

The REPORTER

Brandon • Pittsford • Proctor • West Rutland
Lake Dunmore, Leicester, Whiting, Sudbury, Goshen

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75¢

RNESU board approves budget hike of 2.75%

Discusses bus Driver shortage, COVID burnout

BY ANGELO LYNN

BRANDON — At their regular meeting last Wednesday, Dec. 15, the RNESU board met for an hour to discuss the current shortage of bus drivers, the continuing effect of the pandemic on the school district, the proposed bud-

get, and heard an update on the ongoing superintendent search.

Superintendent Jeanne Collins briefed the board on the extensive efforts the board is taking to try to ease the shortage of bus drivers throughout the district. She noted the district is advertising for help in the area newspapers, in social media and digital venues, and that the district was still facing shortages. She also said
(See RNESU board, Page 16)

Superintendent Search committee sets first public forum for Jan. 6

BY ANGELO LYNN

BRANDON — Following the recent announcement by RNESU Superintendent Jeanne Collins that she would step down at the end of the current school year in June 2022, the RNESU school board has formed a search committee and are already “well underway,”

according to board chair Laurie Bertrand.

At their first meeting on Dec. 13, the committee hired a search consultant through the Vermont School Board’s Association, Elaine Pinckney, with the goal of finding a candidate before Town Meeting, Bertrand
(See Superintendent, Page 16)

Brandon Area Rescue appeals to towns for emergency aid

BY ANGELO LYNN

BRANDON — After decades of taking care of Brandon-area residents when emergency attention was needed, the Brandon Area Rescue Squad is now appealing to the community for an emergency of its own.

Jordan Stage, BARS chief

operations officer, recently reached out to the four towns it principally serves — Brandon, Leicester, Goshen and Sudbury — for additional aid as its traditional revenue sources are not keeping up with the ambulance service’s costs.

(See Brandon Rescue, Page 22)

OV, Proctor, Westside winter sports teams kick-off the season

BY ANDY KIRKALDY & ANGELO LYNN

BRANDON — The COVID-shortened winter of the 2020-21 high school sports season is behind us, and the teams at Otter Valley are happy about that. The pandemic forced the school’s basketball programs, like those

elsewhere, to play abbreviated seasons, and wrestling was sidelined for the entire season.

And after a year off, the Otter Valley wrestling team looks to be back and very strong with enough grapplers to fill the entire lineup and then some. The basketball teams — the girls’ squad has a

new but familiar coach — will try to play up their strengths this year. And the Nordic ski team is young but learning fast.

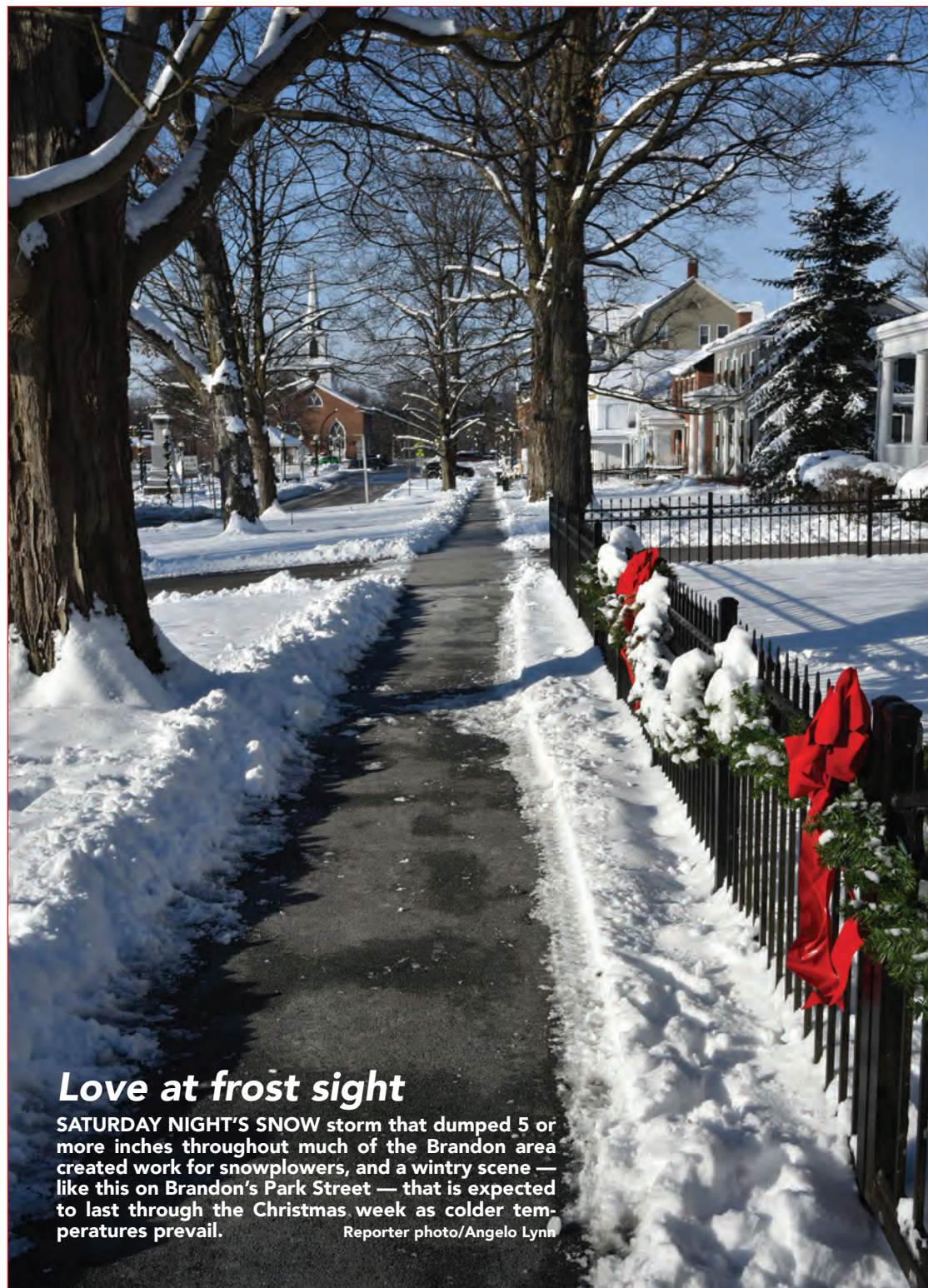
Unless the pandemic worsens and state officials curtail the season, OV athletes in the preseason were looking forward to enjoying full schedules (with masks for all,

except wrestlers while on mats), and they and their coaches were feeling hopeful.

BOYS’ BASKETBALL

Coach Mike Stark was feeling optimistic about his Otter boys’ basketball team during the preseason because of what he saw as its balance and depth.

“One through 11 they’re all pretty similar in their talent level, so I think contributions from the bench are going to be huge this
(See Sports Report, Page 10)



Love at frost sight

SATURDAY NIGHT’S SNOW storm that dumped 5 or more inches throughout much of the Brandon area created work for snowplowers, and a wintry scene — like this on Brandon’s Park Street — that is expected to last through the Christmas week as colder temperatures prevail.

Reporter photo/Angelo Lynn



Pittsford scrimps on road budget; board continues interviews for Town Manager

By ARIADNE WILL

PITTSFORD — In an effort to keep budget increases in check, the Pittsford Selectboard concluded at their meeting Wednesday — without a vote — to think about foregoing striping the roads another year to help balance the town's budget.

Haverstock said that the selectboard's options for coming up with or cutting an additional \$25,000 were to increase highway property taxation, increase General Fund taxation or to make additional cuts to the Highway Fund budget.

He added that he has already made line-item cuts to the

highway department's budget. Haverstock said that Highway Foreman Chad Eugair suggested any additional cuts to the highway department budget appear in the department's paving budget.

The selectboard also — in a unanimous vote — decided to transfer \$25,000 from the town's General Fund to the Police Cruiser Replacement Fund at their meeting Wednesday.

Town Manager John Haverstock said that the transfer of funds would allow the Police Cruiser Replacement Fund to keep out of the red, which it has entered the past three years fol-

lowing the annual transfer of \$15,000 into the fund.

The General Fund currently has about \$250,000 in it.

Selectman David Mills asked Haverstock where the \$45,000 that has been transferred to the Police Cruiser Replacement Fund over the years has gone. Haverstock said that the costs of the cars and maintenance tend to drain the fund quickly.

TOWN MANAGER SEARCH

The selectboard held two candidate interviews with the 16 applicants for the position of town manager. This is the first round of interviews, with another

round with finalists scheduled to take place sometime in January.

OTHER BUSINESS

The selectboard decided against having a special meeting in January to hear an update on the Grandpa's Knob wind turbine project. Instead, the board will continue to receive updates from project developer Sam Carlson, who says the project will not be moving forward in any big ways until mid-2022.

The selectboard approved a draft of their submission to the Town Report.

Thank you for helping us begin to heal

To the friends and neighbors, community members and perfect strangers who have all helped lift my family up and carry us down our path of healing...I am so

I know this won't reach all of you, but please know that if you helped us in any way, big or small, your love has been felt. Your words have been read. And I have paused and tried hard to let it all sink in.

grateful. My desk is stacked with cards and letters that I've been meaning to reply with a "thanks." But the amount that has poured in these past four months has been simply overwhelming.

I know this won't reach all of you, but please know that if you helped us in any way, big or small, your love has been felt. Your words have been read. And I have paused and tried hard to let it all sink in.

This time of year always gives me time to reflect, and this year more than ever. The truth that I keep finding is that the time we had with Jon during his very full life was a true gift to so many. 22 years of farming here on Wood Lane was a gift to his community. 10 years of being a dad was a gift of his pure love.

There is never, ever enough time, but perhaps we can all let what time we had with him sink in and settle into the empty spaces. I am beyond thankful for each one of your acts of kindness. They have meant so much, and they continue to bring me peace and light.

Courtney Satz at Wood's Market Garden



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Vt. reports 460 Covid cases, 3 deaths, updates breakthrough stats

BY ERIN PETENKO AND MIKE DOUGHERTY, VtDigger

Vermont reported 460 new Covid-19 cases on Friday, for a seven-day average of 394 cases per day.

That's a steep decline from the seven-day average of 485 cases 10 days ago, but officials have cautioned that cases could rise again after Christmas and New Year's. And, on Friday, Burlington officials confirmed that traces of the highly transmissible Omicron variant have been found in the city's sewer system and cases of the virus have now been detected in Vermont.

Sixty people are in Vermont hospitals with the virus, including 19 in intensive care units, the same number as on last Thursday.

The department disclosed three more deaths in its data. In total, 33 people have died so far in December, and 451 people have died since the beginning of the pandemic in Vermont.

New health department data also shows that the gap in outcomes between Vermont's vaccinated and unvaccinated populations appears to be widening.

The department's data summaries, released every two weeks, are the only regular report of post-vaccination infections, hospitalizations and deaths, commonly known as vaccine breakthroughs.

Over the latest two-week reporting period, the state reported 2,221 new breakthrough infections, compared to 4,056 infections among those not fully vaccinated.

Experts stress that breakthrough data should be analyzed by the rates of infection among the vaccinated and unvaccinated populations. In Vermont, where 76% of the state's population is fully vaccinated,

some portion of breakthrough cases is to be expected.

Unvaccinated people were roughly 4.9 times more likely to contract Covid-19 than fully vaccinated people over the latest reporting period.

That gap is even wider for people hospitalized with the coronavirus. The state reported 39 breakthrough hospitalizations compared with 92 among those not fully vaccinated. Comparing the hospitalization rates for both the vaccinated and unvaccinated populations, unvaccinated Vermonters were roughly 6.6 times more likely to be hospitalized for Covid.

The state Department of Financial Regulation released data Tuesday that showed an even more pronounced effect among Vermont adults who had received their booster dose of a vaccine. In the prior six weeks, people who were not fully vaccinated were 30 times more likely to be hospitalized for Covid than people who had received their booster dose of a vaccine.

While death numbers are small, they also show a significant gap based on vaccination status over the past two weeks. The state reported eight more deaths among vaccinated Vermonters compared to 26 among those not fully vaccinated.

The mortality rate among vaccinated and unvaccinated people has varied widely during the Delta surge, with some reporting periods showing more deaths among vaccinated people than unvaccinated. For the Delta surge as a whole, dating back to July, unvaccinated Vermonters were roughly 2.4 times more likely to die from Covid-19 than fully vaccinated Vermonters.



Iconic lines

A FLAG WAS caught in a curl, while the lines on the house and adjacent barn dominate the vista coming into Brandon from Forest Dale.

Reporter photo/Angelo Lynn



Happy Holidays

FROM EVERYONE AT THE REPORTER!

We will not be printing a December 29, 2021 edition of the paper. We're excited to bring you all the news of the area again starting on January 5, 2022. Look for us in your mailbox or area stores.

The **REPORTER**

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Guest Editorial

Vermont's Dirty Little Secret: Our State Government is Anti-Renewable Energy

BY PETER STERLING

Talk to anyone who has tried to bring renewable energy to Vermonters and they will tell you the same thing: despite our green reputation and the thousands of Vermonters who have asked for leadership to avoid the existential crisis climate change presents to humanity, our state government works every day to put the brakes on new solar energy and wind power projects.

The latest example is the draft Comprehensive Energy Plan from the Vermont Department of Public Service which will guide state energy policy for the next five years.

Facing massive demand for new electricity consumption that will be needed as Vermont reduces climate-changing fossil fuel use by electrifying its transportation and weatherization sectors, the Department's Plan:

- Makes no mention using clean and reliable Vermont wind power;
- Fails to recommend any new in state renewable energy use beyond the meager 10% already in state law;
- Whitewashes Vermont's loss of renewable energy jobs every year since 2016 when incentives for solar energy started being reduced;

• Inaccurately alleges that "Under any reasonable measure, the existing siting process allows well-sited generation projects to be built in Vermont"

By failing to recognize the need for new, homegrown clean energy sources, undercounting the clean-energy job loss, and misrepresenting the significant challenges facing those trying to build clean energy projects on private land, the Department's plan is anything but "comprehensive."

The Vermont Public Utilities Commission (PUC), charged with permitting renewable energy projects, wrote the most restrictive statewide sound standard for wind power in the country — effectively banning new wind projects in Vermont by, for example, requiring wind turbines to be roughly 100 times quieter than the FAA's "strictest" sound level for F-35 jets.

Renewable Energy Vermont

members have long documented how the current permitting process for solar projects is unpredictable and unnecessarily time consuming and expensive for all but the smallest size projects.

For example, the PUC rejected a solar project in Manchester stating, "The Project would have an undue adverse impact on aesthetics...[because] The duration of the view for drivers [passing by it] would be approximately 26 seconds" and that "approximately ten residences or businesses near or adjacent to the Project site would have visibility of the Project."

Similarly, the PUC denied a solar project proposed on a vacant, treeless lot next to an auto parts supply warehouse, self-storage facility and a gas station. The hearing officer denied the project because he reasoned that it would have an undue adverse effect on the aesthetics of the already heavily-developed area

While these and other cases represent a relatively small number of denials, they have a substantial chilling effect on renewable energy developers and private landowners who abandon otherwise promising sites—including sites in already-developed areas where forest and other wildlife impacts are minimal—because of the uncertainty they create.

These project denials and other harmful PUC standards also harm our economy and our ability to fight climate change. Since 2016, when the PUC started decreasing incentives for solar power, Vermont has lost 1,421 jobs in the renewable energy field.

One could imagine the Governor's office taking very direct action if say over 1,400 Vermonters lost their jobs in the ski industry or at Global Foundries over the last five years with no end in sight.

If our state government doesn't allow solar panels next to warehouses and gas stations because of aesthetics or doesn't think it's ok for drivers to spend 26 seconds looking at solar panels as they drive by, it is impossible to see how Vermont will reduce our fossil fuel use

(See *Vermont's secret*, Page 7)



Sparkles on ice

THE SUDDEN DROP in temperature between Sunday and Monday morning refroze the southern half of Lake Dunmore and left crystals sparkling on the surface with Mount Moosalamoo glistening in the background.

Reporter photo/Angelo Lynn

Community Forum

The 1968 Irasburg affair: A racial night-rider attack

BY STEPHEN C. TERRY

Racism punched Vermonters hard in the face with the shotgun night-rider attack by three Whites on the home of a Black minister in Irasburg in the early hours of July 19, 1968.

The shock and impact of that racial attack is still being felt and debated more than a half-century later with the publication of a new book about the notorious Irasburg Affair, as well as two other state police scandals during the 1970s.

The book,

Legacy, Weaponizing Race in the Irasburg Affair of 1968, published by The White River Press, with the Center for Research on Vermont at UVM, is a blockbuster read when race issues in Vermont can no longer be ignored. The book is available this December. Gary Shattuck of Shrewsbury is a former Vermont State Police commander, lawyer, former Assistant Vermont District Attorney, and now author. The author spent four years of me-

For many in Vermont these events and the role of the Vermont State Police during the 1960s and 1970s have faded into the mists of history. Yet, this history is critically important for Vermonters to have a perspective with which to judge the work today of Vermont's police forces, state and local.

Attorney, and now author. The author spent four years of me-

ticulous research for his important book with almost 1,000 footnotes. He brings back to life the events surrounding the Irasburg Affair, which shattered Vermont's quiet image by making it national news for its unusual racial attack in a lily-white state.

The Irasburg Affair involved three young White Northeast Kingdom Vermonters on a sultry summer night in 1968 attacking the Irasburg home of a Black minister and his family with shotgun blasts.

While no one was injured, the racial attack rocked Vermont's as it became a central part of the 1968 political campaign for governor and a bitter end for outgoing Gov. Philip H. Hoff's six years in office.

The Irasburg case resulted in Larry Conley, who was home on Army leave being convicted of a minor charge while his two night rider companions, one male and a young woman, es-

(See *Irasburg affair*, Page 7)

Letters to the Editor

On Climate—What's Governor Scott Going To Do About It?

One way to make America great again is to create green jobs for all kinds of Americans, including immigrants. We are a nation of immigrants and their children after all.

The other way is to stand up for free and fair elections. Civil rights and climate justice should come hand in hand.

Vermont's Global Warming Solutions Act is all about reducing CO2 emissions, but deliberately excludes active removal of CO2 from air, perhaps because it is considered too costly and other understandable misgivings addressed below. Complicating matters, Vermont's Climate Action Plan was recently upended after Connecticut and Massachusetts pulled out of the Transportation & Climate Initiative Program (TCI-P), which was set up in part to boost electric vehicles.

The Council must now find other ways to reduce CO2 emissions by at least one million metric tons by 2025. Renovating Vermont's power plants might well cover that gap.

Ideally, CO2 reduction should come hand in hand with active removal of CO2 from the sky simultaneously and profitably. Reports from the IPCC and COP26 suggest that reduction without removal is like digging a hole in the sky and filling it again. COP26, also known as the 26th Conference of Parties to The United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, was recently held in Glasgow, Scotland with mixed results and no new solutions.

The missing ingredient that Gov. Scott and Vermont utilities can bring to the table is a profitable plan for CO2 removal. Central plants can be transformed in two stages into negative emission, power and storage stations that reuse CO2 for supplemental fuel and make other synthetic fuels and products, i.e. plastic, concrete, fertilizer, graphene and carbon fiber. Besides, storage is vital to back up the rapid growth of intermittent renewables and electric cars, by the way.

Unfortunately, many environ-

mentalists have thrown the green baby out with the green washing. Progressives and Democrats alike do not trust 'CO2 Capture' scenarios to save climate for fear of green washing by fossil companies who make no secret they want to capture CO2 emission to frack for natural gas or for enhanced oil recovery (EOR). Greens view EOR as evil, oily and regressive for good reason. Wouldn't it be all too convenient to claim carbon offsets while pushing more oil and gas out of the ground and more CO2 into the atmosphere?

Clearly, we should reject the misuse of CO2 chemistry to green wash EOR and fracking by oil and gas companies. Instead, let's apply the new chemistry by design to reduce CO2 emission and remove CO2 from air simultaneously. Hemp and soft woods are cheap to grow for fuel and very good at pulling CO2 out of the air to make carbohydrates.

In a similar vein, the diesel engine was invented to run on peanut oil and other biofuels including hemp biodiesel. Think what a different world it would be if that had become the norm. Both Ford and Diesel liked industrial hemp to make biofuels, car parts and other products before a flood of cheap oil washed over them.

This essay covers main points from a 'CO2 Reuse' research summary written for the Renewable Nations Institute (RNI), posted under 'Comments' on the Council website. It advocates for the profitable renovation of central plants - like Vermont's wood plants and Vermont Yankee (VY) - to make them 'carbon neutral' first and then 'carbon negative' in two stages within ten years.

Over 60 articles, lab reports and links are cited on a) how best to capture CO2 and b) how best to catalyze CO2 into synthetic fuels and feedstocks. If said fuels and feedstocks are responsibly utilized then negative emissions can be actuated, monitored and certified

(See On climate, Page 6)

set-up, those who spent hours keeping the auction running over four days, and those who assisted with getting the items distributed and doing clean-up. Addi-

tional thanks to Bill Moore and the Town Hall, to Carey Bunker at the Library (who produced the beautiful graphics), and to our supportive families. You are all

truly Friends of the Brandon Library.

Bobbie Torstenson on behalf of the Friends of Brandon Library

Brandon Area Toy Projects thanks our helpers

As 2021 comes to a close, the Brandon Area Toy Project would like to thank all of our amazing donors and entities that join hands with us to help.

In 2021, we helped 158 kids have Christmas. With Christa's Totes, Beth Quenneville gave out a hundred gift cards to Hanafords.

The Vermont Foodbank helped Nicole Danyow to deliver 526 food boxes during the year in addition to 100 boxes this week. Working with Operation Christmas for Troops, Ally Brown shipped out dozens of care boxes to troops overseas.

Gifts Galore by Stacey Mohan helped kids to purchase low cost items for their families.

The Dolly Parton Library delivers 100 books every month to kids in our area because of Kyle Hutchins of the Toy Project.

And, Brandon Recreation Department brought the Reverse Parade to life! And yes, Spooksville, Harvest Fest, the Carnival, and various other events through the year happen with great collaborations with Neshobe PTO, BFPL, Brandon Rec, Brandon

Fire Dept, BARS and more.

So thank you for supporting us throughout the year. Your donations stay local and go directly to the project. We truly are better together! Teamwork makes the dream work. Thank you for

making these dreams come true.
*Colleen Wright
Brandon*

Letters can be found on pages 2, 5, and 6

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Thanks from the Brandon Library

A sincere thank you to all who participated in assuring a successful outcome for the Friends of Brandon Library Holiday Auction. This includes the many artists, craftspeople, and supporters of the Library who contributed such a wide variety of wonderful items. They were fully appreciated by the many people who visited, and indeed the response

was better than expected, despite the necessary accommodations. We do look forward to next year, and the return to a live auction with our usual social interactions and refreshments.

Certainly the auction would not have been so successful without the contributions of all the volunteers - those who helped with accepting items and

Brandon Obituaries

Mary Ann Spotts, 87, Pittsford

PITTSFORD — Mary Ann Spotts, age 87, passed away Monday, December 13, 2021, at Wintergreen North Residential Care in Brandon.

Mary Ann was born in Youngsville, Penn. on May 26, 1934. She was the daughter of George and Anna (Zurkan) Senchuk. She grew up in Youngsville where she received her education. She started nursing school, but dropped out to get married.

She married Charles 'Decker' Spotts on December 5, 1953. She and Decker had lived in various states during their careers. She was involved in many church activities. She especially thrived in children's church programs, and she worked as a teacher's aide for



Mary Ann Spotts

several years at Manchester Elementary School in Maryland.

She loved to entertain, often housing missionaries, singing groups and Fresh Air children. She loved all varieties of plants, her home looking like a

greenhouse. She loved nature and wildlife, especially deer and cardinals. She had been involved in the Gideon's Auxiliary.

She and Decker enjoyed traveling and spent more than ten years motorhome traveling throughout the country. A fond memory was spending seven weeks doing a cross-country trek. She was a very supportive wife and loving mother.

Mary Ann is survived by her husband, Charles 'Decker' Spotts, and her son, Brian Spotts and his wife Tina, all of Pittsford, Vt.; and a daughter, Charann Beth Creech of Greenville, S.C.; and one sister, Bonnie Dove of Bluffton, S.C.

She is also survived by her grandchildren: Carrie and Luke Creech, Krista (Spotts) Desabrais, Kendra (Spotts) Seavey and Kelsey (Spotts) Magnuson; and her great-grandchildren — Hannah, Hillary, and Hayden Desabrais; Malcolm and Piper Seavey; and Sophie Magnuson.

She was predeceased by a son, Keith Allen Spotts; her brothers, Pete Senchuk and Nick Senchuk, and a sister, Helen Carlson.

The memorial service "In Celebration of Her Life" was held on Saturday, December 18, 2021, at 2 p.m. at Calvary Bible Church, 2 Meadow Lane, in Rutland. The Rev. Ed Elliott officiated. A private burial will take place at a later date.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made, in her memory to: BAYADA Hospice, 190 South Main Street, Suite 2, Rutland, Vt. 05701, or to Elderly Services, 27 North Pleasant Street, Middlebury, Vt. 05753.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon.

On climate

(Continued from Page 5)

at utility scale. The overall plan is to replace fossil fuels with a mix of efficiency, wind, solar, storage, synthetic fuels made from CO2 emission and biofuels made from industrial hemp and other, sustainably cultivated biomass. Vermont farmers and most farmers need new cash crops.

To sum up:

- Recent advances in chemistry and agriculture can now be harnessed to cultivate both food and fuel crops, and replace fossil fuels completely;

- Much underutilized farmland in the U.S. and many countries can be put back to work. Likewise, new ways to irrigate deserts beacon to us. Greening deserts is crucial to cool climate and feed the world.

- Monoculture agribusiness can give way to sustainable farming methods interspersed with wilderness reserves that nurture birds and bees. Let Einstein's warning about the bees be our guide. Imagine if Monsanto actually supported diversity and sustainability instead of championing a maniacal, monopolistic, monoculture plot to corner the world wheat market. It remains to be seen that Bayer, their new owner, will set a new course.

Finally, here is some good news on the cost of CO2 Capture from DOE's Pacific Northwest National Laboratory. In a study published

last March, reviewed by Robert Service in Science Magazine, the PNNL team reported that their new EEMP solvent absorbs CO2 from flue gas and releases it as pure CO2 for as little as \$47.10. That number brings us within arm's reach of cost effective CO2 Capture.

Governor Scott and The Vermont Climate Council should be actively investigating these matters with an eye toward transforming Vermont Yankee and Vermont's two wood plants into negative emission plants. Though small, 30 & 50 MWs, these two wood plants put out over 600,000 metric tons of CO2 per year. Or they can be profitably retrofitted to remove most of that amount from the sky, thereby making a combined difference, for the good, of over one million metric tons or over one tenth of Vermont's yearly CO2 emission. That would go a long way toward covering the emissions gap left by the implosion of TCI-P.

Let's face it. COP26 and 27 are in trouble. The Vermont Climate Council needs help. Gov. Scott and Vermont utilities should now come to the rescue with a profitable plan to renovate Vermont's power plants to reduce CO2 emissions and remove CO2 from the sky and, by doing so, set the right example to the nation, the world and Joe Biden too.

*Jim Hurt,
Woodstock*

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Christopher Book/Director

For five generations the Barnard family has assisted families in Pittsford, Proctor, Chittenden and the surrounding area getting through one of life's most difficult times.

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Irasburg affair

(Continued from Page 4)

caped prosecution.

The case also exposed flaws in the way state police dealt with racial issues and its command structure.

The lessons from that series of events, as well as the 1979 Router Bit Affair, and of the dirty cop, Paul Lawrence, who in the 1970s planted drugs on people and then arrested them, showcased a decade-long misbehavior by the Vermont State Police. For this reason, this book is an important recounting of Vermont history, especially now when police-community issues are frequently considered breaking news in the nation.

For me, Shattuck's book was a return to one of the most reported Vermont news events of 1968, already a very tumultuous year with the Sen. Robert F. Kennedy and The Rev. Martin Luther King murders, anguish over the Vietnam War, a spirited GOP gubernatorial primary, and efforts in our state to foster more racial understanding between young rural Whites and urban Blacks.

During the Irasburg Affair, I was a Statehouse reporter for the Rutland Herald and the Barre-Montpelier Times Argus and one of the news people covering these events.

For many in Vermont these events and the role of the Vermont State Police during the 1960s and 1970s have faded into the mists of history. Yet, this history is critically important for Vermonters to have a perspective with which to judge the work today of Vermont's police forces, state and local.

Shattuck has done a brilliant job of recreating that time. He writes that his book is "an account of the unintended consequences resulting from the careless use of divisive, racially-charged language lodged against law enforcement agencies when virtually no evidence of racism existed."

Wow! Shattuck's conclusion was a surprise to me, as I remained convinced, more than a half a century later, that racial attitudes tainted the work of the Vermont State Police in investigating the Irasburg case. In fact, a three-member commission investigating the Irasburg case, headed by the late U. S. District Judge Ernest W. Gibson Jr., found that the state police went from prosecuting the shotgun attack to persecuting the Black minister.

While the state police mem-

bers were investigating the shotgun attack, they observed that the married Black minister was engaged in sexual relations with his White houseguest. This resulted in the two being charged with the crime of adultery, which added a whole new salacious dimension to the story.

The Router Bit Affair involved state police members in the St. Johnsbury area getting free seconds of router bits for their personal use that they later misappropriated. In 1979, I directed coverage of the impact of the Router Bit scandal as Managing Editor of the Rutland Herald. The tragic result was that Vermont State Police Cpl. Howard Gary Gould, distraught over the scandal, took his life on July 30, 1979, behind the Vermont State House, and left a note which is included in the book.

I agree that the Vermont State Police did little to support Gould's widow and family after the tragic event. At the same time, Vermont's media fell short in its reporting, as well. We were all focused on the human tragedy and its impact on the Gould family. As the Herald's Managing Editor, I should have done more to focus our reporters on that aspect of the story.

In the book's Epilogue, Shattuck sets forth documentation of the many efforts by the Vermont State Police to create new leadership from within. He convincingly argues that the old culture of "Fortress Redstone," the former location of the police headquarters, has now evolved into a culture of accountability and transparency. Prior to these events, the state police were a law unto themselves as the scandals of the 1960s and 1970s demonstrated.

(Disclosure: Shattuck, after several interviews, asked if I would write a Preface for his book. I agreed, and even though I disagreed with his central conclusion, he bravely included it. I believe it gives this important book even more credibility.)

Editor's note: Stephen C. Terry of Middlebury is a former Managing Editor of the Rutland Herald (1977-1985) and a Statehouse reporter (1965-1969).

Vermont's secret

(Continued from Page 4)

enough to do our part in stopping climate change.

To reduce greenhouse gas pollution, we know the future will require increased reliance on cleaner electricity to power our cars and heat our homes without burning dirty energy sources that are making our

planet less safe for humanity. Vermonters need a state government that truly leads on the fight to stop climate change by removing barriers to electricity from clean, safe, reliable, and affordable in-state renewables like solar and wind power. But the record is clear, Vermonters are not getting what we need.

Editor's Note: Peter Sterling is the Interim Executive Director of REV, the voice of Vermont's renewable energy business community who are working to eliminate our reliance on dirty fossil fuels by increasing the use of renewable energy and building a clean energy economy.

Two Groton residents found guilty of interfering with bear hunters

GROTON — Two Groton residents were issued citations by a Vermont State Game Warden on Nov. 11, following the investigation of an incident of hunter harassment. Both were found guilty in Caledonia Superior Court of interfering with hunters.

Topsham resident Theodore Shumway and two companions were hunting black bear with hounds in the 26,000-acre Groton State Forest near Noyes Pond on October 9, 2021. A bear led the hounds onto private property before the bear climbed a tree. The hunters entered the woods from Buzzy's Road and retrieved the hounds, leaving the bear in the tree on the landowner's property.

On returning to his truck with leashed hounds, Mr. Shumway encountered Donna Babic and Betty Eastman releasing air from the tires of his truck. Following an argument

between the parties, one of the two women allowed a German shepherd out of their vehicle. The loose German shepherd attacked and injured one of the leashed hounds, which required veterinary care.

Vermont State Troopers responded to an emergency call from Mr. Shumway to defuse the situation. A subsequent investigation by a Vermont State Game Warden found the licensed and permitted bear hunters to be acting lawfully. The game warden cited Ms. Babic and Ms. Eastman with violations of Title 10 VSA 4708, Interfering with Hunting, Fishing or Trapping.

"Vermonters don't always agree on wildlife management, especially when it comes to big game," said Colonel Jason Batchelder, Fish and Wildlife's Chief Game Warden. "Even so, I would ask that Vermonters respect one another's constitutional right to hunt. Intentionally

interfering with legal hunters in any fashion will result in court action, especially in a potentially dangerous fashion as we saw in this case."

The department supports public engagement with wildlife management through appropriate channels, including town government, the legislature, and the Fish and Wildlife Board.

"Managing Vermont's wildlife for a public with diverse values is a challenge and a privilege," said Commissioner Christopher Herrick. "I encourage all Vermonters to join me in remembering our shared passion for wildlife, no matter how different our practices or approaches may be, and to remain civil and respectful as we discuss these important conservation issues."

Babic and Eastman were each fined \$262 and will lose their license privileges for fishing, hunting and trapping for a year.



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Calendar of events

December

Mondays Thursdays:

Brandon Public Library Second Story

This is a program started to keep the library a quiet place to work even throughout the after-school rush. The Second Story is open from 3:30 - 5:00 pm Monday - Thursday throughout the school year. It's a fun place to chill after school with board games and computers.

24:

Town Hall Theater virtual Holiday Jukebox.

Friday, Dec. 24-Saturday, Jan. 1, online at townhalltheater.org. THT presents a new concert showcasing an uplifting collection of local music videos. \$10. Proceeds benefit the Giving Fridge.

30:

"Shepherd: The Story of a Jewish Dog" on screen in Middlebury.

Thursday, Dec. 30, 7 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Pleasant St. From award winning director Lynn Roth, this film sensitively portrays the timeless and unbreakable bond between a boy and his faithful dog as it is put to the ultimate test in 1930's Germany. When the Nuremberg Laws are passed forbidding Jews to own pets, Kaleb, a German Shepherd, is separated from his Jewish family and his beloved 10 year old master, Joshua. What follows is a story of love and courage during an unforgettable time in history seen through the eyes and perspective of a dog. More info at mnff.org or townhalltheater.org.

31:

New Year's Eve fireworks and ice skating in Middlebury.

Friday, Dec. 31, beginning at 6:30 p.m., Middlebury Rec Field, Mary Hogan Dr. American Legion Post 27, is sponsoring this year's New Year's Eve fireworks and ice skating. Fireworks will begin at approximately 6:30 p.m. When they're done head over to the Memorial Sports Center and enjoy free ice skating from 7-8:30 p.m.

January

2:

"Cinderella" LIVE in HD in Middlebury.

Sunday, Jan. 2, 1 p.m., Town Hall Theater, 68 S. Maple St. Laurent Pelly's storybook staging of Massenet's Cendrillon is presented with an all-new English translation in an abridged 90-minute adaptation, with mezzo-soprano Isabel Leonard as its rags-to-riches princess. Encore screening of the January 1 Met performance. Tickets \$24 adults/\$10 students, available at townhalltheater.org.

*Goings on
around town*



Christmas Bird Count 2021

Rutland County Audubon's annual Christmas Bird Count will take place this year on January 2. Birds spotted within a 7.5 mile radius of Meads Falls in Center Rutland will be counted by teams of field birders and feeder-watchers in this count circle. Results will be tallied and posted on e-Bird.

Interested persons can contact birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org for information or to sign up.

The Christmas Bird Count is a census of birds in the Western Hemisphere, performed annually in the early Northern-hemisphere winter by volunteer birdwatchers and administered by the National Audubon Society. The purpose is to provide population data for use in science, especially conservation biology, though many people participate for recreation.

The CBC is the longest-running citizen science survey in the world.

Prior to the turn of the 20th century, hunters engaged in a holiday tradition known as the Christmas "Side Hunt." They would choose sides and go afield with their guns—whoever brought in the biggest pile of feathered (and furred) quarry won. Conservation was in its beginning stages in that era, and many observers and scientists were becoming concerned about declining bird populations. Beginning on Christmas Day 1900, ornithologist Frank M. Chapman, an early officer in the then-nascent Audubon Society, proposed a new holiday tradition—a "Christmas Bird Census" that would count birds during the holidays rather than hunt them.

EJ Hauser to come to Vermont Studio Center this January

WEST RUTLAND — Vermont Studio Center today announced an artist talk with painter EJ Hauser, as a part of the Visiting Artist Program. On Monday, January 10, 2022, 7 p.m., the talk will take place at Vermont Studio Center in the Red Mill Building. This event is free and open to the public.

EJ Hauser lives and works in Brooklyn and Ulster County N.Y., and is represented by Derek Eller Gallery in New York and Philipp Haverkamp Gallery in Berlin.

EJ's paintings are both graphic and open to interpretation, teetering between iconography and something familiar but abstract. This imagery shifts between omnivorous references both ancient and current, her paintings are mysterious talisman, employing buzzing pallets and marks that dance. Stuttering lines form a visual code like musical notes, which coalesce with atmospheric layers to create ineffable messages.

EJ had her second solo show with Derek Eller Gallery, *Voyagers*, in April, 2021. In 2020, she had her first solo exhibition, *Forest Dwellers*, with Philipp Haverkamp in Berlin, Germany. Her paintings and drawings have been shown in numerous group exhibitions in New York, including Cheim & Read, Sperone Westwater, Gavin Brown's Enterprise, Regina Rex, The Journal Gallery, and Sargent's Daughter's, and recently at The Pit in LA.

EJ's work has been featured in *The New Yorker*, *The New York Times*, *Frieze*, *BOMB* magazine and *Turps Banana* among others.

*Welcome the
New Year!*

Skibots

FORMER OVUHS ART teacher Jim Samler, who taught at the school 28 years, from 1986 to 2014, recently crafted these skier robotic figures from art scraps he had hanging around his studio — just for something fun to do, he said. The figures measure 7 to 16 inches in height. Fun stuff during a week of wintry weather.

Photos by Jim Samler



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL

Sports report

(Continued from Page 1)

year,” Stark said. “And guys who start one game might not neces-

court is a strength of ours. I think shooting the ball is going to be a strength of ours,” Stark said. “We’re a little undersized, so post play and help defense is going to

Drew Pelkey provide depth in the frontcourt.

Stark described the rest of the team as “eight guards,” although several are capable of sliding into

are Matt Bryant and Matt Greeno.

Stark said the team’s two versatile sophomores will also make strong cases for minutes, guard Owen Thomas and swingman

and match, Stark said set lineups might be rare, especially in the early going.

“It will be what lineup is clicking, what group of five is clicking,” he said.

The Otters have a tough Division II schedule that includes both Rutland and Addison county teams, but Stark believes they can hold their own.

“We could have our ups and downs. But I think if guys continue to buy in and we keep committing to competing every single day, I think we could be anywhere between 12-8 and 8-12,” he said.

WRESTLING

An influx of three sophomores and four freshmen, almost all with both middle school and youth experience, has given the OV wrestling program a numbers boost.

With eight upperclassmen also signed on, most back after missing last winter, when health officials ruled out wrestling as a high school sport because of the pandemic, Coach Cole Mason has close to a full ladder and full practice room — and competition in several weight classes.

“We’ll have some overlap. Kids are going to have to wrestle off for the first time at Otter Valley in a long time,” Mason said. “It’s a great problem to have.”

Having that many wrestlers in the room also helps build team spirit and camaraderie and makes for a more enjoyable experience for a team, he said.

“It makes it a lot easier to come to practice, especially because wrestling is a grind,” he said. “Having 15 kids is great.”

Among the returners Mason expects to excel are senior Sam Martin, a state meet third-place finisher at 195 pounds who might

(See Wrestling, Page 11)



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL BOYS' VARSITY BASKETBALL

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME	1/11	@ MT. ANTHONY	7 P.M.	2/2	WINDSOR	7 P.M.
12/22	@ SPRINGFIELD	7 P.M.	1/14	MSJ	7 P.M.	2/7	@ HARTFORD	7 P.M.
12/27	@ WINDSOR	7 P.M.	1/21	HARTFORD	7 P.M.	2/10	FAIR HAVEN	7 P.M.
12/29	@ BRATTLEBORO	7 P.M.	1/24	BURR & BURTON	7 P.M.	2/17	@ WOODSTOCK	7 P.M.
1/4	VERGENNES	7 P.M.	1/28	@ FAIR HAVEN	7 P.M.	2/21	@ MT ABRAHAM	7 P.M.
1/7	MT. ABRAHAM	7 P.M.	1/31	BURR & BURTON	7 P.M.	2/24	SPRINGFIELD	7 P.M.

sarily start the second game. So it’s nice to have 11 guys who are so similar, because I can play 11 guys, and there’s not a drop.”

He sees a team that can run and fill up the basket, but one that is not the biggest he has coached.

“Getting up and down the

have to improve, and we’re working on that.”

Two seniors who will see plenty of playing time offer much of the Otters’ size, center Hayden Bernhardt and forward/center Dylan Clark-Stevens. Junior Thomas Politano and freshman

the small forward role.

The team’s other two seniors are both guards capable of running the point or playing off the ball, Elijah Tucker-Bryant and Evan Thomas. Two juniors who will start or see plenty of time at shooting guard or small forward

Aiden Decker. That leaves one more player, guard Logan Letourneau, who like his two older brothers made the varsity team as a freshman and brings both outside shooting and driving ability, according to Stark.

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Wrestling

(Continued from Page 10)

bump up to 220; junior Caleb Whitney at either 132 or 138, who Mason said is “pretty hungry” after underperforming at the 2019 state tourney; senior Austin Cormany, who was one place short of the podium at 120 in 2019; and junior Tucker Babcock, who Mason said has “worked hard in the past two off-seasons.”

Other upperclassmen are senior Dom Davis at 182; juniors Malachi Sheldrick and Ben Marks, both at either 145 or 152; and Simon Martin at 195 or 220.

The three sophomores are heavyweight Derek Li, Carter Giles at 138 or 145, and Caleb Reynolds at 120.

The freshmen rounding out the squad are Isaac Whitney at 170 or 182, Quincy Boone at 138 or 145, Kingston Cotter at 126, and Jackson Marks at 106.

Mason clearly expects some of his younger wrestlers to excel, but opted not to be specific.

“We’ve got some young kids who are going to surprise some people,” he said. “I wouldn’t be surprised to see a couple of these young kids on the top of the podium come February.”

Mason also believes the Otters can fare well as a team.

“You don’t get a trophy unless you get top three,” he said. “The goal is to get a team trophy. The goal is to produce quality wres-



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL VARSITY WRESTLING

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME			
12/29	@ MIDDLEBURY TBA.		1/22	@ VERGENNES TOURNAMENT	TBA
1/6	MVL DUALS - FAIR HAVEN, RUTLAND	6 P.M.	1/26	@ MVL DUALS – BURR & BURTON	6 P.M.
1/8	@ MAU TOURNAMENT	9:45 A.M.	1/29	OTTER VALLEY INVITATIONAL	TBA
1/13	@ MVL DUALS - SPRINGFIELD	6 P.M.	2/12	@ SVL DUAL MEET CHAMPION	9:30 A.M.
1/14	@ ESSEX TOURNAMENT	TBA	2/25 & 26	@ CVU (STATE TOURNAMENT)	TBA
1/15	@ ESSEX TOURNAMENT	TBA	3/4 & 5	@ NEW ENGLAND TOURNAMENT	TBA

The biggest news for the OV girls’ basketball program is the return of Coach Ray Counter, who led the program for several seasons about a decade or more ago.

Counter did not leave coaching after departing from the varsity. He simply returned to middle

Counter takes over a team that brings back several key players from a 4-6 season that included a strong finish and a first-round Division III home playoff win before a quarterfinal loss to eventual champion Lake Region.

He sees positives in the team, but also areas that will need shor-

ness and our team unity, and we have a lot of work to do on our defense and our rebounding,” he said.

Certainly, the Otters are not a tall team. Counter said only one of his returners, junior Emily Peduto, is a true forward, although standout senior Alice

who is likely to see significant minutes again.

The team’s other seniors are guards Marissa Connors and Joanna Ray and forward Brittany Jackson. Counter said Jackson has been away from the sport for a while, but her athleticism will be valuable in the paint.

Speedy junior guard Ryleigh LaPorte will start along with Keith, Counter said, while junior guard Elena Politano will see plenty of minutes either as a starter or in the regular rotation, and junior forward Alivia Sheldrick will be in the frontcourt mix.

Two more players will, at least to start with, swing between the varsity and JV teams, sophomore Sierra Cormany and freshman Matelin LaPorte.

Counter described the lineup and rotation as “still up in the air” as the Otters’ opening game approached, and said he could continue to tinker with things as the season progressed.

“Right now we could have a number of starting lineups depending on who we are playing,” he said.

Essentially, Counter expects the Otters to gel as the weeks pass and be better when February and March roll around.

“I see us having some struggles early on, but as we spend more time together, I think that things will get much smoother, both offensively and defensively,” he said. “And my expectation is we will see those improvements through the season, and most of all any time we step on the court I (See Nordic Skiing Page 12)



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS' VARSITY BASKETBALL

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME						
12/23	MIDDLEBURY	7:00 P.M.	1/8	WINDSOR	2:30 P.M.	2/4	SPRINGFIELD	7:00 P.M.
12/28	@ MILL RIVER	5:30 P.M.	1/11	@ VERGENNES	7:00 P.M.	2/8	@ WINDSOR	7:00 P.M.
12/30	WEST RUTLAND	7:00 P.M.	1/17	BURR & BURTON	7:00 P.M.	2/11	WOODSTOCK	7:00 P.M.
1/3	FAIR HAVEN	7:00 P.M.	1/25	WOODSTOCK	7:00 P.M.	2/15	@ PROCTOR	7:00 P.M.
1/6	@ RUTLAND	7:00 P.M.	1/28	HARTFORD	7:00 P.M.	2/18	@ SPRINGFIELD	7:00 P.M.
			2/1	@ HARTFORD	7:00 P.M.			

tlers. We’re finally at that point we’ve been working toward.”
GIRLS’ BASKETBALL

school and kept preparing the next generations of Otter athletes for high school play.

ing up as the Otters face a tough schedule.
“Our strengths are our quick-

Keith is a strong inside player as a guard/forward, as is junior Anna Lee, a mainstay in recent seasons

Nordic Skiing

(Continued from Page 11)
 expect us to compete.”

NORDIC SKIING

The Otter Valley Nordic ski team this winter is young and looking to build its skills, as the five-member team is comprised of three sophomores and two freshmen. And the dearth of snow hasn't been helping, said Coach Bob Clark.

“The team is very young, but they've all done some skiing and they have great potential for improvement,” Clark said, but so far, the team hasn't been on snow.

The team typically practices at Mountain Top Nordic Center in Chittenden, which has yet to open, and this week's warmer weather forecast likely set things back compared to previous years.

Practices, Clark says, have been focusing on roller skiing, running a steep hill across from OVUHS that's a mile and a half up and down, riding stationary bikes and other drills to build endurance, speed and cardiac capacity. “The kids are getting eager to get out on the snow and put their skis on, and so am I!” Clark added.

Team members are: sophomores Ike Bailey, Dillon Ladd and Baker LaRock; and ninth-graders Luke Calvin and Eli Bagley.

Vermont Nordic ski teams compete in two divisions, Divisions I and II, but Clark notes that even the Division II schools include such ski juggernauts as Middlebury, Harwood and Woodstock. For league competitions OV skis in Vermont's Southern conference.

“There are very few small schools, OV's size, that have Nordic teams,” Clark said, “but it's a great sport, a great lifetime sport, and we're building a program and we're on the right track with these young kids.” Clark, who has been coaching varsity for the past two years, had spent more than a dozen years coaching at the middle school. A lawyer before he retired, Clark recalled that his daughters skied in the Bill Koch League, and two skied at Otter Valley years ago.

OVUHS has had a Nordic ski team since the early 1970s, he



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL NORDIC SKI TEAM

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME			
12/14	@ MAU	3 P.M.	1/19	@ MT ANTHONY	3 P.M.
12/22	@ BRATTLEBORO	3 P.M.	1/26	@ BRATTLEBORO	3 P.M.
12/29	@ WOODSTOCK	10 A.M.	2/9	@ BURR & BURTON	3 P.M.
1/4	@ RUTLAND	3 P.M.	2/15	@ RUTLAND	3 P.M.
1/8	@ WOODSTOCK	10 A.M.	2/17	@ BRATTLEBORO	3 P.M.
1/12	@ BURR & BURTON	3 P.M.	2/24	STATE MEET @ CRAFTSBURY (CLASSIC) 1	0 A.M.
			2/28	STATES @ RIKERT FREESTYLE SKATE	10 A.M.

said, recalling that the team's most famous alum was Lawton Redman, who skied on the U.S. Olympic team in 2002, when the winter Olympics were in Utah.

While this season will be one on which to build toward more competitive seasons in the years ahead, Clark says he's looking forward to seeing how much individual team members can improve, and how they can work together as a team to be able to compete at the varsity level.



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL ROCK CLIMING TEAM

OTTER VALLEY CLIMBING TEAM

BY ANGELO LYNN

BRANDON — With a large number of returning climbers coming back to OV's rock climbing team,

Coach Andy McMillan is looking forward to a strong team doing well in the upcoming competition. (See *OV Climbing*, Page 13)

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME			
12/1	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.	2/2	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.
12/15	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.	2/16	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.
1/5	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.	3/9	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER (STATE FINALS)	TBA
1/19	@ RUTLAND CLIMBING CENTER	6:00 P.M.			

OV Climbing

(Continued from Page 12)

tions this winter.

McMillan said the team's numbers are comparable with previous years, noting that the team combines the school's middle school and high school into one team for competitions. This season, he said, "we have a robust high school roster of a 14 students, with an additional four middle school climbers. Overall, the numbers are solid and within the range we've seen in previous seasons (not counting 2020-2021, which was smaller and did not include competitions because of the coronavirus.)"

Otter Valley considers indoor rock climbing an official school sport and is looking ahead to seven meets this season. With the first meets starting in December, the team meets for regular practices at the climbing center in Rutland. The sport combines the difficulty of a designated route with the speed in which a climber can ascend that route — or as high up it as they can go without falling off.

"Our top climbers," McMillan said, "in order are: Patrick Daly, Lucas Klein, Sawyer Tinsman, and Adia Polli. We also have two homeschooled brothers climbing with our team this year, Drew and Kyle Frankenberg, who are climbing at a high level of difficulty. Given that many of these top climbers are returning, all on the high school team, and are bringing past experience with them, I am expecting OV to perform very well in competitions this season."

McMillan explained that rock climbing as an official school sport is unique to southern Vermont in the Rutland and Woodstock regions, and that the schools mainly compete at the Green Mountain Rock Climbing Center in Rutland. Currently there are no rock climbing teams from northern Vermont that participate in SIRCA, explaining that SIRCA is unique to GMRCC, which developed the program in collaboration with local area schools and coaches.

While returning top climbers will likely carry the team's fortunes this year, McMillan highlighted the several new members on the team and other

returners who continually work to improve their skills. Those members provide the foundation for others to learn the sport and to move up in the ranks as their skills improve.

"We are always working to improve upon the needs of each individual climber," McMillan said. "I coach for each individual's personal progression throughout the season more than anything else, and, if I'm successful, to instill some passion for climbing as a life-long sport so they can apply the problem solving skills and resiliency that climbing demands. And that applies to wherever they end up — whether climbing for fun outdoors, dealing with unexpected challenges that life often presents, or competing at the collegiate level."

Team members are:

- Seniors: Luca Cifone, Lucas Klein, Gunnar Tinsman; all are returning climbers.

- Juniors: Kelsey Adams, Keith Carrara, Katelyn Lee, Adia Polli, Morgan White; all are returning except Adams, who is new to the team.

- Sophomores: Sawyer Tinsman, returning;

- Freshmen: Christina Cararra, Patrick Daly, Andrew Easter, Kaiden Lee, Danika Poli; Carrara and Poli are new, the others are returning;

- 8th grade: Mia Fox and Kathleen Pape (both new);

- 7th grade: Lucia Carrara and Owen Harrison-Burvick (both new).

McMillan noted that of the team's four top climbers, Daly "trains extensively year-around and also competes in USA Climbing format competitions and has made it from regionals, to divisions, to nationals — and he's a freshman.

Adia Polli, the coach said, also stands out as a female climber and "routinely nabs top female scores in SIRCA competitions." Sophomore Sawyer Tinsman has "advanced quickly over the past two seasons," McMillan said, adding that senior Luca Klein "climbs with tactical skill and moves with precision."

It's a strong team, McMillan said. "I'm confident we'll be in contention for a top-place finish."



OTTER VALLEY UNION HIGH SCHOOL CHEERLEADING TEAM

COMPETITIONS-TEAM WILL CHEER AT ALL HOME BASKETBALL EVENTS.

DATE	OPPONENT/EVENT	TIME			
1/29	@ CVCC (RUTLAND-CSJ)	TBA	2/12	@ VCCA (TBD)	TBA
			2/19	@TBD STATES	TBA

OTTER VALLEY CHEERLEADING TEAM

BY ANGELO LYNN

BRANDON — Let's hear it for OV'S cheerleading team, it's — give me a B, O, O, M. I.N.G. Booming!

Last year's team had only 5 athletes, but this winter's team has grown to 11 athletes, says OV varsity cheerleading coach Cassidy Buley. Seven of those athletes were on the fall cheerleading team, with four of those being returners from the prior year.

"We have definitely grown as a team, especially from my first year coaching this team back in 2019 where we struggled with athlete numbers to now where we have 11 and can have alternates in case someone gets injured or ill. So I call that an improvement!"

Buley explained there are two divisions for Vermont cheerleading — D1 and D2. This is based on squad size, she said, adding that "as long as you have 9 athletes on the mat you are considered D2 and for D1 it is 10+. We will be in D2, so I will have 9 athletes on the mat competing."

The team members are: seniors: Virgil Chapin, Jade Flanders, Emily Hutchins, Maggie Loyzelle; junior, Capt. Zoe Elliott; sophomores, Kayleigh Corey, Delaney Fielder, Abigail Hayes, Brookelyn Kimball,

Lajay O'Connor; and freshman Grace Kenyon.

The team will have three competitions during the season, and otherwise will perform at OV basketball games. To prepare for the competitions and cheerleading at games, Buley says the athletes put in a surprising number of hours.

"Practice during this time is pretty hectic," she said. "We spent all last week going over and evaluating each athlete on different skills from stunting, tumbling, a cheer, a holiday dance, and jumps. This week we're putting together the holiday dance formations and going over more game day material. The first couple of weeks of practice is strictly basics, so cheers, tumbling, formations, etc. Our practice ranges from one and a half to two hours depending on the day and what is going on."

The team's goal, Coach Buley said, is to "keep improving with difficulty as well as cleaning up basics and improving where we stand for comp scores. Our main job is to cheer on our varsity basketball team — both boys and girls. That is our #1 concern, as it is a school-sanctioned event, but comps (competitions) fall right with it as this is what the team loves to do. They love adrenalin and learning new things. But they

also like cheering at basketball events to help support our team.

"For us," she said, "they both go hand-in-hand."

Looking ahead on the season, Buley said that while last year's comp scores improved, it was difficult because of the COVID protocols. "But I feel that we have come a long way since last year, so my hope as a coach is that we keep improving our score each time..."

"We did have a good fall season and I definitely think that from that we overcame a lot and pushed through. So long story short, improving our scores along with increasing the difficulty of the stunts and tumbling are our biggest goals this year, as well as having a safe, happy, and healthy one!"

As a team, Buley said, "we're really looking forward to this season and I'm excited we are able to sort of go back to our regular schedule — meaning attending games and traveling to comps. I know the athletes have been very excited about this upcoming year and have the drive to keep pushing through everything and being extremely motivated and willing to do just about anything I ask them or teach them cheer wise. I know we all are looking forward to all the events and just having a great season!"

For weekly sports updates
check out our website

BRANDONREPORTER.COM.

PROCTOR HIGH SCHOOL

PROCTOR HIGH GIRLS' BASKETBALL

PROCTOR HIGH BOYS' BASKETBALL

The Proctor High School boys team won its first two starts of the season in the Bob Abrahamson tournament held at the local school over the weekend of December 9-10. It marked the first time that the host institution has won the annual event. That's quite a feat for a team that is used to winning in many different venues. The Phantoms defeated Poultney, 45-31, in a hard fought defensive contest in the championship game.

Bryson Bourn had an excellent tournament weekend for the team by pouring in 40 points in the two wins. In the final, Levi Petit's 16 points led the way in a balanced Phantom attack.

This season, the team will feature a lot of speed and quickness and they love to score via the fast break and the

three ball. Coach Jake Eaton should have multiple options during the course of the year to encourage ways to score for his young squad.

Coach Eaton will be looking to replace Connor McKearin and Connor Crossmon, two outstanding scorers and playmakers from the past year. Younger brother Carter Crossmon will be stepping in to help out the Phantom effort. Other players looking to impact will include the aforementioned Petit along with Jacob Patch and Joel Denton. Matt Nop, Treyton Kimball, and Ian French should also be significant contributors.

Next game for the squad will be on December 21 versus Green Mountain at their gym.

PROCTOR — The Proctor High School girls basketball team is off to an impressive start in its quest to defend its Vermont Division IV state title. That team, despite its highly dominant run to the state title game, won its championship in unique fashion as the Danville squad opted to forfeit its appearance in the potential state championship game due to concerns brought about by the pandemic last spring.

It was a justifiable end to a season, but a disappointing one for all concerned. This year, the Phantoms hope that health and good fortune will be in abundance and the team can make another strong run towards the title.

If the results of the first few games are any indication, they are on the right track. An early blowout at

White River Valley was followed by a strong test from a big and very capable West Rutland squad last week on the Westside. The smaller Proctor squad battled the much bigger Golden Horde down to the final minutes before utilizing their quickness and speed and turning a close game into a double figure win, 60-48.

Maggie McKearin was the go-to player in that win, racking up an impressive 34 points that included making 14 of 18 free throws, including several down the stretch to ice the game. McKearin combines excellent court vision with an ability to get fouled and attracts a lot of attention from the opponent. Alongside her in the backcourt are Laci French and Isabel Greb, both talented and accomplished athletes.

A transfer senior, Meghan Cole, has also become part of the picture for Proctor. Other contributors on the deep and talented team are Cadence Goodwin, Katelynn Regula, Angel, Dez, Jasmine Traverse, Jenna Davine, Grace Durkee, Makayla French, Grace King, and Shelby Moody.

Head Coach Joe McKearin will again lead the squad that features a dynamite full court press along with multiple defensive looks in the half court. Offensively, they will ride the speed and quickness in the backcourt along with three-point shooting and creative shot-making. Next game for the Phantoms will be against Green Mountain on Tuesday, Jan. 21.



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WEST RUTLAND HIGH SCHOOL

WEST RUTLAND HIGH BOYS' BASKETBALL

New head coach Ali Serrani Mitchell inherits a very young West Rutland High School boys basketball team in her inaugural season as the leader of the Westside team. It will be a great challenge for her.

The team has played two early-season contests and has been thumped roundly in both. However, the season is young and the team no doubt will improve as the season wears along.

The team has but one senior (Jordan Jarrosak) and only two juniors (Jayden Shaw and Joshua Jackson). The rest of the pre-season roster includes six sophomores, six freshmen and two eighth-graders. The sophomore group features David Noel, Thomas Connolly, Michael Cain, Jesse Flood, Charlie Harte, and Garrett Owens. Freshmen are Clayton Kessop, Tristan Rocke, Tyler Fitzgerald, Charlie Duncan, Andrew Bailey, and Jacob Chamberlain. The two eighth-

graders on the list are Braeden Hogan and Jeff Tedesco.

In last week's 82-17 loss to White River Valley, the Golden Horde's young and inexperienced backcourt featuring two freshman guards in the starting lineup quickly showed their youth by turning the ball over several times in an early flurry by White River that saw them jump into a quick 12-2 lead. It would not get better over time as the WRV squad built the lead to 52-5 by the halftime horn.

WRV, to their credit, showed an excellent shooting touch and range as they buried countless three-point shots and did so with excellent form and technique. They are going to be a team to be reckoned with as the calendar turns into 2022. They have great designs on going deep into the D IV playoffs in late February and March.

Coach Mitchell could well have a very enjoyable season

taking her youngsters and molding them into quality high school players. The group showed great spirit and tenacity last Friday versus WRV and made some very positive strides late in the contest. The youthful exuberance should be a big part of the team as they move forward and as all of the players become more comfortable and experienced in handling the ball versus pressure they will improve. Their overall lack of size will also be an issue as they are quite small and will need to be particularly intent on keeping opponents off the glass.

The faithful who attend the WRS games will need to be patient as this team develops. With Coach Mitchell's outstanding pedigree in the sport of basketball, it will be a fun experience for the teams' followers and fans to enjoy watching the young people develop in playing the game.

WEST RUTLAND HIGH GIRLS' BASKETBALL

BY GENE DELORENZO

WEST RUTLAND — The West Rutland High School girls basketball team has enjoyed a tremendous run of success over the past decade. The Golden Horde has appeared in 11 of the past 12 Final Four events at the state level in Vermont, including the past nine in a row.

Under veteran coach Carl Serrani, the Horde will attempt to keep the streak alive in 2021-22. After the abbreviated and often interrupted 2020-2021 schedule, a return to somewhat normalcy will be a welcome relief to the coach and team members, albeit wearing masks and exercising an abundance of caution — a concession to the pandemic era we all now live in.

The team will feature good size with two players measuring 6 feet, 2 inches in height. The group will also have several fine ballhandlers and shooters. This

combination of size and speed should develop over the course of the season into a fine basketball machine at the Westside school.

Mallory Hogan and Isabel Lanfear will be the two twin towers. Lanfear will be joined by seniors Serena Combs, Mikayla Bania, Anna Cyr, and Taylor Mills. Juniors who will play alongside their classmate Hogan will be Ariana Combs and Hannah Cecot. The sophomores will be Emily Trepanier, Gabby Griffith, Samara Raiche, and Olivia Cyr.

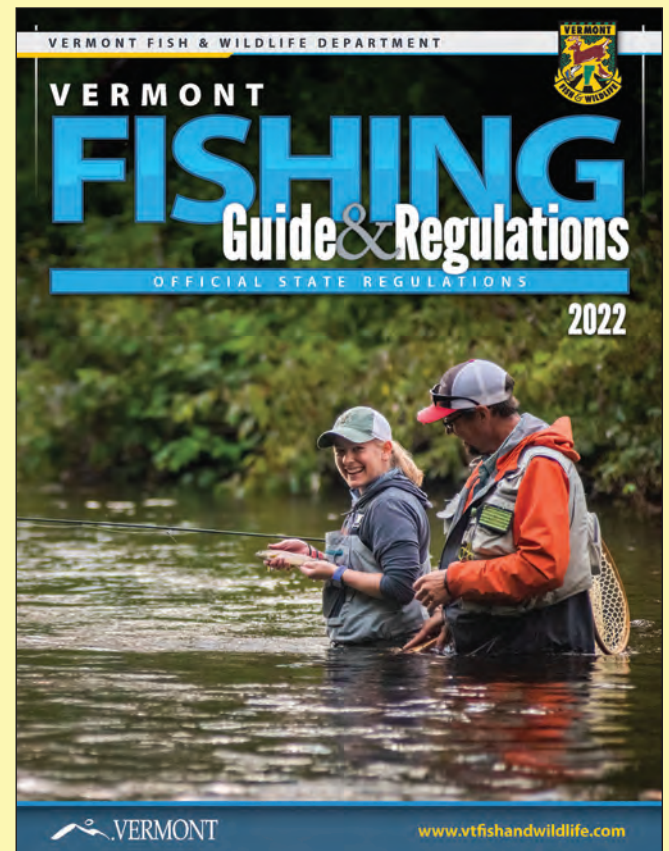
A large first-year class will feature Peyton Guay, Kennah Wright-Chapman, Alexis Howar, Soyhr Perry, Aubrey Beaulieu, Maggie Therien, and Isabella Combs. It is a large group and the coach will look to blend the good size and large numbers of players into a cohesive team.

The team hosted a strong

Proctor group last week and battled into the early part of their fourth quarter and trailed by a 43-41 score until a late run keyed by Proctor's overall team speed doomed the Golden Horde in a 60-48 loss. But there were very encouraging signs as the team dominated the offensive boards for most of the game and presented some stiff defensive challenges to the guard-heavy Proctor team.

Both teams were impressive in this game—particularly given the early season nature of the contest. It will certainly be a battle of the two central Vermont Division IV powers towards a return trip to the Barre Auditorium in late February.

The next game for the West Rutland squad will be on Monday, December 20 when they host Arlington. Results were not available at press time.



2022 Hunting, Fishing, Trapping Licenses Are Available Online

Proceeds go to manage
wildlife and conserve habitat

MONTPELIER, Vt. -- Vermont hunting, fishing and trapping licenses for 2022 and license gift certificates are available on the Fish and Wildlife Department's website (www.vtfishandwildlife.com).

"Our licenses for the New Year will be popular based on the increased interest we are seeing from people who want to enjoy more outside activities like hunting and fishing," said Vermont Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Christopher Herrick. "Ice fishing is a lot of fun, and it will soon be possible with colder weather."

"A license gift certificate is the perfect gift for a friend or family member who hunts or fishes," he added. "You can go to our website, fill out the certificate and pay for it online, and then you can print it to present to your recipient."

A gift certificate link is on the Vermont Fish and Wildlife's website home page and in the license section. The person who receives the certificate must go to the website to redeem it and purchase their licenses.

Herrick noted that proceeds from license sales have helped pay for some of Vermont's greatest wildlife conservation success stories, including restoring game species as well as helping nongame species such as peregrine falcons, bald eagles, loons, and ospreys. These funds also are used to manage Wildlife Management Areas that provide critical habitat for many species as well as recreational opportunities for Vermonters.

Printed copies of the "2022 Hunting & Trapping Guide and 2022 Fishing Guide" are available from license agents. The department's website has links to online versions as well.

Existing permanent, lifetime or five-year licenses can be updated online on January 1.

RNEUS board

(Continued from Page 1)

an important avenue could be word-of-mouth advertising and wanted the community to know that the district was offering to pay for training and licensing of drivers, and that there are opportunities to combine the two part-time daily activities of a typical driver (early morning driver to school and after school, with other part-time school positions (such as custodial) into a full-time job position that could offer benefits.

The administration will keep its focus on trying to recruit new bus drivers and encourages the school community to help spread word of the job opportunities.

In its discussion of the proposed district-wide budget for FY 2022, the board approved a proposed budget of \$10,733,367, which represents a budget increase of 2.75%. District wide property assessments were up 9.45%, however, which could likely mean the tax rates will remain somewhat stable. A budget surplus of \$170,000, which is typical, will be carried over.

COVID BURNOUT

In comments related to the COVID 19 pandemic, Collins noted that the entire community needed a break from the constant strain, but that the current resurgence means that is unlikely. “People are tired,” she said, but encouraged everyone to remain vigilant through the next wave of the omicron variant and this winter’s surge of the Delta variant — both of which are expected to hit Vermont and the Northeast now and through the early part of

the winter.

Collins noted that the entire second grade at Neshobe Elementary School had been quarantined. In later news last Friday, Collins made the decision to go to remote learning at Neshobe through school break. (See related story.)

WHITING CHILDCARE

Collins also described the Whiting Childcare Partnership Program, to the board, noting that 20 students were enrolled as of Oct. 1, 2021. The program can host two classes of 16 students each in what she described as a “unique learning/daycare environment.” Eleven students attend the program from outside the district, she said, adding that there was demand for a similar program to be located in the southern part of the district.

In other news, Bertrand presented an update of the superintendent’s search, saying it was “well underway” and had hopes of completing the search before Town Meeting. (See related story in this issue.) She noted that the search committee consisted of six RNEUS board members, a consultant, representatives from special services, finance, technology, a principal, a teacher and Melinda Piper, secretary of the superintendent’s office.

As a final action, the board approved an additional 50% increase in the board chair’s compensation, raising it to a total of \$900 per year, for the large number of hours the board chair puts into that position.

Note: Gene DeLorenzo contributed to this report.

Covid prompts remote learning mandate at Neshobe

BRANDON — A surge of Covid-19 cases within Neshobe Elementary School forced RNEUS Supt. Jeanne Collins to move the entire school to remote learning as of last Friday, Dec. 17 and to keep that in place until the December break this Wednesday.

In a statement posted on the school’s website last Thursday evening, Collins said it was a tough choice to make but considered it a “last choice option.”

“Since we are not able to get ahead of the positive cases, we have made the very difficult decision to go to distance learning starting tomorrow (Friday, Dec. 17) until the December

break,” read the statement.

Collins cited two main factors that prompted the action: a cluster of positive cases that affected a number of grade levels and sent at least six classes into quarantine; and a shortage of staff.

Collins said Neshobe had 22 staff absences in a single day earlier last week and could not enough substitutes to fill those positions.

“For consistency of education, it made sense to move to distance learning so that all kids would be able to complete these next four days,” she said. Classes go through Wednesday of this week.

Made you look!

THIS SCARECROW FOUND dangling from the roof of a home in Brandon sure does it’s job.

Photo by Angelo Lynn



Superintendent

(Continued from Page 1)

said.

“Based on the high caliber of leaders we’ve had in the past, we’re looking for a new leader to follow in their footsteps and, perhaps most importantly, be an innovative leader. We’re looking for someone who is forward looking to take these schools into the future in the bold ways that we need to be proceeding, and also be able to make good, quick decisions to handle the crises of the day — like Jeanne has with this pandemic, and as she did in meeting the consolidation and merger challenges under Act 46.”

“Because Jeanne has built up such a good team around her, we’re in really good shape and should be a very desirable school district to manage,” Bertrand said.

She also noted that the search committee and the district board wanted to involve district residents in the search process as much as possible. To that end, Bertrand said the committee would be putting out “thought exchanges” on the school dis-

trict’s website to allow residents to reach out to the committee with thoughts, recommendations or questions; and would host a PEG TV broadcast in which the search process will be discussed between Bertrand and Pinckney.

A special page on the district’s website will be devoted to the search for a new superintendent with ways the community can be involved. A meet and greet with the finalists will hopefully be set in February, Bertrand said.

Members on the search committee are: Lead group with voting power: RNEUS board members, comprised of Laurie Bertrand, Becky Bertrand, Barbara Ebling, Brenda Hummel, Jacob Powsner, and Jessica Quesnel.

The extended team taps the Central Office personnel and includes: Brenda Fleming, director of business and finance; Melinda Piper, executive secretary to the superintendent; Kristin Hubert, director of Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment; Marsha Bruce, director of special services; and Alexis Blake, director of technology. Also, Lathrop

Principal Debbie Alexander and one teacher from Barstow.

When asked what other qualities they are looking for in a superintendent, Bertrand was quick to add “being a good communicator with district residents. Jeanne has done an excellent job keeping district parents and residents informed about what’s going on and explaining the reasons behind our actions. Making sure parents have the information they need is key, and we want that to continue,” she said. And, of course, she added, “making sure the district runs effectively and efficiency and being able to pivot with things like the pandemic.”

A virtual public forum on the search process, which is also a forum seeking public input on what traits residents most want to see in the candidates, will be held on January 6 from 6-7 p.m. A committee meeting will follow. More information can be found about the search committee process by going to <https://tinyurl.com/2p8jukch>.

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Mim's Photos

Can you identify any of the people in these vintage photos from Mim Welton's Dateline Brandon newspaper archives? Let us know!



Recognized



Maria McDonough called to identify the photo in the December 8 issue of the little girl with a baby on her lap. The pair are Maria's niece and nephew; Jenny Mae Silbert and Christopher Hetzel (sp?).



**E-mail ads@
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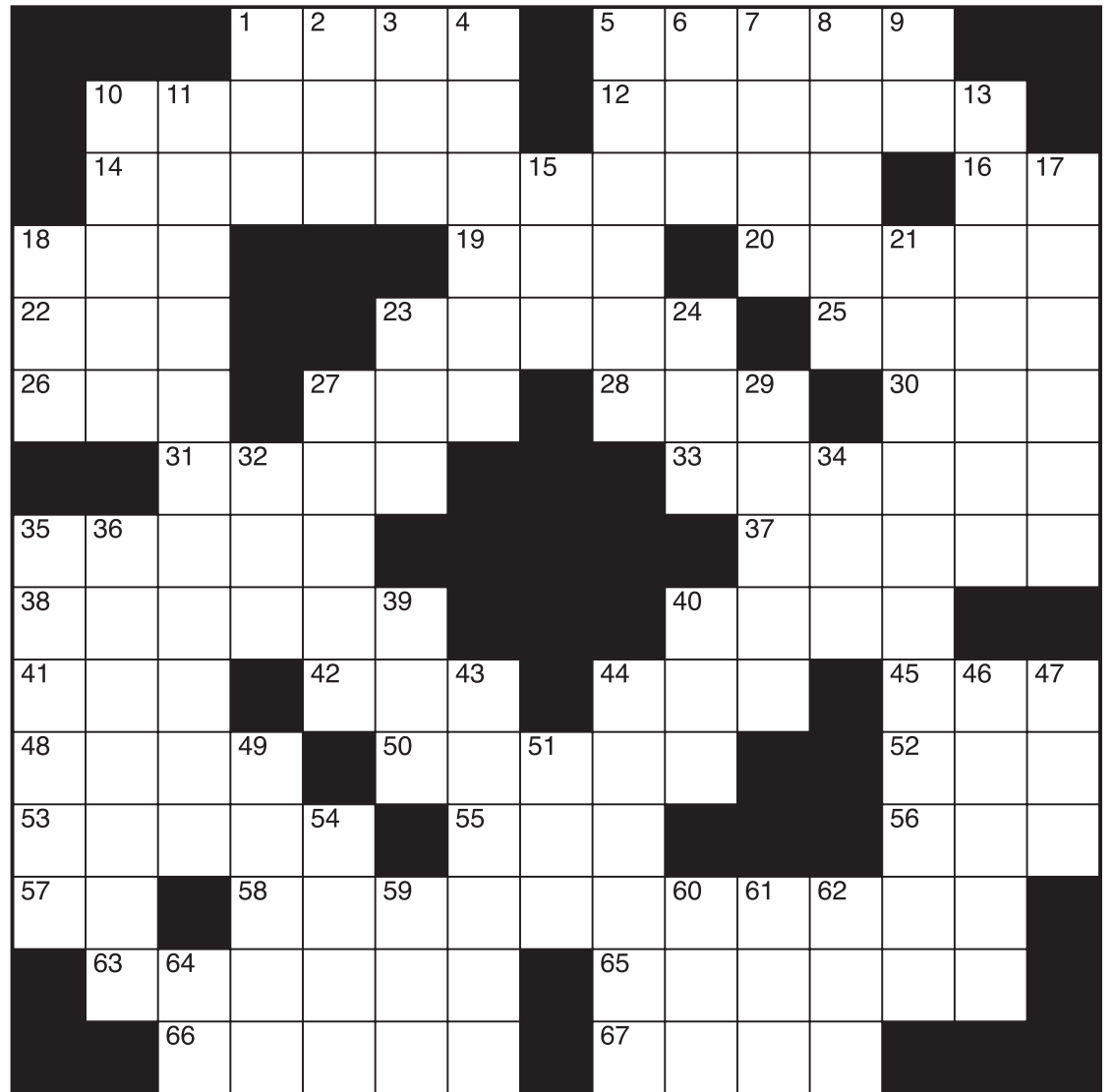
Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

1. Chinese Muslim group
5. Alternative name
10. Resounds
12. Supporter
14. Furnishes anew
16. Beloved Hollywood alien
18. Supervises flying
19. Ballplayer's tool
20. Coarse edible red seaweed
22. Former CIA
23. Basketball player
25. Travel necessities
26. Honey producer
27. Military analysis (abbr.)
28. Diego, Francisco, Anselmo
30. Mental sharpness and inventiveness
31. Popular Easter meal
33. Man (Spanish)
35. ___ de la ___
37. Counterweights
38. Made a harsh, grating noise
40. Monetary unit
41. Commercials
42. Cool!
44. Partner to cheese
45. Expression of creative skill
48. Unit of angle
50. Transported
52. N. American people of Kansas
53. Computer game character Max
55. Moved swiftly
56. Everyone has one
57. Tin
58. A mole is one
63. Nocturnal hoofed animals
65. Oppositional to
66. Monetary units
67. Not on time

CLUES DOWN

1. Hoghead (abbr.)
2. Misery resulting from affliction
3. Defunction European group
4. Line on a map
5. Becomes less intense
6. Back muscle
7. Frosted
8. Ethiopian town
9. Midway between south and east
10. Wipe from the record
11. In a continuous way
13. Breathe
15. Cleaning device
17. Male organ
18. Tab on a key ring
21. Criminals
23. Taxi
24. Cheer of encouragement
27. Wartime American escort carrier
29. Polish river
32. Current unit
34. Life form
35. Painful contractions
36. Glowing
39. Press against lightly
40. Melancholic
43. Something you can be under
44. Of the mind
46. E. Indian cereal grass
47. Couple
49. Sharpshoot
51. A baglike structure in a plant or animal
54. ___ Blyton, children's author
59. Human gene
60. Data mining methodology (abbr.)
61. Examines animals
62. Mineral
64. Cools your home



Sudoku

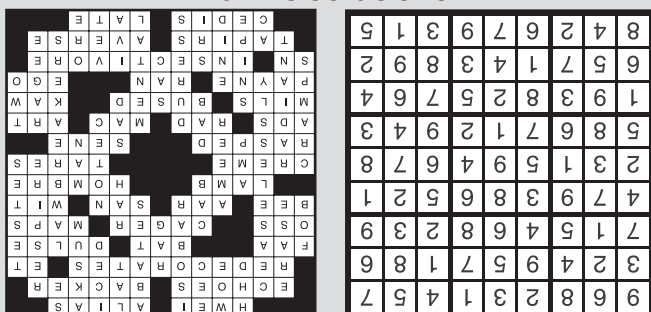
Here's how a sudoku puzzle works:

Sudoku puzzles are formatted as a 9x9 grid, broken down into nine 3x3 boxes. To solve a sudoku every row, every column and every box must contain the numbers 1 through 9. Each number must appear only once in each row, column and box. Figure out where to fill in the missing numbers by using the numeric clues already provided in the boxes. The more numbers that are filled in, the easier it gets to solve.

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

Level: Intermediate

Puzzle solutions



Please Remember the Homeless Animals this Holiday Season

The homeless animals at the Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS) would love to be added to your holiday list this year! Some of the items on this year's wish list include: animal bedding (new and used blankets and towels), 13 and 33 gallon trash bags, paper towels, brooms and dustpans, cat toys, litter pans, canned pate cat and kitten food, KMR formula, dog toys, soft/chewy dog treats, rabbit food, timothy hay, or gift cards to local pet merchants! RCHS is always in need of supplies for the animals and is grateful for your continued support. For more information, please contact the shelter at 483.6700 or check out our wish lists at www.rchsvt.org. Thank you for remembering the homeless animals at the Rutland County Humane Society! Happy Holidays!

I COULD BE THE NEW FRIEND YOU'VE BEEN LOOKING FOR!



ABIGAIL - 3 YEARS OLD. SPAYED FEMALE. HOUND MIX. BROWN AND TAN.

I am a medium size hound dog mix looking for my forever home. My colors and markings are stunning! I do need some help with manners so stock up on some tasty treats for me. When I don't want to do something I am stubborn which is where my training will come in handy. It is important that my new family knows that I can jump a five foot fence with no problem and I do like to run off. Please make sure to plan on leash walking and working on my manners.

GENEVIEVE - 4 YEARS OLD. SPAYED FEMALE. DOMESTIC SHORT HAIR. GREY TIGER.

I am an adorable girl with a great personality to match! I am a little shy at first, but as soon as I warm up, you'll see that we will be great friends. I can often be found curled up in the best napping spots! I also like good hiding spots where I can relax and have some alone time. I came to RCHS on June 24 as a stray and surprised all my friends with kittens! I was a good mom and took care of them until they no longer needed me. I am ready to find my forever home!



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Off the Shelf

New books at the Brandon Free Public Library

Adult Fiction

Dark Queen Watching by Paul Doherty

November, 1471. With Edward of York on the English throne and her son, Henry Tudor, in exile in Brittany, the newly-widowed Margaret Beaufort, Countess of Richmond, is alone, without protectors. All she can do is wait and watch, planning for a time when she's in a position to make her move.

Adult Non-Fiction

Cosmos: Possible Worlds by Ann Druyan

Based on National Geographic's internationally-renowned television series, this groundbreaking and visually stunning book explores how science and civilization grew up together. From the emergence of life at deep-sea vents to solar-powered starships sailing through the galaxy, from the Big Bang to the intricacies of intelligence in many life forms, acclaimed author Ann Druyan documents where humanity has been and where it is going, using her unique gift of bringing complex scientific concepts to life.

Did you know?

The Brandon Library will be closed December 23 – 25, in addition to New Year's Eve and New Year's Day. Happy Holidays!

Picture Books

New Year by Mei Zihan, illustrated by Qin Leng

It's Lunar New Year, a time when families come together for a wonderful feast, and a father longs to be with his daughter—but she lives in another country. As he imagines how his daughter is spending the festivities, he recalls fond memories of time spent with her, feeling a sense of loss and dislocation. While he misses her deeply, he also recognizes her need to move away, grow up, and become herself. New Year's Eve is a beautiful and lovingly portrayed portrait of leaving home, finding independence, and loving those who are many miles away.

DVDs

Saint Maud

Follows a pious nurse who

becomes dangerously obsessed with saving the soul of her dying patient.

The Mitchells vs the Machines

A quirky, dysfunctional family's road trip is upended when they find themselves in the middle of the robot apocalypse and suddenly become humanity's unlikely last hope.

Magazines

Smithsonian

Copper and the King: How new archaeological evidence from 3,000-year-old mines relates to the Bible's account of Solomon.

Consumer Reports

Our top picks of the year.

The following Large Print books were donated by Brenda Whittaker:

"A Man of Honor" by Barbara Taylor Bradford in memory of Maureen Vogel

"Mercy" by David Baldacci in memory of Charles H. Whittaker

"Game On" by Janet Evanovich in memory of "Tish" Holmes Washburn Morris

Brandon Police Report

December 13

Read logs; Harassment complaint on Pearl St.; Fingerprints for employment; Patrol with traffic stops, tickets issued; Casework; Four property watches, all secure; Directed patrol.

December 14

Call out for juvenile problem on Franklin St.; Read logs; Follow up at OVUHS on juvenile complaint; Traffic control at OVUHS; Several sets of fingerprints for employment; Citizen assist with fraud complaint; Assist BARS on Arnold District Rd.; Directed patrol; Four property watches, all secure; Winter parking ban notices.

December 15

Chiefs' Meeting in Randolph; Assist VSP on McConnell Rd.; Several sets of fingerprints for employment; Juvenile problem on Franklin St.; Traffic control at OVUHS; Juvenile problem at OVUHS; Late reported juvenile problem at OVUHS; Welfare check on Mulcahy Dr., all OK; Patrol; MV complaint on Franklin St.; Three property watches, all secure.

December 16

Read logs; Patrol/radar; Several sets of fingerprints for employment/chaperones; Four property watches, all secure; Casework at PD.

December 17

Read logs; Fingerprints for employment; DLS on Grove St., citizen cited; Two property watches, both secure; Patrol; Vandalism complaint on Bridge Park.

December 18

Patrol; Traffic control for funeral procession; MV off the road on Route 73; MV accident on Franklin Street; Missing person complaint, later returned home; Domestic disturbance complaint, unable to locate; Patrol; Assist BARS with mental health issue; ATV complaint on Center St., GOA; Casework at BPD; Patrol.

December 19

Call out for located missing person; Review and approve reports; Patrol; Vandalism on Park St.; LSA on Grove St., investigation started; Directed patrol; Cruiser maintenance; Four property watches, all secure.



WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

LEO July 23–Aug. 23

Prioritize your actions to maximize peace and quiet, Leo. You have been under pressure lately, so take every opportunity to enjoy some quiet time.

VIRGO Aug. 24–Sept. 22

Virgo, your intuition is telling you that there are tensions growing at home or at the office. You will have to find ways to diffuse any situations that may grow out of control.

LIBRA Sept. 23–Oct. 23

Continue to lean into an optimistic mindset, Libra. It will enable you to be a bright light when others are feeling a little down. Boost good moods.

SCORPIO Oct. 24–Nov. 22

You are naturally compelled to look deeper into any circumstance you find yourself in, Scorpio. Always dig below the surface to unveil the truth, even if it takes work.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23–Dec. 21

Be direct about any frustrations you may be harboring, Sagittarius. Share your feelings with others who are willing and able to help. Releasing this burden will

prove liberating.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22–Jan. 20

This week is packed with cosmic action, Capricorn. All of this energy has you a bit restless. Rest easy, as you will soon figure out how to juggle your personal and professional lives.

AQUARIUS Jan. 21–Feb. 18

Aquarius, you're on a truth-seeking mission and you're ready to question everything you see. Take a step back and figure out your strategy, which will require finesse.

PISCES Feb. 19–March 20

Pisces, try to smooth over something that has been a thorn in your side for some time. Keep at it and you'll persevere.



FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- Dec. 23 Donna Tartt, author (58)
- Dec. 24 Anthony Fauci, physician (81)
- Dec. 25 Louise Bourgeois, artist (d)
- Dec. 26 David Sedaris, humorist (65)
- Dec. 27 Johannes Kepler, physicist (d)
- Dec. 28 Maggie Smith, actress (87)
- Dec. 29 Pablo Casals, cellist (d)

ARIES March 21–April 20

Aries, the stars have been keeping you on your toes lately. There has been much going on but somehow you have been able to wade through it all like a rock star.

TAURUS April 21–May 21

Others are asking you to stretch yourself beyond normal limits, Taurus. Do your best, but weigh the effects that this could have on your overall well-being.

GEMINI May 22–June 21

Aim to be honest and direct with others as much as you can this week, Gemini. If you can prove you are trustworthy, then more people are likely to follow you.

CANCER June 22–July 22

Cancer, you may be introduced to someone who is the ideal partner for you at work. This pairing can lead to the successful completion of projects new and old.

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See page 19

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Brandon Rescue

(Continued from Page 1)

“Over the years, Brandon Area Rescue has been able to manage and overcome adversities, but our current predicament is dire,” Stage wrote in Town Meeting Day petitions being circulated in the four towns. “We’ve reached a point where the challenges have become too great, and your support is more crucial now than ever before.”

Stage explained that the emergency medical services BARS provides and the ambulance response units it has to maintain and purchase are just too much to cover in light of a revenue stream that is undercut by payment limits from Medicaid and Medicare as well as payments from private insurers that are spotty, at best.

Stage explained that for most emergency medical service (EMS) organizations cannot control what they will be paid. Reimbursement rates, he said, “are substantially controlled by state and federal government programs like Medicaid and Medicare. A high percentage of our transports involve an older population, and a lower income demographic, most of which are insured by Medicare and Medicaid programs... Medicaid patients cannot be billed for any balance, and Medicare generally allows EMS to bill 20% of the allowed amount.”

Commercial insurers also rarely pay the full amount of any EMS bill, “as most patients have a cost-sharing amount that may go unpaid... And EMS also carries a percentage of patients who are uninsured and those bills are rarely paid, if at all.”

VOLUNTEER SHORTAGES

But not only is the revenue stream undercut by government reimbursement limits, insurance programs and others, but BARS and other EMS providers are also challenged to find enough volunteers to run a 24-7 service.

BARS’s ability to attract an adequate number of volunteers has been greatly diminished by the tight Vermont job market and because it serves a sick and ailing community in the midst of COVID-19 pandemic, Stage said, adding there are several factors complicating the short-

age, including more intensive and time-consuming training.

“Aging service members, extensive initial and continuing educational requirements, increased provider responsibility and financial liability, full-time jobs and personal commitments, and members moving on to full-time paid career services are all challenges we have to meet,” Stage said. “But given the lack of volunteers and volunteer availability, we need to offer paid positions to help mitigate staffing disparities, ensure coverage, increase our response times, and allow for community outreach.”

“Our current predicament is dire. We’ve reached a point where the challenges have become too great, and your support is more crucial now than ever before.”

—Chief Jordan Stage

“There is a current national shortage for all pre-hospital emergency medical services,” Stage told The Reporter. “A recent study came out and only 11 states in the county deem EMS an essential service, Vermont not being one of them. Every agency in our district (10) is facing the same issues.”

On top of a declining volunteer labor pool, poor reimbursement and dealing with a pandemic, Stage said the cost of equipment repair, buying new medical equipment and additional training all the time creates a triple-whammy for small services like Brandon Area Rescue.

To that end, Stage is appealing to Brandon, Leicester, Goshen and Sudbury for increased funding in the upcoming fiscal year in the form of a town resolution that requests funding. Petitions are being circulated throughout the four towns to get the allocation request as a vote approved by residents during town meeting.

BARS is seeking a total outlay of \$116,720 from these towns, which represent a total population of 5,836 and encompass a 112-square-mile service area.

Requests are based on a town’s population:

- Brandon \$82,580 (population 4,129).
- Goshen \$3,440 (pop. 172).
- Leicester \$19,800 (pop. 990).
- Sudbury \$10,900 (pop. 545).

Stage said that it the towns support the Brand Area Rescue Squad with the increased appro-

priation request it will be able to hire two or three paid staffers to assist with emergency calls. It will also enable BARS to keep current medical equipment up to date with the proper preventative maintenance.

TOWN RESOLUTIONS

Erin Kilpeck, president of the BARS board, explained that each town will vote on a resolution to fund the Emergency Medical Service, but first a petition has to be circulated to put that amount in front of the voters.

“If we don’t receive the 100 signatures on the petitions from registered voters of Brandon, we cannot be included on the ballot,” Kilpeck said. “We haven’t changed our allocation in a few years, and this year we are asking for more money than in previous years. If it’s voted no, we will lose our current allocation as well, which means we will not receive any additional funds from the town.”

And if the petition is approved to appear on the Town Meeting Day ballot but it’s rejected at town meeting there would be no local service provided to that area, and needs would have to be met by neighboring EMS organization that have the capacity to take on four more towns. But whether neighboring EMS providers could step in is no sure thing and the time it would take to reach a person in need would be longer, Kilpeck pointed out.

Kilpeck also explained that the cost per capita of the BARS town meeting requests works out to about \$20 per year. For Brandon, she said, “based on your home value of \$100,000 – \$199,999, the yearly increase would be \$23.91, which equates to \$1.99 a month.”

There are other areas BARS is looking for increased revenue, Stage explained. One source is “long-distance transfers.”

“We have local hospitals who are calling sometimes two-four times a week looking for help with transfers from local hospitals whose primary ambulance agency can not keep up with the demand,” he said.

Another source of revenue is “stand-by events.” There is a readiness cost for an ambulance to be on standby in the event of an emergency at such events as physical agility testing for the police academy (BARS has assisted at such an event in the past).

With the extra funding in this year’s requests, Kilpeck said, (See Brandon Rescue., Page 23)

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Brandon Rescue

(Continued from Page 22)
 the squad's hope "is to use this additional money to hire more full-time employees and be able to pursue other avenues of revenue and be more self-sustaining. There are many ideas we've had — community events, more classes, more outreach, more recruiting, more trainings — but we don't have the staff to do it.

"The reality is it's getting more difficult to find volunteers," she continued. "We all have full-time jobs, and families, and other obligations and find it harder and harder to add this to our already busy sched-

ules. We also have to account for the additional trainings we need to keep our certification, which takes more time than just signing up for your 24-hour shift a month."

Stage is the one full-time employee for Brandon Area Rescue and is covering a majority of the shifts and essentially works 24/7 because of the lack of members, Kilpeck said.

"There's also much more than just 'running calls,'" she said. "There's the whole business side that Jordan has to keep up with, like billing, vehicle maintenance, ordering supplies and other tasks to keep the organization running."

"There is a current national shortage for all pre-hospital emergency medical services ... Every agency in our district (10) is facing the same issues."

— Chief Operations Officer Jordan Stage

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Three entities partner to boost BROADBAND build-out

MONTPELIER — Christine Hallquist, executive director of the Vermont Community Broadband Board (VCBB), announced Monday that the Vermont State Employees Credit Union (VSECU), the Vermont Community Foundation (VCF), and Vermont's Communication Union Districts Association (VCUDA) have partnered to purchase over 1,000 miles of fiber-optic cable in time for the 2022 construction season in conjunction with a 1,000 mile purchase by NEK Broadband, the state's largest communication union district. The 2,000 miles of cable will be used to build publicly-owned broadband networks across the state of Vermont.

Hallquist says that “this partnership provides the capital necessary to make the fiber optic cable purchase in advance of grants to be issued early in 2022. The substantial cost savings will also allow the Communications Union Districts to build out to more addresses providing Vermonters with access to fast, affordable, internet access.”

This purchase comes at a critical moment. Supply chain issues and the influx of federal funds to build fiber optics networks have resulted in long wait times for delivery, in some instances as long as 52 weeks. According to CCG, a telecommunications consulting firm and discussions with distributors, pricing for domestically produced fiber, as required by American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA), is soaring. The National Rural Telecommunications Cooperative (NRTC) is providing this fiber at a fixed price but expects their prices to increase by 35% early next year. The fiber purchased by

VCUDA and NEK Broadband this month will begin to arrive in the spring of 2022.

The nearly \$7 million combined purchase would not have been possible without the support of funding partners VSECU and the Vermont Community Foundation. Both institutions demonstrate their community-first values with this effort to bring high-speed internet to every Vermonter.

“Rural broadband is key to connecting individuals and communities across the state with each other and the larger world. Increasing connectivity builds opportunities for education, civic engagement, and business development,” said Greg Huysman, Director of Business Lending and Services at VSECU. “We encourage all of our members to do what they can to save money while taking on the challenges of life and business. It is a challenge to get high quality broadband access to rural Vermonters. We are here, as part of this community, to take on that challenge.”

“The Vermont Community Foundation and our family of funds are committed to expanding Vermonters’ access to affordable broadband so everyone can lead full lives in today’s connected world,” said Dan Smith, President and CEO of the Vermont Community Foundation. “It is the creative work of forward-thinking partners like the Vermont Community Broadband Board and

VSECU that will make universal broadband in Vermont a reality.”

Six of the nine CUDs will be receiving fiber optic cable as a part of the purchase. Each District will receive enough fiber to complete current construction plans for 2022, and in some cases the supply may hold until the 2023 construction season as well. All of the CUDs will benefit from the savings and expedited construction timeline that the bulk purchase supports.

According to F. X. Flinn, Chair of the Vermont Communications Union Districts Association (VCUDA), “We’re grateful the VCF and VSECU stepped up to help us place these orders even though our construction grants from the VCBB have not been finalized yet. This assures the CUDs who are ready to start building in the spring will have the materials they need at reasonable cost. The VCBB is fast becoming the USA’s leader in deploying the ARPA broadband funds, and their participation and encouragement in bringing this deal together is a notable achievement.”

NEK Broadband, the most rural CUD, is a member of the National Rural Telecommunication Cooperative and has contracted NRTC for design and construction management in addition to some material procurement. NEK Broadband’s 1,050-mile purchase of fiber optics, backed by a full line of credit from Community National Bank, provid-

“This is only the first of many such joint purchasing arrangements VCUDA will help facilitate.”

—Will Anderson, VCUDA program coordinator

GMP extends rebates through 2022 to help more customers cut costs & carbon emissions

COLCHESTER, Vt. — Green Mountain Power (GMP) is extending its popular rebate programs through all of 2022 to help more customers save money while reducing carbon emissions. The rebates were set to expire at the end of this year.

In 2021, GMP customers saved with more than 7,000 rebates when they made the choice to switch away from fossil fuel at home and on the road — for heating, driving, mowing their lawn, and electric motorcycles. GMP rebates include a \$1,500 rebate on all electric vehicles, plus an extra \$1,000 for low- and moderate-income customers, and a \$400 base rebate on cold climate heat

pumps with an extra \$800 in incentives for income-eligible customers in partnership with Efficiency Vermont.

The Vermont Natural Resources Council (VNRC) cut costs with GMP incentives while completing the renovation of a historic house in Montpelier to serve as new office and expanded meeting space.

“One of our goals was a net zero building, and Green Mountain Power’s incentives were a huge help in swapping out an old, inefficient oil-burning boiler for cold climate heat pumps,” said Brian Shupe, VNRC’s executive director. “GMP’s incentives also helped us install an electric vehicle charging station to help staff

and visitors convert to electric vehicles.”

In 2021, GMP rebates and customized projects with business customers around the state will offset more than 173,000 metric tons of lifetime carbon emissions — the equivalent of taking 38,000 gas-fueled cars off the road.

“These are popular programs that continue to grow each year as more Vermonters move toward clean electricity to power their lives and fight climate change,” said Kristin Carlson, a GMP vice president. “All our programs are designed to help reduce costs for all GMP customers and make the grid more flexible, boost resiliency, and enable more cost-effective

local renewable energy generation. We’re all proud of the progress we’re making, and excited to partner with customers to do much more in the new year.”

Rebates are just one way GMP helps customers cut carbon and costs — a specialized team of energy experts will consult with businesses, free of charge, to design custom clean energy transformation projects that help businesses save. GMP offers incentives to help install clean heat systems, electric commercial ovens, electric snowmaking, EV charging and more.

“It’s all about finding creative ways to help businesses achieve their energy goals,” said Carlson.



Frosted

AT A DISTANCE the snow-covered branches of this bush were easy to pass by, but on closer look the hoar frost bristled with winter’s wonder

Reporter photo/Angelo Lynn

ed the additional support for financing the statewide effort.

Christa Shute, Executive Director of NEK Broadband, stated that “NEK Broadband is very pleased that we could leverage our partnerships to help other CUDs make a larger purchase of a critical material that will in turn accelerate the provisioning of fast internet service to our state’s many underserved residents.

According to Vermont Community Broadband Board’s Deputy Director Robert Fish, “Securing

additional financing and funding is necessary to accelerate the purchase of other materials and to secure a workforce for the coming year. We’ve said from the beginning that this is an ‘all hands-on deck’ moment to capture and leverage resources from the state and federal government, private institutions, and municipalities across the state. With innovative solutions and the continued support of Vermont institutions, the effort of connect every Vermonter to affordable, high-speed internet will continue to accelerate in 2022.

“This is only the first of many such joint purchasing arrangements VCUDA will help facilitate,” said VCUDA program coordinator Will Anderson. “Beyond the materials issue, we are also looking forward to partnering with these and other institutions to address two of the greatest challenges still facing the CUDs: the need for adequate capital to fund construction, and the need for an additional workforce to carry out that construction as efficiently as possible.”

According to Hallquist, “addressing labor concerns is the next challenge the partners will tackle. The Vermont Community Broadband Board and other partners are working to create a tremendous opportunity for many Vermonters to move into the growing field of technology and telecommunications, but statewide legislative support will be needed to help seed a ‘Pay it Forward’ plan to help Vermonters transition from low paying jobs to these high paying careers.”