21

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Lou McNally

BRIDGEWATER

8 p.m. Woolen Mills Comedy Club – Comedy Show with headliner Brian Muenzer

KILLINGTON

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

6 p.m. The Foundry – Liz Reedy

6:30 p.m. Still on the Mountain – Sammy B

POULTNEY

6 p.m. Poultney Pub – Bird Mountain String Band

QUEECHEE

10:30 a.m. Quechee Balloon Fest – Sammy B

1 p.m. Quechee Balloon Fest – Seth Yacavone Duo

3:30 p.m. Quechee Balloon Fest – Theta Waves

5 p.m. Quechee Cub – Nick Bredice

5:30 p.m. Public House Pub – Brooks Hubbard

6 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music With Sleeveless Tease

6:30 p.m. Quechee Balloon Fest – Lakou Mizik

RANDOLPH

9 a.m. Town of Randolph – Make Music Randolph

7:30 p.m. Chandler Music Hall – Villalobos Brothers

SOUTH POMFRET

7 p.m. Artistree – Juan Nieves & Orquesta Legado (Outside, Rain or Shine)

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 – Livingston Leo

SUN
6/22

BOMOSEEN

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

BRIDGEWATER

CORNERS

3 p.m. Long Trail Brewery – Breanna Elaine

KILLINGTON

6 p.m. Liquid Art – Tboneicus Jones

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

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

QUEECHEE

11 a.m. Quechee Balloon Fest – Rhys Chalmers

2 p.m. Harry's Cocktail Lounge – Live Music with Side Effects

RUTLAND

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

9 p.m. CJ Suds South – Karaoke with Sunset Entertainment

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
6/23

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Sammy B

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 (Debut Show)

LUDLOW

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

RUTLAND

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

STOCKBRIDGE

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

WOODSTOCK

6:30 p.m. Ottauquechee Yacht Club – Bluegrass Etc. Jam with Ben Kogan

TUES
6/24

BOMOSEEN

6 p.m. Lake Bomoseen Lodge & Taproom – Nancy Johnson

PITTSFIELD

7 p.m. Town Hall – Open Jam

PITTSFORD

6 p.m. Pittsford Village Farm – Tunesday Concert with the Panhandlers

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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SATURDAY, JUNE 21 | 7:00 PM



THURSDAY, JULY 24 | 7:30 PM



FRIDAY, JULY 25 | 7:30PM



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Iris DeMent.....Sunday, August 24
Justin Willman.....Thursday, October 16
Story of a Song: A 90's Unplugged Experience..... Friday, November 7

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Foreplay Golf Company rebrands flagship event as the Green Mountain Classic moves to Rutland Country Club

RUTLAND—The Killington Classic, a popular and fast-growing golf event organized by Foreplay Golf Company, will get a new name and a prestigious new home in 2025. Rebranded as the Green Mountain Classic, the tournament will take place on Friday, Oct. 17, at Rutland Country Club, one of Vermont's top-ranked golf courses.

Foreplay Golf co-founders and Castleton State College alumni Ben Killary and Matt Murphy say the rebrand and venue shift reflects their goal of elevating the player experience while staying true to their roots.

"Hosting an event at Rutland Country Club is a dream come true," said Killary, a Rutland native and RCC member. "This course was my introduction to golf, and it holds a special place in my heart. We're going all out to make this the best event we've ever produced."

Rutland Country Club, designed by Wayne Stiles and John Van Kleek, is known for its fast greens and panoramic views, particularly during Vermont's peak foliage season. Ranked #3 in the state by Golf Digest, the course brings additional prestige to the already well-loved event, which combines competitive golf with a festival-like atmosphere.

The Green Mountain Classic will retain the spirit of the Killington Classic—laid-back, fun, and social—while introducing a few new elements. The 2025 event will include scramble formats of 27, 18, or 9 holes, live music, sponsor activations, giveaways, high-end swag, and a lively post-round celebration.

Foreplay Golf's events are more than just tournaments—they're also designed to support small businesses. Co-owner Murphy explained how their media partnership helps deliver value beyond the course.

"Our sponsor team packages aren't your typical charity outing exposure," Murphy said. "With help from our professional media partners at LMTLSS, we provide curated content that helps small businesses walk away with promotional tools they wouldn't otherwise have access to."

Murphy and Killary met while studying sports administration at Castleton, later becoming the first employees of Spartan Race. That early experience, they say, gave them the tools to build and scale top-tier events.

"Spartan taught us what world-class event production looks like—and how to execute it," Murphy added. "We're bringing that energy to Vermont golf and, eventually, the world."

With limited spots and a strong following, the event is expected to sell out. Foreplay Golf encourages early registration to guarantee a place in what promises to be one of Vermont's most exciting golf events of the year.

To register, visit: foreplaygolfcompany.com/killington-classic.



Courtesy Foreplay

The Killington Classic will return this fall as the rebranded Green Mountain Classic, hosted at the Rutland Country Club.



Courtesy Billings Farm

Billings Farm will host an appreciation for all things cheese and dairy on Sunday, June 22.

Billings Farm hosts family-friendly dairy celebration in Woodstock

Sunday, June 22 from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.—WOODSTOCK—Cheese lovers, curious kids, and anyone with an appetite for Vermont's agricultural heritage are invited to Billings Farm & Museum for its annual dairy celebration—a full day of farm-fresh flavor, hands-on activities, and fun.

This lively event celebrates Vermont's world-renowned dairy culture with cheese tastings from a range of producers, including Billings Farm, Vermont Farmstead, Spring Brook Farm, Green Mountain Blue Cheese, Plymouth Cheese, Cobb Hill Cheese, Grafton Village Cheese, and Cabot Creamery. Attendees can churn butter, make ice cream, and play the interactive "From-A-Cow, Not-From-A-Cow" game.

For young guests and families, horse-drawn wagon rides will run from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m., and farm staff will lead pasture tours

highlighting rotational grazing and regenerative agriculture. Visitors can meet the farm's legacy Jersey cows and follow milk's journey "from field to fridge."

Those interested in Vermont's dairy history can explore the Creamery Tour and view vintage photographs and artifacts from the historic Billings-Starlake Dairy operation.

The event will also feature:

New England Dairy's Mobile Dairy Bar with flavored milk samples

Vermont Mobile Spirits, offering signature cocktails

Sustainable Eats food truck fare and treats from the Farmhouse Scoop Shop

Live music by Vermont-based singer-songwriter Ali T, performing from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

For details and tickets, visit: billingsfarm.org/events/dairy-celebration-2025.

BarnArts Seeks Script Submissions for Haunted Village Theater

BARNARD—BarnArts Center for the Arts is now accepting short script submissions for its third Haunted Village Theater, set to take place on Friday, Oct. 18. Writers are invited to submit original works that are Halloween-adjacent, 5–10 minutes in length, and adaptable for outdoor performance around a fire pit. The deadline for submissions is July 11.

Scripts should be suitable for all ages or capable of being adjusted for family-friendly presentations. Flexibility for indoor staging is also encouraged in case of inclement weather.

First launched in 2021 as a creative response to pandemic-era performance limitations, Haunted Village Theater quickly became a community favorite. The immersive, walking-style theatrical experience brings short scenes to life in locations throughout Barnard village. The event now alternates each fall with BarnArts' seasonal musical.

Interested playwrights can submit their work at: forms.gle/ds2qdapvRPpeqkm46. Those interested in acting or directing should stay tuned for auditions, which will be announced later this summer.

For more information, visit: barnarts.org/mainstage/haunted-village-theater.



Poultney hosts climate-conscious community concert with UVM pianist David Feurzeig

Friday, June 20 at 7 p.m.—POULTNEY — The Stone Valley Arts Center will come alive with music on Friday evening, as David Feurzeig, composer, pianist, and professor at the University of Vermont, brings his climate-conscious concert tour “Play Every Town” to Poultney. The free performance is part of Feurzeig’s ambitious mission to perform in each of Vermont’s 252 towns in an effort to inspire climate action through the power of local music.

Concert #83 in the series, the Poultney performance will feature Feurzeig alongside violinists Heather Munch and Lana Weltman and saxophonist Maximus DiDomenico. The event is free to attend, with donations accepted to benefit the Poultney United Fund.

Launched in 2022, “Play Every Town” challenges the norms of jet-setting performers and high-emission tours. Instead, Feurzeig travels exclusively in a solar-charged electric vehicle, highlighting the importance of sustainability and connection. “Routine jet travel is unsustainable—which means it’s literally not possible to keep doing. I want to model a performance culture that doesn’t require hopping on a plane and flying all over the world,” Feurzeig said.

Known for genre-blending recitals and lively commentary, Feurzeig’s programs mix classical, jazz, avant-garde, and popular music in unexpected and engaging ways. The Poultney performance will feature compositions tied to local history, including:

“Adoration” by Florence Price, performed by Heather Munch

“Some of My Favorite Things” by Shirley Givens, played by Lana Weltman, a Poultney first grader and Munch’s student

Beethoven’s Sonatina in F major (1790), marking the founding year of Vermont’s first library in Poultney

Haydn’s Sonata No. 41 in B-flat major (1784), honoring Jeffrey Brace, the African-born author of Vermont’s first slave narrative who settled in Poultney

Liszt’s 1867 funeral march commemorating the town’s first organized Jewish community

Henry Zickel’s “Eureka March,” celebrating Poultney’s first slate mine and the region’s lasting slate industry

Feurzeig’s concerts aim to break down the formality of classical music while fostering a sense of local pride and global responsibility. “If I don’t get a laugh from the audience in the first two minutes, I get worried,” he said, noting his commitment to making performances enjoyable and accessible.

For more information, visit: playeverytown.com.



Submitted

Composer and pianist David Feurzeig will play at Stone Valley Arts Center on Friday, June 20.



Courtesy BarnArts

The BarnArts performers lined up as the Von Trapp children at a rehearsal of “The Sound of Music.”

The hills of Woodstock are alive with ‘The Sound of Music’

June 19-29—WOODSTOCK — BarnArts stages “The Sound of Music” in the open air at King Farm, using the surrounding landscape as a natural stage for this timeless story. Performances will take place June 19-21 and 27-28 at 6 p.m., with matinees on June 22 and 29 at 4 p.m. Tickets are available at barnarts.org.

Directed by BarnArts executive director Linda Treash, this beloved musical tells the story of Maria, a young postulant who brings music, joy, and love into the lives of the von Trapp family as the shadows of World War II begin to darken Austria. The real-life von Trapp family eventually made their home in Vermont, lending a special resonance to this local production.

Treash said the organization had long hoped to bring “The Sound of Music” outdoors, and the move to King Farm—with its sweeping views and historical character—provided the perfect opportunity. “The view and the setting on the farmhouse lawn is spectacular,” said Treash. “We are using it as our set, keeping the production simple and natural.”

The production also marks BarnArts’ first collaboration with vocal director Michael Zsoldos, who joins longtime music director Carol Cronic in shaping the sound of the show’s 28-member cast. “The nuns will blow our audience away with the power and beauty of their 4-part harmonies,” said Treash.

The cast brings together seasoned BarnArts performers and newcomers from across the Upper Valley. Taylor Hobson of West Lebanon stars as Maria. “This story has always held a special place in my family,” said Hobson. “Performing in ‘The Sound of Music’ feels like sharing part of

myself with my community.”

Albert Falcone, a recent Woodstock resident, plays Captain von Trapp. “We’re engaging in radical empathy,” he said of community theater. “Acting out important events in the lives of people we don’t know, and considering themes of resistance, family, and hope.”

The show features many other local talents: Jenevra Wetmore, executive director of Sustainable Woodstock, appears as Rolf in their first BarnArts role. Lisa Milligan returns to the stage after 40 years as Sister Sophia. Marlena Farinas, a longtime BarnArts youth performer, plays Liesl—just as she herself turns 16 going on 17.

Children from around the area fill out the von Trapp family: Adam Huyck, Henry Butler, Natalie Thakur, Josie and Julia Flaster, and Tasia Benoit. Supporting roles are played by Greg Pomeroy, Elizabeth Linsley, Christine Meagher, Lili Morris, Alicia Hodges, and others in a large ensemble of nuns, guests, and townspeople.

Choreography is by Bridgette Hammond, and costumes—over 100 pieces—are designed by August Doughty, who created custom dresses for Maria and Liesl’s ball scenes.


King Farm, owned and preserved by the Vermont Land Trust, offers a unique backdrop for this outdoor production. Guests are encouraged to bring chairs or blankets and arrive early to allow for a short walk from the parking area. Some seating will be available, and picnics are welcome. In the event of inclement weather, updates will be posted on barnarts.org and emailed to ticket holders; tickets are valid for any performance.

For more information, visit: barnarts.org.

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Rutland County Pride Festival is a full-day celebration

June 21, from 11 a.m. - 5 p.m.—RUTLAND — The Rutland County Pride Center will host its third annual Rutland County Pride Festival this Saturday on Center Street and Merchants Row in Downtown Rutland. This free, family-friendly celebration highlights the theme “Diversity is Resilience,” honoring the strength found in the intersecting identities and experiences of the 2SLGBTQIA+ and BIPOC communities.

The day begins with a Juneteenth Strut, co-hosted by the Rutland Area Branch of the NAACP, in recognition of the shared history and unity of BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. The Strut will start at 11 a.m. at the Rutland Free Library and proceed down Center Street to officially launch the festival.

The Pride Festival includes a wide array of inclusive and accessible events:

- Live music and performances featuring local and regional drag, dance, spoken word, and musical artists
- Guest speakers and storytellers sharing community narratives
- Interactive art installations, crafts, and games for all ages
- Food trucks and local artisan vendors offering a variety of tastes and wares
- ASL interpretation at all main-stage events
- Quiet Space available for attendees needing a break from the crowds
- Accessibility-focused design to ensure participation for all

The Rutland County Pride Festival remains a space for connection, celebration, and solidarity, affirming the identities and contributions of everyone in the community.

For more information, visit: rcpride.org.



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email us: editor@mountaintimes.info

Rutland County Pride Center's William Fourney-Mills: leading with purpose, empathy, and compassion

As the director of the Rutland County Pride Center (RCPC), William Fourney-Mills is a pillar of LGBTQ+ advocacy in the Killington-Rutland area, overseeing the 501c3 organization he launched over two years ago. In championing inclusivity, diversity, and community building, his work is particularly vital given the current political climate, making Rutland County Pride an essential force in the region.

RCPC is perhaps best known as the driving force behind the annual Rutland Pride Festival, a vibrant celebration that draws participants from across the region. This year's festival is taking place on Saturday, June 21, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., on Merchants Row in downtown Rutland.

But well beyond this marquee event, Fourney-Mills and his team—mostly volunteers—provide crucial year-round resources, support, and advocacy, including discussion groups, educational programs, and collaborations with local businesses and other nonprofits.

An ordained minister, Fourney-Mills honed his leadership and management skills by serving on the board of a suburban Philadelphia church for years.

"I was traveling the country helping other churches with their backend bookkeeping and making sure all their paperwork was correct," Fourney-Mills said. "So I gained knowledge on how to do the nuts-and-bolts pieces for a nonprofit like the Rutland County Pride Center."

Fourney-Mills has been in Vermont for 20 years and understands the unique challenges faced by the LGBTQ+ community, especially in rural areas—issues like isolation, limited resources, and persistent prejudice. With his imposing stature, one might not expect it, but Fourney-Mills is a wonderfully jovial man—quick to laugh and extending a hearty welcome even to visitors who drop into the center's headquarters.

He emphasizes building bridges and fostering dialogue, approaching his advocacy with a blend of passion and respectful communication. Before the Rutland Center opened, the nearest Pride Center was two hours away in Burlington.



For the Greater Good
By Liz DiMarco Weinmann

"We birthed the Rutland County Pride Center out of necessity," Fourney-Mills said. "We just started looking and listening to the friends and family that we talked to every day to see what they wanted and then started building from there. And now we are a strong part of the community."

He continued, "We get involved in everything from the Rutland Feud to the Halloween parade, just basically anything that we have an opportunity to show people that it's okay to live your life and be who you are."

Fourney-Mills' philosophy is deeply humanistic: "I've always been about helping other people, and I don't care what your belief system is; we all have something in common. I think that's the problem with humanity right now, that we refuse to acknowledge our connections. Instead, we highlight our differences."

Rutland County Pride offers vital programs, including weekly recovery meetings, "Queer Working Hours" for remote workers seeking community at the Pride Center's offices, and "Fierce Fridays" social events with mocktails and coffee to support sobriety. RCPC also organizes bingos and other events to bring entertainment and connection to different areas of the county.

To be sure, like most nonprofits, the RCPC also faces its challenges. Fourney-Mills highlighted the dedication of his team but stressed the need for funding to hire paid staff.

"We've done a great job, and I think we're victims of our own success because people see how much we can do with so little," he admitted. "While we continue to explore options for hiring a paid program coordinator, the current funding landscape makes adding additional staff a significant challenge in the near future. That said, we're always actively seeking out resources, grants, and partnerships to make this vision a reality sooner rather than later," he added.

Fourney-Mills is pleased to report that the RCPC finalized its strategic plan in April, providing a clear roadmap for its next phase of growth, including program development, financial sustainability, and infrastructure goals.

"It's already been a valuable tool in guiding our organizational focus and engaging with potential funders," he said.

Fourney-Mills envisions expanding the center's clinical services at some point.

"Right now, we've been focusing on the social because that's what we're able to do," said Fourney-Mills. But we would love to have a clinician available, [so people could] get the help and the resources that they need on a more clinical basis as opposed to just referring them elsewhere."

Fourney-Mills has been in a romantic relationship for the past four years and is the proud parent of 22-year-old twins. As such, he is compassionate about what he calls "the persistent and unique heartbreaking needs," of LGBTQ+ individuals who are not as fortunate in having a loving family.

"The majority of the folks I know have a segment of their family life that's not available to them anymore," he explained. "As horrible as it is, it's something that we've dealt with historically all the time."

"I can't imagine how kids feel today, especially in the political climate that we're in," he continued. "Stonewall [the pivotal 1969 Greenwich Village gay rights protest] drove me forward, yet all they're seeing is the division and the hatred towards people and the non-acceptance. And that's making them even reach out to us more because now they're looking for a safe place, and they don't feel safe," he added.

William Fourney-Mills' leadership of the Rutland County Pride Center is a testament to his dedication to social justice and his belief in the community, ensuring that all LGBTQ+ individuals in the county feel safe, supported, and celebrated.

Reflecting his early work as a minister in the suburbs of Philadelphia, Fourney-Mills' parting message was poignant and emblematic of his empathy and compassion: "Everybody has the ability to belong and love and find community, and nobody should be ostracized for that."

For more information, visit: rcpride.org.

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



Left to right: Cooper Babbitt and William Fourney-Mills manned a Rutland County Pride Center booth



William Fourney-Mills (center) participated at a recent Rutland County Pride drag event.

Good vibes are on the way with the Vermont Symphony Orchestra’s ‘Summer of Love’ tour

By James Kent

July 1 and 2—CASTLETON and SOUTH POMFRET—The Vermont Symphony Orchestra (VSO) will return to Castleton and South Pomfret this July as part of its popular Summer Festival Tour, offering a warm-weather celebration of music, community, and connection with this year’s theme: “Summer of Love.”

The 2025 tour opens Tuesday, July 1, at the Vermont State University Castleton Pavilion and continues the next night, Wednesday, July 2, at Skandena Six Ski Area in South Pomfret, produced in partnership with Pentangle Arts. Both shows begin at 7:30 p.m., with grounds opening at 5:30 p.m. for picnicking. Audiences are welcome to bring blankets, lawn chairs, and friends for a festive night under the stars.

Conducted by Music Director Andrew Crust, the program highlights the power of love through music, blending selections from classical, opera, film, and pop genres. Works include “Romeo and Juliet” by Tchaikovsky, selections from “West Side Story,” John Williams’ “love theme,” from “Star Wars Episode II,” and bold vocal performances such as “Habanera” from “Carmen” and Nina Simone’s “I Put a Spell on You.”

Crust says the theme emerged naturally.

“We need good vibes in our world today. We wanted to do a theme on the love of community and the love of our state. Vermont is a state I love. We are trying, with this program, to spread good feelings. We love this tour and the opportunity to bring our orchestra family together. It’s one of our most warm and fuzzy programs, and there is a ton of music around this theme to build a concert on.”

The VSO will be joined by featured guest Nikola Printz, a San Francisco-based mezzo-soprano known for their dynamic range and genre-crossing ability. Crust first saw Printz perform in San Jose and was immediately struck.

“They are able to do traditional arias but also tackle an artist like Nina Simone,” Crust said. Printz will perform a technically dazzling operetta aria by Franz Lehár as well as “Nature Boy,” paired with Heitor Villa-Lobos’ “Bachianas Brasileiras No. 5,” a haunting piece originally composed for soprano and cellos, reorchestrated for strings.

“Singing love songs is such a personal experience—sharing familiar melodies, poetry, and words that resonate deeply with listeners is incredibly powerful,” said Printz. “I’m especially thrilled to perform with an orchestra for a mash-up of ‘Nature Boy’ and ‘Bachianas Brasileiras’ by Villa-Lobos. I love songs that are in conversation with one another and that blend jazz and pop with classical music.”

Crust, now in his third season as VSO’s music director, recalled his introduction to the orchestra fondly.

“I came on board as one of the VSO’s final choices, and I did a week with the orchestra. I loved the area already. Meeting the musicians—it’s relaxed, and it reflects the ambiance of Vermont. The orchestra sounds fantastic.”

Crust sees the “Summer of Love” tour as a perfect entry point for newcomers. “This is a perfect opportunity to bring a friend who’s never been. It’s a show for all ages. And it’s a really great time to support your local orchestra. It’s more important than ever to come out and support the symphony.”

Each concert will also feature the VSO’s Musical Petting Zoo before the performance, offering children and curious adults the opportunity to explore orchestral instruments firsthand.

After the summer tour, the VSO looks ahead to major performances, including “Oklahoma!” in August and “East Meets West” this fall, a global program featuring music from India, Russia, and Ukraine. Crust will also conduct the orchestra’s holiday concert series later this year.

For tickets and more information, visit: vso.org.



VSO Music Director Andrew Crust

By Richie Lubaton



Courtesy VIBE Portrait Art

The VSO will kick off their “Summer of Love” tour at the Vermont State University Castleton Pavilion on July 1.



Courtesy Nikola Printz

Nikola Printz

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'The Shrouds' is another erotic techno-thriller from David Cronenberg

Filmmaker David Cronenberg is 82, and if "The Shrouds," his latest, is any indication, he hasn't lost his stride

Humans have difficulty dealing with death. Canadian auteur David Cronenberg is not immune to this affliction. His wife of nearly 40 years passed away in 2017. Cronenberg said on record that "The Shrouds" is one measure of his grieving process. We all handle grief differently. Maybe not quite as different as Cronenberg or his protagonist, Karsh, a techno-entrepreneur who channels the grief of his wife's passing in a most unusual and decidedly Cronenbergistic fashion.

Karsh is played by French character actor Vincent Cassel, who gets a rare opportunity to step into a leading role here, and his performance will leave audiences wondering, "Vincent, where have you been all our lives?" We're used to Cassel showing up as a villain, but in the "Shrouds," he's an understated genius who can't let go of his dead wife, so much so that he's developed a software that will allow grieverers to visit with their loved ones after death.

Let's pause for a moment. If you've never seen a David Cronenberg film before, then you'll likely be as surprised, shocked, and turned off by Karsh's technology as much as an early-in-the-film blind date is, when Karsh gives her a tour of his cemetery for the first time, if you have, you probably know what you are getting into. Cronenberg is the king of body horror, and if you can get down with "The Shroud's" vibe, you'll find parallels to many of Cronenberg's films, from "Videodrome" to "eXistenZ" to "Dead Ringers." There's even a lot to connect to his last film, the criminally underrated and underseen "Crimes of the Future." And, in true Cronenberg fashion, the film is a little kinky and erotically twisted. After all, we're talking about the man who gave

us an adaptation of J.G. Ballard's love letter to those who get sexually aroused by car crashes and found a way to turn "Naked Lunch" into a movie. His latest is tame by comparison, but it will not disappoint those who hunger for the Cronenberg experience and are thankful that this filmmaker continues to churn out films that no one else has either the audacity, ability, or imagination to make.

Karsh's invention involves a hi-tech "shroud" or radiated suit that embodies the corpse and, through sophisticated software, allows relatives to check in on their deceased loved ones as they decay. Yup, it's as weird as it sounds. And yet, while this movie is set in some near future point, it never sounds far-fetched. When you have the uber-wealthy building subs to visit the Titanic or pay big bucks to get a 30-minute space flight, it isn't difficult to imagine someone with the funds to afford this service not wanting it.

The obsession that drives Karsh through the crux of this film is his inability to leave the ghosts of his past behind him, namely his dead wife, Becca, played by Diane Kruger. Complicating matters is Becca's sister, Terry (also played by Kruger.) While the body horror and twisted nature of the proceedings are all Cronenberg, the obsession and doubles all feel like a homage to Brian De Palma movies. Terry, a former veterinarian turned dog walker, is a fixture in Karsh's life, as another visual reminder of Becca, albeit in living form, and as a potential, in-the-flesh temptation. Terry's ex-husband Maury (played to facial twitch perfection by Guy Pearce) is also around. He was once a former software technician of Karsh's in the development of "The Shroud" technology. Terry, a brilliant yet flawed genius,

also created an AI chatbot for Karsh named Hunny, who could potentially give M3GAN a run for her money. When Karsh's shroud cemetery is vandalized in what appears to be a targeted attack, Terry shows up to try and solve the mystery for Karsh.

Enter a mysterious philanthropist, Soo-Min (Sandrine Holt), whose dying husband wants to back Karsh's company, GraveTech, in a Budapest venture. Soo-Min, who's going blind, bears certain similarities in personality to Karsh's wife, and he finds himself drawn to the woman.

The bulk of "The Shrouds," a talky movie that is more plot than action, involves the neo-noir mystery over who wants to end Karsh's business and why. The film slowly builds multiple conspiracies, and it isn't long before neither Karsh nor the audience knows whom to trust fully.

Cronenberg isn't shy about sexuality, and there are several scenes involving graphic content that may be a bit much for some. Still, it all feels in service to the characters' moods and behaviors. Swapping conspiracy theories appears to be an aphrodisiac for Becca's sister, Terry. Oh, and did I mention the body horror? Yes, Cronenberg fans will not leave disappointed. There is body horror mixed into this film; how could there not be in a movie where people can use technology to watch their loved ones decompose? However, I will save some surprises for those willing to embark on this journey.

The end of the film is a bit on the obscure side, and I can imagine it leaving more than a few heads scratching, but all in all, this is a Cronenberg film through and through, and those who understand what that means and entails will surely admire it on several levels.

"The Shrouds" is available to rent on demand.

James Kent is the arts editor at the Mountain Times.



Screens and Streams
By James Kent



David Cronenberg's "The Shrouds," is his latest offering of technology meets body horror oddness.

Courtesy Janus Films



Submitted

A musical celebration will get underway on Saturday, June 21, in Randolph.

Randolph’s Make Music Day promises music in every corner of town

Saturday, June 21, all day.—RANDOLPH —The streets, shops, parks, and venues of Randolph will come alive with music from morning to night as the town celebrates Make Music Day, a global event observed in over 120 countries and 2,000 cities around the world.

Randolph has been part of the worldwide Make Music Day celebration since 2020, and this year’s festival promises to be the biggest yet, with live music scheduled from 10 a.m. to 11 p.m. at more than 10 different locations throughout the day. Organized by a team of local creatives—Vincent Freeman (The Underground), Chloe Powell (Chandler Center for the Arts), Jess Wilkinson (White River Craft Center), and Erica Robinson (Randolph Area Community Development)—the event features over a dozen performers, family-friendly events, and culminates in an electrifying evening lineup at the Chandler Center for the Arts.

The day kicks off with church bells ringing at 9 a.m., followed by performances at the Randolph Farmers’ Market and Kimball Public Library, as well as music at cafes, shops, and outdoor plazas. Highlights include Krishna Guthrie, Rick Redington & Tuff Luv, and children’s sets with Mr. Moose & Friends. At 6 p.m., a kazoo parade will wind its way from Trillium Plaza to Chandler, leading to a headline concert by the Villalobos Brothers, internationally acclaimed for their fusion of Mexican folk, jazz, and classical music.

That performance, held at 7:30 p.m. in the Chandler Music Hall, will be followed by a dance party with DJ Denisova in the Chandler Gallery from 9 to 11 p.m.

All events are free and open to the public, with donations encouraged to support youth music programs at Chandler. Reservations are recommended for the Villalobos Brothers concert due to the expected high turnout.

For more information and reservations, visit: chandler-arts.org/makemusicday.

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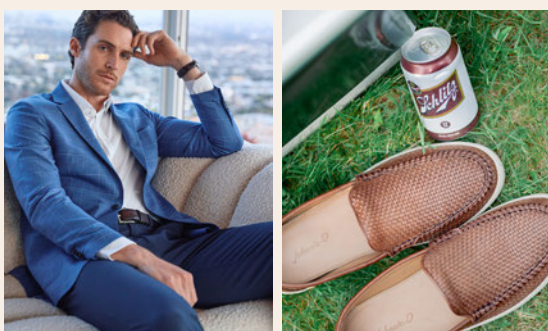
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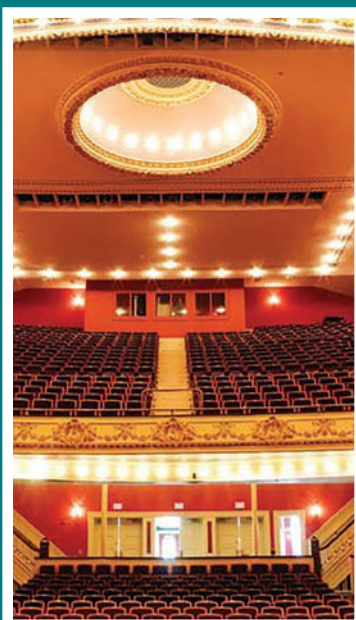
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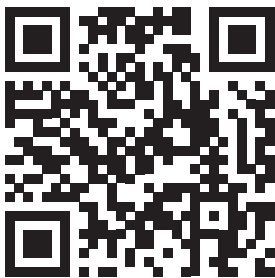
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DOWNTOWN RUTLAND VERMONT



Rutland County Pride Festival 2025

When: Saturday, June 21, 2025 | 11 a.m.-5 p.m. **Where:** Center Street & Merchants Row in Downtown Rutland

The Rutland County Pride Center is proud to host its third annual Rutland County Pride Festival, taking place on Saturday, June 21, 2025.

The festival kicks off with a Juneteenth Strut, co-hosted by the Rutland Area Branch of the NAACP, in celebration of the intersecting identities of BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. Starting at 11:00 a.m. at the Rutland Free Library, the Strut proceeds down Center Street, launching the day's festivities.



- The festival features:**
- Engaging activities for all ages, including interactive art installations, hands-on crafts, and community games to encourage connection and creativity
 - Live music and performances by local and regional artists, including drag, dance, spoken word, and more
 - Guest speakers and community storytellers
 - Vendor booths, food trucks, and local artisans
 - ASL interpretation at all main stage events
 - Accessible venue design, including a Quiet Space for attendees who need a break during the festival
- Learn more at rcpride.org/pridefestival*



Festival Theme: "Diversity is Resilience"

Rooted in this year's pride festival theme, "Diversity is Resilience," the festival honors the strength that emerges from our diverse identities and experiences. It uplifts the vibrant voices and lived experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals whose presence and power continue to shape and strengthen the Rutland County community and beyond.

This free, family-friendly celebration is open to all and is designed to be inclusive, affirming, and community-centered.



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For the latest on new businesses, event information, and downtown news, visit

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Solutions From page 13

Crossword

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



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



Phantom—1-year-old.
Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Nugget—young. Male.
American tri-color guinea pig.



Tippy—2½-year-old.
Spayed female. Rottweiler mix.



Sophie—5½-year-old.
Spayed female. Domestic shorthair.



Gloria—7½-year-old.
Spayed female. Pitbull terrier.



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



China—2½-year-old.
Spayed female. Mixed breed.



Tito—4-year-old. Neutered male. Domestic shorthair.



Iris—4-month-old. Female. Pointer mix.



Zara—2-year-old. Female. Mixed breed.



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Cosmic Catalogue

**Aries**
March 21 - April 20

If you look back on the past six months, have you achieved all that you set out to do? Chances are, life did get in the way a bit, as you have had your fair share of astrological ups and downs. That said, your ruling planet is about to change signs for the first time in a long time. As such, you'll be able to change focus, and what you need right now is to get a sense of routine and rhythm back.

**Leo**
July 21 - August 20

By this stage of 2025, you've probably had enough of a good thing and are ready to shift gears a bit. You've had a long time to get to know yourself better and determine what motivates and excites you. Now, it's time to take action. It may cost you some money, and that's OK. Consider it an investment into your future. Nothing changes unless you do, and at long last, you probably now know what you need to do.

**Sagittarius**
November 21 - December 20

The next several weeks are ideal for investing more energy in your career or the overall direction you want your life to take. At the same time, you'll be motivated to take stock of your current situation and figure out whether it's right for you or not. This isn't just about working harder; it's also about working smarter. Double down on good choices, but also know when to quit if something just isn't working the way you would prefer it to be.

**Taurus**
April 21 - May 20

The tension that has been building may begin to die down now. This week, you may need to extend an olive branch or two or at least be ready to receive one. It will be worthwhile to let go of any grudges or ill feelings from what didn't seem to work out the way you wanted. You know what they say about rejection being redirection? This week gives you a rare opportunity to start realigning yourself with what brings you a sense of joy and happiness.

**Virgo**
August 21 - September 20

Anticipate that even though your energy has been less than great, you may get a boost this week and over the next little while. This may be less about doing more things or solving more problems, but actually about doing less. Learn to say no! A period of slashing habits and attitudes that aren't in your best interest has now arrived. Start streamlining and decluttering your life! Less is more. Detox! Become proficient in the art of doing less!

**Capricorn**
December 21 - January 20

Relationships are an area of focus for you now. This isn't just about the good times and the happy days. It's also about ensuring you're on a similar philosophical path. Do you have the same beliefs, values, and aspirations for the future? If you're unsure, find out! Set goals for yourself or your relationship. A sense of meaning and purpose can help you push through the less-than-exciting aspects of the partnership. Create the happiness you really crave.

**Gemini**
May 21 - June 20

You can probably feel that things as they are will not stay the same for you. Are you feeling more irritable than usual? Perhaps you're making choices that are a bit out of character. Maybe you're in a phase where you really don't care what others think about you or the choices you're making. The price of conformity is that everyone else likes you except yourself. That sentence alone is going to be your biggest revelation moving forward.

**Libra**
September 21 - October 20

Turning point arrives in terms of your Career and Overall Life Direction. So far, 2025 has been a one-step forward, two-steps-back equation in this area of life. That all changes now. That being said, you do need to think longer term, at least the next six months, if not longer. Where do you want to be positioned by then? Take action with the outcome in mind. It may take some time, but it will happen. Just keep moving in the right direction.

**Aquarius**
January 21 - February 20

Relationship tension or frustration will begin to subside. If you've been in an exciting or passionate phase, that will be subdued, too. Just because a situation has dropped down a gear or two, that doesn't mean something is wrong. It's about taking things to the next level but at a slower pace. If a relationship has seemingly lost its spark, that could simply mean you need to go deeper or that you just need to focus on other areas of life for a while.

**Cancer**
June 21 - July 20

When an array of opportunities comes your way, it can be hard to know what is worth exploring and what is worth a polite decline. It's important to remember that all that glitters isn't gold. That said, being a skeptic is also not the same as having an abundance mindset. This week, do ask questions and be discerning about what is worth your time and energy and what is not. It's OK to change your mind about both big and little things.

**Scorpio**
October 21 - November 20

Sometimes, life is about quality, not quantity. This is what you'll discover over the next several weeks when it comes to your friends, social networks, and communities. You may realize that you're simply no longer aligned with some people, or you don't have the things in common you thought you did. While with other people, the bonds you share will become solidified. If in doubt, keep your cards close to your chest. Not everyone who smiles at you is a friend.

**Pisces**
February 21 - March 20

Passion planet Mars arrives in your Relationship Zone. This could add a much-needed dose of excitement. It could also pour salt on some pre-existing wounds. In any case, it will be a period to tread carefully when it comes to your most significant other, as well as other people in general. If you find yourself on rocky territory, then do what you need to do to smooth things over. Do that by focusing on what's right, not what's wrong.

Solstice shift: From heart to head



Cosmic Catalogue
By Cassandra Tyndall

The Solstice arrives this week. If you're located on the northern half of the globe, the Sun will reach its highest point and slowly begin the descent of light towards the Winter Solstice. If you're reading from the south, the Sun reaches its lowest position, and from there, the days will slowly grow in length.

Whether you're enjoying long summer days or fresh winter nights, the Solstice represents a time when the Sun stands still. It's a time to pause and reflect on the six months that have passed and the six months that are to come.

It's not only the Sun that arrives at a turning point this week. It appears that humanity has, too. While the Sun pauses, it seems as though timelines have sped up, and the great divide in humanity has become even wider.

It's the sign of Leo that is ruled by the Sun. Its organ, the heart. The heart is the centralizing and organizing principle of our bodies and the Sun, the entire Cosmos. After an exceptionally long time in Leo, Mars exits and arrives in Virgo, trading the heart for the head. If taking action from the heart has not got the results you want, it may be time to trade passion for facts.

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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.

The dapper sparrow of the underbrush: Eastern towhee

From forest edges and thickets on late spring mornings in the Northeast comes what sounds like an exhortation from across the pond: *Drink your tea!* This is not a British parent's plea but rather the song of a chunky, colorful sparrow: the eastern towhee.

The eastern towhee (*Pipilo erythrophthalmus*, or "red-eyed chipper") is found in much of the eastern United States. The species belongs to the New World sparrow family, a group native to the Americas that tend to feed on the ground. While towhees spend the winter in the southern United States, they return to the Upper Valley, which lies along the northern edge of their breeding range, in April, and stay until September or early October.

Towhees sport handsome plumage reminiscent of a flashy American robin. The male has a jet-black head and back and a black-and-

white tail, contrasted by healthy blushes of orange along his sides and a prominent white breast and stomach. The female is nearly identical save



for the swapping of brown feathers for the male's black ones. As suggested by their scientific name, both sexes have striking red eyes.

Towhees tend to stick to the underbrush. They prefer shrubby, overgrown environments where they can forage concealed from predators. In these areas, they scratch at the ground, pushing leaves out of the way with a backward kick of both feet and a jump, and then feast on unearthed spiders, centipedes, and other invertebrates. This dance for dinner can be loud enough for the quiet ambler to detect before they hear the towhee's harsh *chewink* call rasping out from dense thickets. During the breeding season, males will occasionally climb up into shrubs or low tree branches, where they declare their territories via their "*drink-your-tea!*" song.

According to the Cornell Lab of Ornithology, the eastern towhee and the spotted towhee – a species found in western North America – were thought to be the same bird, the rufous-sided towhee, until 1995. The two towhee species known today likely emerged during the last Ice Age, when massive ice sheets cleaved North America down the middle and split the rufous-sided towhee into eastern and western populations. These isolated populations, navigating different environments over thousands of years, eventually became distinct species.

Recent human-induced changes to the landscape have proven detrimental to the eastern towhee. The species benefited from

the widespread abandonment of farms in the Northeast in the 19th and 20th centuries, which resulted in former agricultural lands overgrowing with thickets and shrubs that towhees prefer. But a continued succession of shrublands into the forests, as well as the development of open areas, has shrunk the species' available habitat.

Towhee nests are also subjected to parasitism by brown-headed cowbirds, which lay their eggs in the nests of towhees and other songbirds. Towhees exhibit little to no ability to distinguish these eggs – and the cowbird chicks they hatch into – from their own, leading to reduced survival for towhee chicks. Finally, because

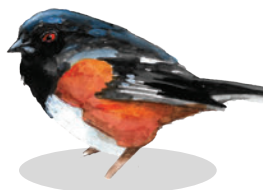
towhees nest on the ground, they are vulnerable in the breeding season to disturbance by off-leash dogs, as well as to predation by cats.

The 2025 State of the Birds report indicates that the eastern towhee is one of 112 "tipping point" species whose populations have declined by more than 50 percent over the last 50 years. Similarly, the second Vermont Atlas of Life, published in the mid-2000s, estimated a 53 % contraction in the state's eastern towhee numbers. New Hampshire Audubon reports precipitous declines as well.

Still, there are ways to help towhees in your own backyard. Consider taking a passive approach to leaf litter and other "messy" areas, especially forest edges and shrubby zones, and avoid treating lawns or gardens with pesticides that can poison birds and their insect prey. Leaving these areas as they provide towhees with plenty of cover and forage while benefitting other ground-dwelling species and insect populations. Towhees also feed on the ground under bird feeders, assuming that feeders are near enough to cover for a quick escape.

With migratory birds back for the spring and summer, listen for *chewink* calls and the scrape of busy feet in thickets and for that insistent "*drink-your-tea!*" song from mid-story perches. Even if you catch just a flash of white as an eastern towhee darts away from you, you will have glimpsed one of the Northeast's most dazzling and increasingly rare sparrows.

Colby Galliher writes about conservation, ecology, and environmental policy. To learn more about his work, visit colbygalliher.com. 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 Colby Galliher

Calling for a friend

We've all received those dreaded phone calls—the ones where the person's voice on the other end suggests something dire is coming. The greatest example of this for me was the night I got the call that my father had died.

It happened during my senior year of college around 9 p.m. Upon returning from the gym, my roommates informed me that I had received a call from my older brother, who had left instructions to call him back at a specific phone number, which happened to be for my grandmother's house.

Given the fact that my brother was at my grandmother's house at such a late hour (which was highly irregular), I quickly surmised that something was amiss. I dutifully picked up the phone, took a deep breath, and dialed the number. When my aunt answered the phone, sounding nervous and agitated, I again assumed the worst about my grandmother.

When my brother got on the phone, the first words out of my mouth were, "How's Grandma?" The next words I heard were, "Dad's dead."

Everything got fuzzy after that. In the moment that my brain processed the words, my body started to tremble. I had been standing in the kitchen of my apartment, and before I realized what was happening, I had collapsed to the floor. This is the only time in my life that I have experienced profound shock.

After I gathered myself and explained the situation to my roommates, I went up to my room and cried.

Over the years, I've received similar calls, but none to that level. Even still, the moments tend to plant themselves into your memory—like the night my grandfather died: The call came in, my mother picked up the phone, and all I could hear was my grandmother screaming through the receiver. The next sound I heard was my father running up the stairs and out the door. By the time he got to their house, my grandfather was gone.

I've had similar experiences in the last couple years when receiving calls about close friends who had unexpectedly passed away. I'm middle-aged, so death is more expected than it used to be, but I'm not so old that it feels imminent. The calls about my friends were all shocking, each one sending a rush of emotions through me like a strike of lightning.

Of course, the shock of an unexpected

death is not always contained to people we know personally. I was moved the moment I heard John Lennon was killed, when Princess Diana had died, and when Michael Jackson passed away. No one expected them to leave so soon, especially given the grandeur of their personas.

Well, another one of these calls came in last week. My wife had phoned me at work, and as soon as I heard her voice, I knew something was off. She wasted little time in explaining that a very dear friend had passed after a tragic accident.

Patty was someone I had known for most of my life. We attended separate high schools, but her popularity meant that she was well-known around our town. After high school, our social circles collided, allowing us to become friends. And when

my girlfriend (eventually my wife) moved to town, Patty was the one who took her under her wing and introduced her to her vast friend network.

Before long, the two girls were inseparable. It wasn't uncommon for Patty to be at our home on any given weeknight and out on the town with us on the weekends.

Due to an out-of-state move, Patty drifted away from our daily lives. Ironically, it was at one of the aforementioned friend's funerals that my wife was able to reconnect with Patty. The gravity of that event erased years

of distance, and the two bonded again, remaining that way until her recent passing.

Patty was one of the kindest, bubbliest, and most upbeat women I have ever known. She had a pureness to her character that is rare among people, and that will truly be missed by all that knew her.

This week's feature, "M3GAN," is about a girl with equally pure character. After her parents are killed in a car accident, the girl's aunt (a brilliant roboticist) decides to pair a next-generation child-like doll with her niece in the hope that it will help heal the devastation of the loss. Instead, the relationship causes unimaginable consequences.

If you're at all intrigued by the advances in AI and robotics, definitely check this film out. It's scary on multiple levels, not least of which is the fact that we may be closer to this fiction than we realize. Plus, the next installment in the "M3GAN" series is due for release in a couple of weeks.

A mechanized "B" for "M3GAN," now available to rent on Amazon Prime Video.

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



The Movie Diary

By Dom Cioffi



The great unfurling

We have just about come to the end of the great unfurling. That moment in time when the trees have grown and budded and leafed and have stretched as far as they can go. They are bigger, brighter, and fuller than they were last year, and you can feel the canopy thickening. The woods are darker than they were last year; it's cooler and increasingly moist below. Rocks are slippery, and you can see the imprint of your tracks—whether tire or hiking shoe, all our tracks are made with rubber.

For 50 years, Goodyear manufactured rubber shoes and sole parts in Windsor, starting in 1936, and was an essential producer of boot soles for the Army in the Second World War.

The great unfurling. Or just the unfurling? Maybe Spring unfurling? Something that captures the feeling that the season brings, the fresh energy, world-springs-anew concept, but talks about our beautiful green mountains. I like unfurling. I have been watching the ferns in my border garden just unrolling themselves, first the fronds and then the pinna. I had to google those terms, but I feel better knowing them.

One of the neat things about hiking the same location every day. Or having the same loop that you take, maybe one that you have made around your property—no matter the size—where you check everything over. You notice the small changes and unique differences around your home. Maybe it's the paint chipping on the corner or a section of the log that needs to be stained. Or that one piece of lawn trash that you keep looking at

and not moving because it's in a good spot until Bulky Day, right?

But you must also notice your plants. How each day they get just a little bit bigger, a little bit wider, a little bit stronger. I remember when all those super sped-up, super-zoomed videos of plants growing from sapling to full bloom. They were on the Nature Channel all the time. I freaking loved them. It reminds me of "Genesis" from "Star Trek," watching everything bloom so quickly is almost slightly terrifying, but in real-time ... it's marvelous.

That tender little plant, that fresh branch starting to squeak out of the trunk of the

Living the Dream → 37



By Merisa Sherman

A path under the Green Mountain canopy can lead to anything!



Living the Dream

By Merisa Sherman

Strawberry season is in full swing

By Dr. Vern Grubinger/UVM Extension

There's nothing like the taste of a fresh-picked strawberry. Sweet, juicy, and flavorful, it's the first fruit to ripen on our local farms, and this year's crop is a good one.

The buds that produce strawberries were formed last fall. Growers then tucked the plants away under a layer of straw to protect them from winter damage. Flowers that opened this spring turned into berries in about a month.

Strawberries are grown on many diversified vegetable and berry farms. They're an essential crop because they provide early-season income and have a high value per acre. However, the risks are also high. In addition to potential winter injury, early spring frosts, heatwaves during harvest, and a variety of pests can lead to crop losses.

The 2022 U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Census of Agriculture counted 125 farms with 168 acres of strawberries in Vermont. A typical yield is about 6,000 pounds an acre, so over a million pounds of Vermont strawberries must be picked, sold, and eaten in a relatively short time. Almost all these berries are sold directly to customers or local stores and distributors.

Nationally, about 1.4 million tons of strawberries are produced each year. The vast majority come from specialized farms in California, with Florida a distant second in production. These berries get shipped to stores and processors.

Most of the strawberries grown in Vermont are called June-bearers for obvious reasons. There are also some strawberry varieties called everbearing, which bloom and fruit throughout the summer. These are trickier to grow because they require ongoing attention and are more vulnerable to insect attack later in the summer.

Wild strawberries have been eaten since ancient times, but the development of modern varieties was a relatively recent process involving extensive plant breeding, including

the hybridization of different strawberry species.

'Hovey' was the name of the first American strawberry variety resulting from plant breeding. It was developed by Charles Hovey, a nurseryman in Cambridge, Massachusetts, in 1834.

'Wilson' was bred in 1851 by James Wilson of Albany, New York, who crossed 'Hovey' with other varieties. Wilson was productive, firm, and hardy and could be grown in many types of soil. It also had "perfect" flowers, containing both male and female reproductive structures so that it could be grown by itself without another variety for pollination.

Wilson changed the strawberry into a major crop that would be grown across the continent. The ease with which it could be grown and the availability of railroads for transporting the crop led to "strawberry fever," which dramatically increased production in the 1860s.

Arthur Howard learned to love strawberries as a young man while living with the Perfectionist community in Putney, Vermont. He later developed 'Howard 17' at his farm in Belchertown, Massachusetts. That variety dominated strawberry production in the early 1900s. It had tolerance to leaf spots, leaf scorch, and virus diseases, and it formed many crowns with early flower bud initiation. For decades, it was important for commercial use and breeding.

Before 1920, strawberry breeding was primarily conducted by growers; however, since then, most new varieties have been developed by scientists at federal and state experiment stations. One renowned strawberry breeder was Dr. George M. Darrow, a Vermonter who was chief horticulturist at the USDA. He improved the disease resistance of strawberries and developed dozens of varieties that contributed to the fruits we eat today.

To find a farm where you can pick your own fresh, delicious local strawberries, visit: vermontpickyourown.org.

Dr. Vern Grubinger is the University of Vermont Extension vegetable and berry specialist.



By Vern Grubinger/UVM Extension

Strawberries are the first fruit to ripen on local farms in Vermont, with June-bearer varieties available to pick in June.

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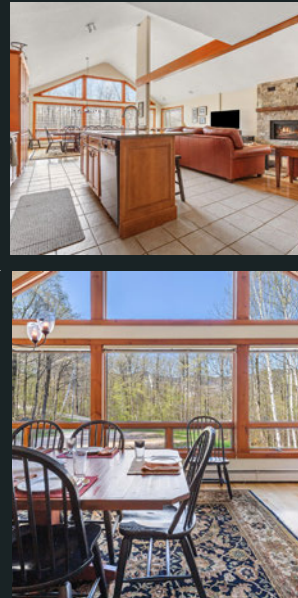
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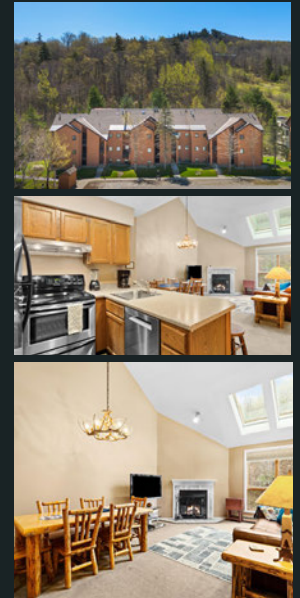
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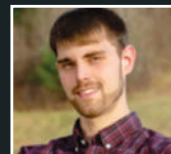
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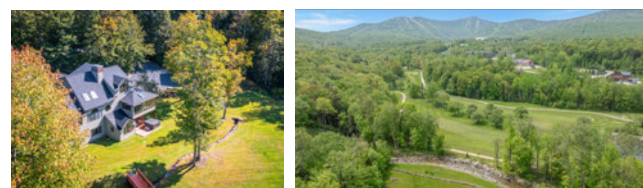


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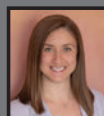
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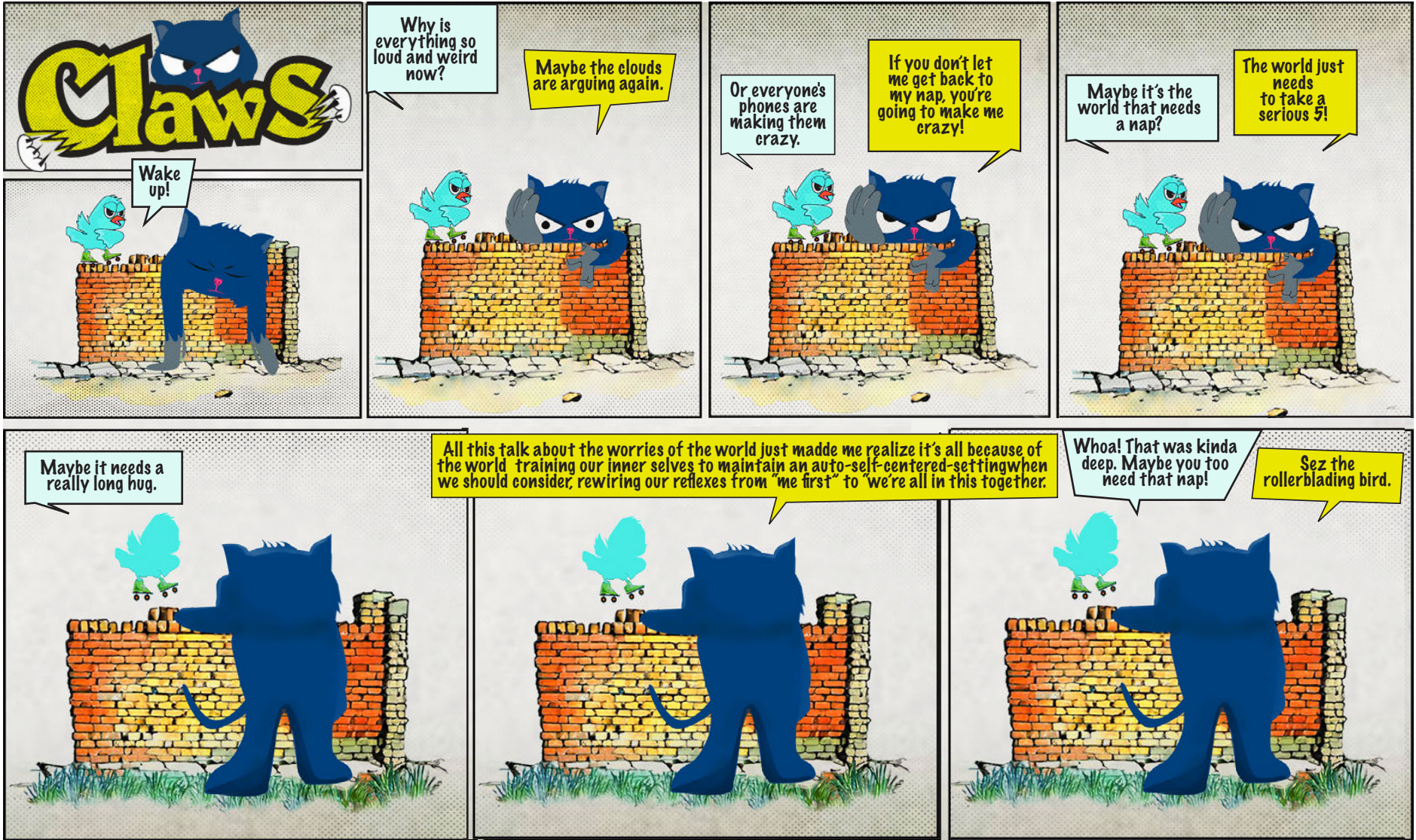
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Living the Dream:

tree, the new branch overreaching farther than it ever had before, with more side branches and then, finally, much fuller plumage. As a kid, I always thought of it as “poofing” season. Everything just “poofed” in a matter of weeks, sometimes it felt like days.

That's what I experience every time I walk up into The Canyon. It's like Tux, only smaller and closer to home. A quick walk up to the bottom of a ravine, tall steep walls closing in on you from this narrow col at the bottom. It's slightly overwhelming; you cannot actually see things right above you but only much farther up. And then, to walk just slightly up into it and sit on that jumping rock at the bottom of Downdraft. It's like being in "Jurassic Park" on a cloudy day.

But I've been watching the plants grow, feeling nature actually closing in around me: the ground that once was mud is now plants that rise up to my waist in some spots. The walls of The Canyon feel like they're closing in—with 4-foot plants on each side, that's an 8-foot smaller space. It's growing into an empty space. It's so cool to watch and feel the differences, to hear the birds come out and rejoicing in the unfurling. Although unfurling does sound like a "Handmaid's Tale" kind of experience.

I might go back to the great poofing. It shows a bit more joy in the experience. AI is telling me it could be the awakening, but that's a story about a woman's journey of self-discovery by Kate Chopin. But, damn it, I really like that. It reminds me that Mother Nature is female, that women grow their strength from the earth, and it would be like claiming that time of season from womanhood. Oh wait—it already is! ChatGPT also suggested green shine, leaf burst, blood rush, and spring flare.

No matter what we call it, this is the time of year when it is best to come to Vermont for a week, to really experience the great change, to become a real observer of nature, and take note of all the changes. To pay attention to life, in total, to take in a larger picture of the world than we had previously. To look beyond our computer screens and truly see nature.

My desk at home faces out the window. If I look beyond this small glimpse of the world and just lift my eyes slightly or even let them fade out. I can see it. I can see the world beyond my computer screen.

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

Goosing off at Kent Pond in Killington



Last Tuesday at Kent Pond in Killington, a lone goose paced the shoreline, setting the quiet rhythm of the morning.

Heirloom quilt exhibit opens for summer season at Middletown Springs Historical Society

MIDDLETOWN SPRINGS — The Middletown Springs Historical Society has opened its doors for the summer with a new exhibition highlighting the artistry and heritage of local quilting traditions. Titled “Patterns and Provenance: Quilts of Middletown Springs, 1840–1920,” the display features 20 heirloom quilts representing 15 historic patterns, all passed down through six longtime Middletown Springs families.

The exhibit is located in the ground-level gallery of the Historical Society and will be open to the public every Sunday from 2-4 p.m. through Oct. 12. Private appointments are also available through Dec. 21 by contacting the society directly.

The quilts on view showcase both utility and creativity—many were hand-pieced and hand-quilted, reflecting a blend of resourcefulness and design sensibility. While some quilters worked with leftover scraps from home sewing projects, others used store-bought fabric, which became increasingly accessible by mail order during the mid-19th century, even in rural communities. Period publications such as Godey’s “Lady’s Book” played a role in popularizing quilt patterns across the country, contributing to the diversity of designs featured in the collection.

Two standout quilts in the exhibit are attracting special attention. One is Juliet Barrett Gray's "Sunshine and Shadows Log Cabin" quilt, made with silk, satin, taffeta, and velvet—luxurious materials that include remnants of her 1860 blue and red plaid silk wedding dress. That same dress, later altered for her daughter in the 1880s, is also on display. Another highlight is an 1883 Double Four Patch quilt top created by Katherine B. Goff, meticulously constructed from 10,200 small cotton squares in a patriotic red, white, and blue palette.

Curator Mary Lou Willits welcomes quilting guilds and community groups for special guided tours by appointment.

For more information, visit: mshsvt.org.



Juliet Barrett Gray's "Sunshine and Shadows Log Cabin" quilt will be on display at the Middletown Springs Historical Society through Oct. 12.

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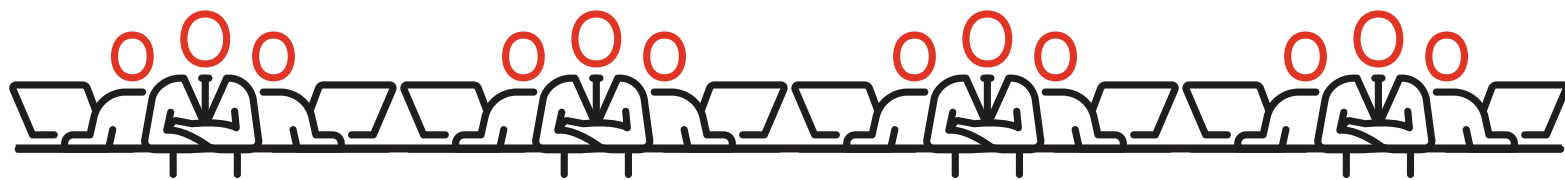
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Windsor County Mentors benefit from Girl Scouts' cookie donations

WINDSOR COUNTY—Thousands of boxes of Girl Scout Cookies are bringing smiles and support to service members, food banks, and nonprofits across Vermont and New Hampshire thanks to the annual Gift of Caring program from Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains. Among the many recipients this year is Windsor County Mentors, a local youth mentoring nonprofit that received donated cookies to share with its mentees and mentors.

In total, more than 70,000 packages of cookies were distributed in 2025, with 21,000 of those gifted by the public through the Gift of Caring initiative. The remaining 49,000 were donated by the council itself to organizations ranging from veterans' hospitals to food shelves, including Vermont-based recipients such as the Vermont Air National Guard, VA hospitals, and COTS of Burlington.

Windsor County Mentors, which connects children throughout Windsor County with adult mentors, was among the Vermont-based beneficiaries. The organization fosters long-term mentoring relationships that encourage academic, emotional, and social growth. The cookie donations not only offered a sweet surprise but also helped affirm the sense of community support that the organization builds among its participants.

The Gift of Caring program highlights the dual impact of the Girl Scout Cookie Program: it allows customers to purchase cookies for donation to deserving community members and supports Girl Scouts as they learn valuable business and leadership skills. Through these sales, Girl Scouts fund troop activities, service projects, and educational trips while also learning financial literacy, decision-making, and ethical business practices.

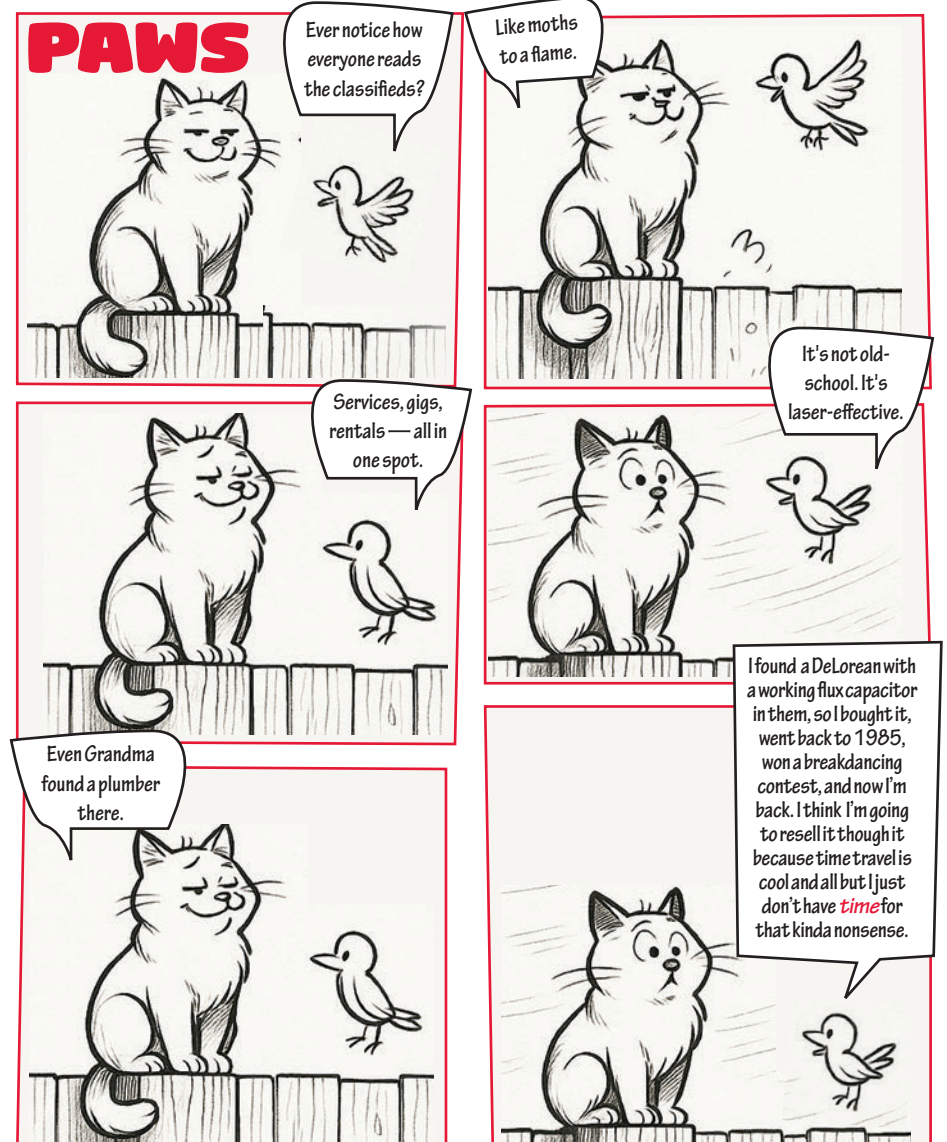
"Most of the time, the biggest treats come in the smallest boxes," said Rhonda Dorval of the Nashua Soup Kitchen, summing up the program's impact on both recipients and the Girl Scouts themselves.

For more information, visit: girlscouts-gwm.org.



Submitted

Windsor County Mentors appreciated Girl Scout Kylie Tilton's donation.



Fletcher Memorial Library launches summer reading program for area youth

LUDLOW—Fletcher Memorial Library is inviting children and teens across the region to take part in its 2025 Summer Reading Program, Color Our World, running from June 23 through August 1. The free program is open to residents ages 0–18 and features a blend of reading, storytelling, art, and special events designed to spark creativity and learning during the summer months.

A highlight of this year's program is the Mini-Masterpiece Art Show, where participants will receive a 4x4 mini canvas, easel, paints, brushes, and a palette to create their own original work. Finished pieces will be displayed in an art exhibition at the library in August.

The program also includes recurring weekly events for a range of age groups:

- Infant & toddler playgroup – Tuesdays, 10:30 a.m.–noon.
- Outdoor summer storytime – Wednesdays, 10:30–11 a.m.
- Art adventure – Thursdays, June 26 to July 24, 11 a.m.–12 p.m.
- Movie matinees – Friday, June 27, and Friday, Aug. 1, 1–3 p.m. (call or check the library website for titles)

In addition, a series of fun Friday special events will offer hands-on experiences:

- July 11: A visit from the Vermont Institute of Natural Science featuring three animal ambassadors
- July 18: Storyteller Michael Caduto presents tales from the Rainbow Garden
- July 25: A Children's Literacy Foundation event with Vermont author Jo Knowles, including a book giveaway

All Friday events take place from 1–2 p.m. and are open to all ages.

Online registration is available at fmlnews.org/youth, or families can register in person at the library.



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THE ESSENTIAL 19TH HOLE.



Whether you're golfing or not, **grab lunch at the Clubhouse Grill every Wednesday-Sunday from 11:00 a.m. - 4:00 p.m.** Enjoy outdoor deck dining, appetizers, salads and sandwiches as well as a variety of beer, wine and specialty drinks.



BE THE BEAST