

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

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\$1



OTTERS RALLY

OV Boys' Basketball triumphs at Mt. Abe, 58-55.

PG. 15

BRANDON SB

Brandon Selectboard approves "thoughtful & balanced" budget.

PG. 2

OVUUSD

OVUU Board approves budget, debates tech ed funding.

PG. 2

SILVER LAKE HUT UPDATE

Silver Lake hut denied approval by District Ranger. Moosalamoo Association vows to continue search for site.

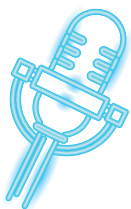
PG. 6



SANCTA LUCIA FESTIVAL

Scandinavian festival, featuring music and story telling comes to Brandon for the first time.

PG. 3



CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sing your heart out! Brandon Idol takes the Town Hall stage!

PGS. 8-9

POLICE REPORT

Brandon PD officer assaulted in drinking & dragging incident on Park St.

PG. 18-19

American Legion Post 55 always ready to serve the community

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—Almost every town in America has one: a post of the American Legion. Founded after World War I, the purpose of the organization is pretty straightforward: to advocate for and support veterans of the American armed services. Brandon's Post 55, however, sees its mission as even broader.

"The Legion isn't just for vets, but for the community," said Post Commander Aaron Tucker. "We have no problem going the extra mile."

Tucker is himself a Vietnam vet and a recipient of a Purple Heart, among other honors. He's been Commander at Post 55 since 2011, with the exception of 2019, when Burt Reynolds (no relation to the actor) held the position for a year.

"I was recruited in 2004 or 05, right after I moved to Brandon, by [WWII vet] Harold Adams," said Tucker. "He was driving by my house, saw me, and asked if I was a veteran. He brought me into the Legion. I realized I could be a help-
(See *American Legion*, Page 7)



AMERICAN LEGION: AMERICAN Legion Post 55 Commander Aaron Tucker stands next to a plaque commemorating previous Post Commanders. "We just want to help others if we can," he said.

Photos by Steven Jupiter



(L TO R) Ben Hsiung, Nate Reitman, and Greg Yelnosky show off their wares in their new craft cannabis shop, Pine Grove Organics, in Brandon. "Our standard for quality is pretty high here," said Yelnosky, with no pun intended. Photos by Carolyn Van Vleck

Pine Grove Organics brings 'craft cannabis' to Brandon

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—Three 20-something dudes open a weed shop in a small Vermont town...it sounds like the plot of a Seth Rogen movie. But these dudes—Greg Yelnosky, Ben Hsiung, and Nate Reitman—aren't bumbling stoners out of their depth. Instead, they're serious entrepreneurs hoping to do for cannabis what craft breweries like Foley

Brothers and Red Clover have done for beer.

"We want to be the leading edge of the craft cannabis movement," said Yelnosky in Pine Grove's new shop on Route 7, just north of Brandon village.

Originally from central Pennsylvania, the three were childhood friends. The shop's name, Pine
(See *Pine Grove*, Page 10)

Snowed Inn? Lack of snow effects businesses

BY WILL ROSS

GOSHEN—Those picturesque Vermont winter mornings, when a fresh blanket of snow lays over the undisturbed ground and the green mountains are cloaked in a white canopy, seem fewer by the year. Vermont is known for its natural aesthetics and winter recreation opportunities. These factors are a major catalyst for tourists and outdoor enthusiasts who travel here hoping to experience winter in Vermont. This seasonal tourism not only benefits the state's economy as a whole, but also directly supports businesses that have come to rely on predictable snowfall to enable the activities they offer.

Though some residents may embrace the mild winter weather of recent years, a few local establishments have been impacted by these

changes. As the frequency of snow-melt events increases, these businesses are finding ways to adapt to the unpredictable snowfall and continue encouraging folks to get outside and enjoy all the great things our state has to offer.

One of these businesses, Blueberry Hill Inn in Goshen, has seen this lack of snow as a deterrent for guests. Founded in 1971, the inn caters to tourism by offering lodging, meals, and events in the heart of the Green Mountains. The Blueberry Hill Outdoor Center across the street is a major draw for guests of the inn. The Outdoor Center is a non-profit Nordic ski area that operates on a donation basis. The Center provides rental equipment
(See *Snowed Inn*, Page 10)



OVUU SB approves FY24 budget amid questions about tech ed

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—The Otter Valley Unified Union School Board approved its budget for fiscal year 2024 at its meeting on Wednesday, January 4. The final amount proposed for FY24 is \$24,174,395.

This represents a 6.45% increase over the FY23 budget of \$22,706,455. Every school in the district will see an increase in its individual budget except for Lothrop El-

ementary in Pittsford, which will see a slight decrease of .03%.

The expenditures that will see the greatest increases across the district are direct instruction (+\$710,275 or +3.13%), student support (+\$234,023 or +1.03%), and facilities (+\$226,325 or +1.00%). Expenditures that will decrease are school administration (-\$22,868 or -0.1%) and debt service (-\$8,148 or -0.04%).

RNESU Business Director Brenda Fleming led the Board through the budget, noting that the proposed increase of 6.45% is still well under the national inflation rate for the year, which is 8.70%, as represented by the Consumer Price Index (CPI).

Specific changes to the budget

from FY23 include:

- Lothrop will lose one teacher, because of diminished enrollment

- Neshobe will gain one para-educator

- Neshobe will add a part-time library assistant

- Otter Creek Academy will move “extraordinary cost” students to the RNESU budget

- OV Middle School will add a full-time English/Social Studies teacher

- OV Middle School will add a paraeducator/interventionist

- OV Middle School will add a pre-late bus run

- OV Middle School will move “extraordinary cost” students to the RNESU budget

- \$7200 in retirement benefits will be disbursed to an OVUHS science teacher

- \$100,000 for truancy, school safety, and social work at OV

After review of the proposal, OVUU Board member Kevin Thornton moved to amend the budget to include \$200,000 to purchase new equipment for the tech education program run by OV teacher Devon Karpak. Thornton argued that current equipment is outdated by de-

cadies and that students need to be taught on up-to-date machines.

A discussion followed in which other Board members took issue with Thornton’s approach. Board chair Laurie Bertrand stated that the motion was premature since Karpak had indicated that he wasn’t yet ready to submit a request for funding. She added that \$175,000 had already been set aside for this specific purpose from the facilities fund and would be available this summer, by which time it was expected that Karpak would be ready to make a request.

Thornton impressed upon the Board that his prior requests for tech-ed funding, which he deemed urgent, had been dismissed by the previous administration as premature as well. “It’s time,” he said. “Justice delayed is justice denied. We’re not doing our kids justice.”

Ms. Bernard replied, “Karpak needs a clear and precise plan before we give him money.”

Ultimately, Mr. Thornton’s amendment was seconded but defeated, 4 to 7.

The unamended budget was approved by a vote of 6 to 4. Residents of the towns that make up the OV district will have a chance to vote on the budget on March 7.

“It’s time. Justice delayed is justice denied. We’re not doing our kids justice.”

—Kevin Thornton, OVUU Board member

Brandon Sb: budget, trees, transformers

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—On Monday night, the Brandon selectboard approved the proposed FY24 budget that it will send to the voters in March. The total amount proposed to be raised by taxes is \$2,737,260.00, representing a 0.9% increase over FY23.

Board Chair Seth Hopkins praised the hard work of the Board, the Town Manager, and the Budget Committee in preparing the budget.

“I was worried we’d be looking at serious difficulties meeting expenses,” Hopkins said. But we’re still able to take care of our staff. We’re able to do capital things with the 1% local option tax. We’re only asking 1% more from taxpayers this year.”

Though most of the town’s revenue still comes in through property taxes, a significant portion is now received through the

1% local option tax levied on goods, food, and lodging.

The proposed budget includes a 5% wage increase for non-union town employees, designed to retain staff at a time when Vermont is experiencing a labor shortage.

Hopkins also indicated that the selectboard had authorized a \$200,000 withdrawal from the town’s unrestricted general reserve fund. \$100K of those monies will be used to directly offset expenses in the budget, thereby reducing the amount of money to be raised by taxes. The other \$100K will be used to pay off municipal leases on equipment, such as the sidewalk machine and an F-550 utility truck. Hopkins estimated that without this drawdown, the proposed budget would’ve been 7% higher than last year’s instead of just 0.9%.

(See Brandon Sb, Page 19)

Pittsford Selectboard keeps their eyes on the road

BY WILL ROSS

PITTSFORD — The Pittsford Selectboard held its first meeting of the new year on Wednesday, January 4, 2023.

The board voted to lower all speed limits within the village to 25 MPH, in an effort to increase the safety of residents. Streets with high foot traffic, such as Mechanic St. and Pleasant St., which are adjacent to the elementary school, will especially benefit from this.

There was a discussion about formally discontinuing a stretch of upper Old Hubbardton Road that is no longer maintained. Board members noted that this could be an opportunity for the town to declare the old stretch of road a public trail. However, this topic was postponed for a later meeting.

There was commentary about Vermont Act 250, specifically pertaining to a permit that was granted to the Vermont Department of Transportation on December 27, 2022. This permit authorized a replacement of the existing bridge (No. 108) over Furnace Brook, across from the Mobile station. The

project would include approach work, realignment of VT Route 3 and Oxbow Road, related drainage and roadway infrastructure, and the temporary construction of both a pedestrian and a vehicular bridge.

The Pittsford planning committee had objected to this project in an earlier hearing because of concerns with the site’s history, conflicts with the town plan, and safety at the intersection. Despite the previous testimony of planning committee members, the permit was granted to the Vermont Department of Transportation.

Attendee Rick Conway stated concerns about emergency vehicles and longer response times that would result from the project.

Board member Mark Winslow noted that it is clear the bridge needs to be replaced, due to neglect, though the additional changes to the roadway being imposed by the state could potentially cause safety issues. Board member David Mills reaffirmed this sentiment stating that the realignment is comparable to taking a bad intersection and

(See Pittsford Sb, Page 19)

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Correction

In our Holiday 2022 feature last week, we incorrectly identified St. Bridget Church

in West Rutland. It is not “St. Brigid” as we wrote. Our apologies for the mistake.

A belated Scandinavian holiday concert at St. Thomas

BY KENNETH MCFARLAND

On Thursday, January 5, Brandon's St. Thomas & Grace Episcopal Church hosted Director Rustan Swenson's Sancta Lucia Festival. A native of Sweden, Swenson has long called Middlebury home. The event was postponed from the usual date of December 13 because of Covid restrictions. In previous years, Middlebury and Orwell have welcomed Swenson's festivals, but this was its premier Brandon setting.

As at previous Swenson programs, George Matthew, Jr. provided accompaniment, moving frequently between the piano and organ as the program required. Rebecca Orten deftly filled the title role, easily recognizable for her crown of candles. She shared the stage with her sisters, Eleanor and Margaret Orten, along with Ainsleigh Linnea and Nellie Pierce, all wearing traditional long white robes. Appropriate for the event, they sang their parts in Swedish, backed by Matthew on piano. The congregation participated fully, singing a variety of carols, with music played on the St. Thomas &

Grace pipe organ. An instrument of remarkable qualities, it perfectly complements the church's early-1860s Gothic Revival sanctuary.

People across Scandinavia have long marked Sancta Lucia Day as the beginning of the Christmas season. They celebrate through festivals commemorating the life of St. Lucia, a native of Syracuse in Italy, who suffered martyrdom for her Christian faith in the early 4th century A.D. In Norwegian, Swedish, and some Finnish towns, a local young person is selected to lead festivities wearing a halo-like wreath set with candles. This recalls the tradition that St. Lucia wore such candles, thus freeing both hands to bring nourishment to Christians secluded in catacombs. Clearly, such festivals also recall older winter solstice, pre-Christian, celebrations marking the return of longer days and anticipating spring's arrival.

St. Thomas & Grace Church holds services each Sunday at 10 a.m. All are truly welcome.



(L TO R) Nellie Pierce, Ainsleigh Linnea, Rebecca Orten, Margaret Orten, and Eleanor Orten perform in Rustan Swenson's Sancta Lucia Festival at St. Thomas & Grace Episcopal Church in Brandon on January 5. Photo Beate Ankjaer-Jensen

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BRANDON REPORTER

Guest Editorial

802 Opportunity Grant offers free tuition

We've long known that the most promising jobs in Vermont require education and training beyond high school. Yet too often, Vermonters seeking that education and workforce training cannot afford it. Cost is the primary barrier to postsecondary continuation, and we have one of the country's lowest college-going rates to show for it. Consequently, we also have a workforce in crisis.

One silver lining of the pandemic is that Vermont has come together to make historic investments in college and workforce training affordability. Last year, with generous support from legislators and the Governor, Vermont Student Assistance Corp. (VSAC) announced the 802 Opportunity Grant:

The power of this program is its inclusivity. Vermonters of all ages and backgrounds stand to benefit, including working adults, single parents, recent high school graduates, veterans, new Americans, educators, healthcare workers, and entrepreneurs.

free tuition at the Community College of Vermont (CCV) for Vermonters with a family income of \$50,000 or less. In 2022, legislators increased the household income threshold to \$75,000.

Thousands of Vermonters have taken VSAC up on its offer. Among them:

- A social worker pursuing a career in mental health who depends on 802 Opportunity to stay out of debt.

- A funeral director, new to the profession, who had been laid off during the pandemic, for whom 802 Opportunity was “a huge weight off my shoulders.”

- A behavioral therapist for children with autism says that 802 Opportunity allows her to access education while working full-time.

The power of this program is its inclusivity. Vermonters

of all ages and backgrounds stand to benefit, including working adults, single parents, recent high school graduates, veterans, new Americans, educators, healthcare workers, and entrepreneurs. Fully half of Vermont households are eligible.

In the 2021-2022 academic year, more than 2,000 Vermonters enrolled using 802 Opportunity—close to 50 percent of CCV's degree-seeking students. Vermonters from all 14 counties attended all 12 of CCV's academic centers. Students were 17 to 74 years old, with an average age of 30. Three-quarters or a staggering 1,500 students were the first in their family to go to college.

We're learning a key lesson: when we remove the barrier of

(See Free tuition, Page 5)



Revenge never tasted sweeter

THIS RED-BREASTED NUTHATCH was captured stealing seeds from a squirrel's cache on Hollow Road.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

Community Forum

Emerge Vermont announces local candidate training for Democratic women

Burlington, VT—Emerge Vermont, the state's premier organization for recruiting and training Democratic women to run for office, announced today that it will offer a new regional training program for women interested in running for local office.

Emerge Vermont Local is different from the organization's more comprehensive candidate training program. Emerge Vermont Local is a half-day training that will provide skills and tools to enable Democratic women to run successful campaigns for school boards, selectboards, city councils, and village trustee boards on Town Meeting Day. “We are excited to launch this

new training program for women who want to serve in local office. This training will help improve women's representation in local government,” said Elaine Haney, executive director of Emerge Vermont. “Our selectboards and school boards are the connection between our communities and the decision making that affects our daily lives,” Haney said. “Local elections typically involve fewer registered voters and smaller geographic areas than legislative campaigns. They generally occur on Town Meeting Day each spring, and so the campaign season is also relatively short and requires less fundraising,” Haney explained. “The

Emerge Vermont Local program will offer campaign training suited to the comparatively smaller local election cycle. It's essential that Democratic women are at the local government table.”

The training will be offered at the Brandon Town Hall on Saturday, January 14th, from 1–5 p.m. and will focus specifically on campaigning locally. The cost of participation is \$35 per person. Those interested can learn more at <https://vt.emergeamerica.org/events/emerge-vermont-local/>.

About Emerge Vermont
For more information about Emerge Vermont, please visit <https://vt.emergeamerica.org/>

The REPORTER

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Current board members are Steven Jupiter, president; Dr. George Fjeld, treasurer; Barbara Ebling, secretary.

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Letters to the Editor

Equity Audit moves OV into “state of the art”

Teaching has become an increasingly complex and challenging profession that requires support from administration, school boards, and communities. The recent audit of our district (see The Reporter 1/4/23), conducted by the Mid-Atlantic Equity Consortium, examined socio-culturally significant factors and offered a number of recommendations for action. This audit helps us all to pursue the “state of the art.”

While there was no evidence that teachers or administrators knowingly discriminated against students, the recommendations can act as guidance for professional development. One of the important elements for being considered a “professional” is to be able to move the “state of the art” into a “state of practice” rapidly. Just as we want our doctors and lawyers to stay abreast of current knowledge and emerg-

ing practices, we also expect our professional educators to do the same.

The presentation to the OVUU Board by administrators on December 21 did just that and illustrates the professional responses to identified needs. Already underway are some relatively new initiatives: Universal Design for Learning, Trauma-informed instructional practices, Embedded Social-Emotional Learning instruction, Identity-Conscious Teaching, Restorative Justice practices, Implicit Bias training. Community-engagement opportunities include a monthly Parent Advisory Committee, a Student Advisory Committee, as well as monthly webinars.

An Equity Action Plan will be implemented in spring and summer of 2023. It will be important for all of us to learn a new common vocabulary and understand a common conceptual frame-

work for this difficult work so that we can have meaningful conversations with each other. For instance, the term “implicit bias,” is not active mistreatment but a subconscious reaction, versus “prejudice,” which is explicit action taken because of a bias. We will need to have ongoing conversations to clarify and understand new vocabulary and concepts. We will need to listen to students. We will need to listen and learn from each other.

The majority of any school’s budget is for professional staff and includes professional development funds and activities. The professionals in each of our community schools continue to need all our support as they move the “state of the art” into practice in a way that benefits all students and families.

Derek Larsen,
member OVUU School Board

Free tuition

(Continued from Page 4)
cost, Vermonters enroll.

Employers need workers with increasingly sophisticated skills, and CCV provides those skills. According to the latest report from the J. Warren and Lois McClure Foundation and the Vermont Department of Labor, the high-pay, high-demand jobs with at least 500 openings this decade include jobs in health care, education, and business—the bread and butter of CCV programs. More than 250 of the 802 Opportunity recipients have already completed a certificate or degree, and most are in the fields of health care, child care, and business.

We know that education is the greatest equalizer when it comes to economic opportunity—and as a rising tide lifts all boats, this is true for individuals and for whole communities. When Governor Scott and the

legislature prioritized funding for higher education, they made a gift to individual Vermonters and to our collective economic well-being.

When we continue this positive trajectory by prioritizing and making permanent the state’s funding for 802 Opportunity in 2023, Vermont will serve as a powerful example to the nation of a state invested in its future. By expanding access to education and workforce training, we are building the foundation for a more resilient, more equitable, more vibrant Vermont.

Scott Giles
President & CEO
President of Vermont Student
Assistance Corp.
Joyce Judy
President
Community College of
Vermont



Legislative Report

BY STEPHANIE JEROME

2023 Legislative Session begins!

MONTPELIER—Thank you for electing me to represent the Town of Brandon in the Vermont State Legislature. It is my great honor to be your voice in Montpelier. I will miss representing the towns of Pittsford and Sudbury, but I am confident that both towns will be served well by Rep. Butch Shaw and Rep. Joe Andriano.

Start to the Biennium

I love the start to each biennium. The beauty of our Capital and the longstanding traditions and ceremony of our state are truly a treasure. On Wednesday, we elected Rep. Jill Krowinski as Speaker of the House, took our oath of office, and received our committee assignments. Thursday was another day of significant ceremonies, with the swearing in of the Treasurer, Secretary of State, Auditor of Accounts, Attorney General, Lt. Governor, and Governor. Many dignitaries were in attendance, including past governors, VT Supreme Court members, and many special guests. This was followed by the Governor’s speech, which outlined his priorities for the session. I was happy to learn that he is making rural Vermont a priority!

Committee Assignments

I have been asked to serve another biennium on the Committee on Commerce and Economic Development. This session I have been chosen to be the Vice-Chair of the Committee and am pleased with this honor. We will be working on a broad spectrum of issues, including workforce, economic development, privacy, career and technical education, personal financial education, unemployment insurance, helping businesses and more.

Caucus Involvement

As in the past two biennia, I will continue to be actively involved in the Rural Caucus, Women’s Caucus, Climate Solutions Caucus, and Social Equity Caucus. My work in the Commerce Committee cuts across all these interest groups.

Community Outreach

After a long pause (due to the pandemic), I will hold monthly constituent meetings again. My first meeting of the session will be on January 14th from 10-11 at the Brandon Free Public Library. Please drop by to join me for coffee to discuss the start of the biennium and to talk about issues that are important to you. I will also post important resour-

ces and legislative updates on my website www.stephaniejeromevt.com, as well as on Facebook and Instagram.

A favorite part of my job is helping my constituents. Thanks to all the folks that have reached

out to me for assistance in the area of fuel assistance, housing, unemployment, childcare, energy, healthcare, business grants, and more.

I look forward to working with you this session,

Rep. Stephanie Zak Jerome
House Commerce and Economic
Development Committee
- Vice-Chair
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Obituaries

Eugene Paul Barrows, 82, Brandon

BRANDON—Eugene ‘Gene’ Paul Barrows, age 82, passed away Friday, December 30, 2022, at the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington.

Gene was born in Addison on April 12, 1940. He was the son of Austin and Dorothy (Lorette) Barrows, Sr. He grew up in Brandon, where he received his early education and graduated from Brandon High School, Class of 1958. Gene was active in sports and was a trumpet player with the high school band. He earned his degree in education from Castleton College. Gene taught school for several years, elementary through college level. While at Castleton, he was on the 1963 team that won the national soccer championship. He continued playing, coaching, and refereeing the sport well into his retirement. He was also a ski patrolman at Pico Peak in the winter months. Gene was an



EUGENE PAUL BARROWS

avid hunter and fisherman.

He is survived by 2 daughters and a son-in-law: Robin Barrows and her husband Joe Butters of Raleigh, NC, and Michelle Bellerjeau. He is also survived by a brother, Austin W. Barrows, Jr. of Maryland, and a sister, Martha Steele of Sudbury. Several nieces, nephews & cousins also survive him.

The graveside committal service and burial, with military honors, will take place, July 8, 2023, time and location to be announced.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made, in his memory, to; the Vermont Veterans Home, 325 North Street, Bennington, VT 05201 or Castleton State College Athletics. <https://castleton.formstack.com/forms/donations>

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

Phyllis May Bailey, 90, Brandon

Phyllis May Bailey, age 90, passed away Monday, January 9, 2023, at Rutland Regional Medical Center.

Phyllis was born in Sudbury on September 20, 1932. She was the daughter of Perley and Lula (Branch) Disorda, Sr. She grew up in Sudbury where she received her early education. On June 22, 1948, she married Norman C. Bailey, Sr. in Brandon. They made their home in Brandon where they raised their family. Mr. Bailey predeceased her in June 2002. Phyllis worked at the Brandon Training School for over 49 years. She retired as an Area Supervisor when the school closed. Following retirement, she and her late husband enjoyed snowbirding 6 months at a time to Florida. She enjoyed arts and crafts, camping, and eating seafood. Big family gatherings were a delight for her.

She is survived by her son,



PHYLLIS MAY BAILEY

Norman C. Bailey, Jr., and his wife Eunenie Bailey of Brandon; 2 daughters, Linda Stone of Brandon and Carol Racine and her husband Robert Racine of Leicester; and her daughter in-law Deborah Bailey of Leicester. Many grandchildren, great grandchildren, nieces, nephews & cousins also survive her. She was also prede-

ceased by a daughter. Pamela Sue Bailey; a son, Robert Bailey; her son in-law, David William Stone; 2 brothers, Perley Disorda, Jr and James “Mick” Disorda; and 3 sisters, Viola Austin, Rachel Denis, and Jane Gove.

The funeral service will be held on Friday, January 13, 2023, at 1 p.m., at the Brandon Congregational Church. Rev. Sara Rossigg, pastor will officiate. A private graveside committal service and burial will follow, in the family lot, at Pine Hill Cemetery in Brandon.

Friends may call at the Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon on Friday, January 13, 2023 from 10 a.m. until 12 noon.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made, in her memory to; Brandon Area Rescue Squad, P.O. Box 232, Brandon, VT 05733.

Obituary Guidelines

The Reporter will publish paid obituaries and free notices of passing. Paid obituaries cost 25 cents per word and will be published, as submitted, on the date of the family's choosing.

For those who do not wish to purchase an obituary, the Reporter offers a free notice of passing up to 100 words, subject to editing by our news department. Photos (optional) with either paid obituaries or free notices cost \$10 per photo. Obituaries may be emailed to news@brandonreporter.com. Submissions must be received by 11 a.m. on Monday for publication in the Wednesday paper.

Silver Lake hut gets the heave-ho

BY STEVEN JUPITER

GOSHEN/LEICESTER—After a months-long deliberative process that included a dramatic public meeting in Brandon last summer, the proposed guest hut on the Silver Lake trail in the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area has been officially nixed.

In his ruling, District Ranger Christopher Mattrick laid out the rationale:

“[A]lthough the placement of a hut within the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area (MNRA) would be a benefit to the public and the Green Mountain National Forest, the proposed hut design and location might tangibly alter the experience of the users approaching Silver Lake on the Goshen and Leicester Hollow Trails, as well as the Silver Lake Campground itself.”

The proposed hut would have provided bare-bones accommodations for up to 10 overnight guests at a price of \$65 to \$165 per night, depending on the season.

At the public meeting in Brandon on June 8, 2022, proponents and opponents of the hut made their cases.

Proponents argued that the hut would offer much-needed shelter during the winter months and that it would act as a home base for the handicapped, the elderly, or families who wanted to hike overnight without carrying loads of equipment.

Opponents argued that the presence of a hut would destroy the experience of hiking on an undeveloped trail. Some folks speaking against the proposal blasted what they viewed as a desecration of nature. It was this argument that seems to have ultimately prevailed.

The ruling does not preclude the possibility of building a hut elsewhere in the MNRA and Moosalamoo Association (MA) President Angelo Lynn insists that the search will continue for a site. “The public good of a hut within the Moosalamoo is undeniable,” he said. The MA is a private organization that works with the Forest Service to develop the MNRA for public benefit.

“[A] goal is to develop a through-hiking trail and hut system in the Green Mountains similar to what New Hampshire, Maine, and many other states have,” Lynn continued. “With the help of area residents and towns, we look forward to finding a suitable hut site in the near future.”

Gagnon Lumber

Native Vermont Lumber

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THESE STICKERS ARE displayed in the bar at Am. Legion Post 55 in Brandon. They represent the wars that Post members served in. The oldest members are both 96 and served in WWII.

American Legion

(Continued from Page 1)

ing hand.”
 “Harold taught me that the top priority of a post is membership. We rode around to just about every town in Rutland County. If we saw anyone we thought might be a vet, we’d ask if they’d be interested in joining Post 55.”

Despite those efforts to bolster membership, there were approximately 240 members when Tucker joined Post 55 and only 141 today. Many of the 240 had served in WWII, Korea, or Vietnam, and the ranks of those veterans have thinned with time. The oldest current members are Harold Adams and Burt Reynolds, both WWII vets and both 96 years old. Though membership may be lower today than in the past, the Post is still extremely active.

The Legion operates programs for homeless veterans, helping them find shelter. It helps veterans find resources to deal with mental-health issues. It provides a Color Guard for veterans’ funerals. “We’re gonna be there at the graveyard to see them out in high style,” said Tucker.

The building itself acts as a community center. There’s a bar where members can come together to socialize, vent, and celebrate. There’s a hall that’s been the site of weddings, funerals, blood drives, the Brandon Christmas Toy Project, Election Day polls, and even a drag show a year or two ago. “It wasn’t a big deal,” Tucker said when asked if the drag show was controversial. “Everything has to get approved by the Executive Board. It wasn’t a big deal.”

The Legion is often the site of fundraisers for local folks who are experiencing hardships. Recently, for example, a local man was in a serious accident in Orwell. His family was having difficulty managing the medical bills. The Legion donated their hall for a fundraiser, complete with food and raffles. “I don’t know where we’d be without the benefit,” said the man’s mother (name withheld for privacy). “The members of the Brandon American Legion are outstanding members of our community!”

During the pandemic, the Legion hosted Everyone Eats and Get It And Go, two food programs meant

to make sure people stayed fed during the days of the lockdowns. More than 10,000 meals were served during that time.

“They’re the go-to group when someone needs a wheelchair or medical equipment,” said Colleen Wright, whose husband retired from the military and who organizes many of the events at the Legion, including the Toy Project. “The Legion is always there when you need

‘em!”

The Legion also sponsors several programs for kids:

On Flag Day, June 14, local Scout troops participate in a ceremony to learn how to handle an American flag properly.

There are separate Boy and Girl State Programs, where juniors from Otter Valley can go to Montpelier for a week to learn the workings of government, all expenses paid. In 2022, OV junior Anna Lee participated and was selected for the National Program, which educates students about federal government.

She had the opportunity to travel to Washington, D.C. and shake hands with President Biden.

The Oratorical Contest is a national competition for high-school students under 20 years of age. Entrants must deliver speeches on an aspect of the American Constitution.

The Law and Order Cadet Program sends students to the Police Academy in Pittsford to learn about law enforcement.

“We don’t get a lot of applicants for these programs,” says Tucker. “We go down to Otter Valley every

year, but we don’t get a lot of interest. We tell the kids it’s good for their college resumes.”

The Post’s short-term plans include adapting the hall for use as an overnight emergency shelter. According to FEMA regulations, an emergency shelter must have a bathroom in order to accept people overnight, so the Post hopes to build an additional bathroom right off the hall in 2023.

Tucker sums it up: “We just want to help others if we can.”

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Calendar of events

January

Tuesdays

Maclure Library Story Time Playgroup

Looking for a fun, educational playgroup for your 2–5 year old? Look no further! From 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. join Miss Allie, a certified teacher, for a weekly FREE literacy-based playgroup. Light snacks will be provided, along with stories, crafts, songs, games, and more. To register, please email allie.griffiths@rcpcc.org with your child's name, age, and contact information for your family



Chaffee Art Center watercolor class Thursday, January 12th 6-8p.m.

Instructor: Dale Bills
\$35 per person, all materials included
Min: 5
16 South Main Street
Rutland
05701

Wednesdays

Ping Pong

The Green Mountain Table Tennis Club would like to announce the beginning of its new season!

The club has begun play on Wednesday evenings starting at 7 p.m. It will meet nearly every Wednesday year-round in the gym at the Rutland Area Christian School in Rutland, located at the corner of Melrose Ave. and Lincoln Ave. in Rutland, a block from the intersection of Route 7 and Melrose Ave. (110 Lincoln Ave., Rutland, VT 05701)).

Being a part of this unique and exciting club offers a variety of activities, including regular practice, a challenge board, clinics for beginner and advanced play, singles and doubles, inter-club events with other table tennis clubs, and even tournaments.

If you are interested in table tennis as a recreational or athletic activity, we're interested in you! There is a modest membership fee of only \$30, although you can come twice free as our guest. Bring your sneakers and paddle (or use ours) and have some fun playing a great game of "Pong!"

For further information about the Green Mountain Table

Tennis Club, call club representative Ronald Lewis at 802-247-5913, or visit our club's website at www.gmttc.com.

Trouble with math? Free tutoring is offered!

Free math tutoring is available in downtown Brandon on Wednesday afternoons from 2:45-4 p.m. at Fellowship Hall — the smaller brick building next to the Brandon Congregational Church.

Larry Rowe is offering help to any Otter Valley students who have questions or difficulties with mathematics or would like help with their math homework. Rev. Sara Rossigg will be in her office — 20 feet away from the worktable — during these sessions to ensure everyone feels comfortable and is safe.

Call 802-236-9130 for more information.

(Please note that Wednesday, Nov. 23 and Wednesday, Dec. 7 are days Larry has other commitments and will not be available.)

Yoga Prana Shakti Zoom & Studio Chair Yoga, Gentle, Wednesdays

From 10:30–11:30 a.m. at 155 Woodstock Avenue in Rutland Lina Cloffe Hanson (Parvati) offers an Earth Conscientious, Spiritual, Gentle Physical Yoga Practice. We meet on Mondays via zoom. Contact for Zoom link. (There is also a Monday Zoom only class)

Not everyone can get up and down off of the floor easily making traditional yoga classes difficult. If you have physical limitation or a health issue this might be the ideal class for you. With

the help of a chair most people can practice yoga and reaping the benefits of increased circulation, balance, flexibility, mobility, strength and more.

We spend a fair amount of the time exercising in a seated position in the chairs but if possible, we also do exercises standing, using the chairs for support. The exercises can be adjusted for individual needs and we move at a comfortable pace. I think will soon notice a difference once you start. Looking forward to seeing you in class!

Lina (Parvati) has 20 plus years of experience teaching and a lifelong personal practice.

To stay tuned if there are any cancelations, follow on Facebook and get on email list. \$15/class

Sundays

Brandon Town Hall Painting with Crystal

Crystal Ketcham leads an all ages painting event!

Yes, you CAN paint! More info, contact Crystal at ceastman88@gmail.com

Wednesday 11th:

Wallingford Town Hall Concert Series presents Gypsy Reel

Gypsy Reel, will be performing at 7:00 p.m. Gypsy Reel is

known for playing high energy stirring music rooted in the Celtic tradition, but garnered from the whole world. Based locally but performing worldwide, their music is an exciting synthesis of world rhythms and influences from 3 continents. The line-up includes talented banjoist and vocalist Claudine Langille, Graham Parker on fiddle, Camille Parker on mandolin & bodhran and singing in French and English, and Shrewsbury's own vocalist & guitarist extraordinaire, Silas Hamilton. All concerts start at 7:00 p.m. with suggested donations of \$10 to \$15/person with all proceeds going to musicians less 10 percent to the Town. Mill River Union High School's Interact Club will host a bake sale.

PLEASE SUPPORT LOCAL LIVE MUSIC.

75 School Street
Wallingford
05773

Otter Valley Unified Union School Board Candidate Info. Session

OVUUSD Board Candidate Info. Session at 5:00 p.m. at the OVUHS Library & Online/Dial In. All board documents and a link to participate remotely can be found at www.rnesu.org

Saturday 14th:

Adult Snowshoe Scavenger Hunt

Come Join MALT for a morning of snowshoeing and exploration on Chipman Hill. Snowshoes will be provided. NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY! Just bring a willingness to have fun in the snow!

We'll meet at the Chipman Hill parking lot in

the morning, give a quick snowshoe how-to, then you'll be able to complete the photo scavenger hunt at your own pace. This hunt will challenge you to be creative and pay attention to your surroundings. Those who complete the scavenger hunt will be entered to win a MALT-swig bag for two, filled with sunglasses, hats, and other gear. We'll also have a fire set up at an overlook

to enjoy at the end. Hot cocoa will be provided. Please dress warmly, bring a phone or camera to take photos.

This event is for Adults 18+. Registration is required. Register online at maltvt.org/events. Member adult \$5/person, Non-member adult \$8/person. Drop in whenever you'd like between 9:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.. Snowshoes must be returned by 1:30PM.

Antje Duvokot and The Sea The Sea

Next Stage Arts Project and Twilight Music present an evening of contemporary folk music with Antje Duvokot and The Sea The Sea at 7:30 pm at Next Stage.

Antje Duvokot is a German-born, American-raised singer/songwriter whose songs have been critically praised for their hard-won wisdom, dark-eyed realism, and street-smart romanticism. Her bicultural upbringing and relative newness to English

Goings on around town



Brandon Idol returns January 14!

Brandon's own singing contest- cheer on your friends, find the hidden talent in our community!

Last chance to enter!
Brandonvt.myrec.com \$5,
Brandon Town Hall, 7 p.m.

have helped shape her unique way with a song, giving her a startlingly original poetic palette. They are the keys to the powerful, even revolutionary, empathy that informs everything she writes. She has won some of the top songwriting awards including the Grand Prize in the John Lennon Songwriting Competition, the Kerrville Folk Festival Best New Folk Award and the Boston Music Award for Outstanding Folk Act.

Since the release of her debut studio CD "Big Dream Boulevard," which was voted #1 Folk Release of 2006 by the Boston Globe and was named to the Top 10 Releases of the Year by National Public Radio's Folk Alley, Antje has been touring extensively, criss-crossing the US and Europe. She is a compelling live performer and has played at major festivals, including Newport, Mountain

seekers talk about what we do, who we serve, and how you could get involved. Refreshments will be served. (In case of inclement weather, the event will be held the following Tuesday, January 24. Cancellation information would be posted on the CVRAN website, cvran.org.)

Montpelier Senior Activity Center
58 Barre Street
Montpelier
05602

Emerge Vermont announces local candidate training for Democratic women

The training will be offered at the Brandon Town Hall on Saturday, January 14th, from 1–5 p.m. and will focus specifically on campaigning locally. The cost of participation is \$35 per person. Those interested can learn more at <https://vt.emergeamerica.org/events/emerge-vermont-local/>.

Church.

While some websites can suggest steps in creating an estate, it is good to have the information from some professionals first hand, and to learn if your own plans should be reviewed. So come and learn from these professionals. This presentation is free and open to the public -- all are welcome and urged to attend.

Saturday 21st:

Electrostatic Cats!

First time on the Brandon Town Hall Stage, the Cats from Leicester play a wide variety of covers plus some originals! The smallest band with the biggest sound! \$5 admissions fee at the Brandon Town Hall, 7p.m.

Sunday 22nd:

The Shoreham Congregational Church will host a Soup and Sandwich Lunch and Board Games Afternoon Join us from 12 noon to 3 p.m. for fellowship and lunch followed by an afternoon of playing cards or board games.

Come and play your newest or favorite board game while enjoying a cup of hot soup and a sandwich.

Soups: Chicken, Split Pea, Vegetable, and Chili.
Sandwiches: Cold cuts and sliders to go with the soup.
Drinks: Hot Chocolate, coffee, and tea
Dessert: Cookies

\$5.00 for soup and sandwich

Playing Board Games is Free!

All proceeds go to the Church Building Fund.

Bring your own game or try one of those already here. So, mark your calendar, invite your friends, and come join with others to try your hand at Connect-4, Uno, Cribbage, Trivia, or more!

The majestic natural beauty of the Grand Tetons, January 24



Follow Sue and Marv Elliott, long-time Rutland birders and Audubon members, as they visit and photograph The Grand Tetons. Learn some of the history, flora and fauna of this beautiful American natural area. Presented by Rutland County Audubon.

7:00 pm in the Fellowship Room of the Grace Congregational Church. For more info: birding@rutlandcountyaudubon.org.

Stage, Philadelphia, Falcon Ridge, Great Waters, and Kerrville. Antje's most recent studio release, "Toward the Thunder," centers around themes of courage, resilience and striving for something better, and as with most of her writing, a sense of hope and perseverance shines through the songs.

The Sea The Sea is the upstate New York-based indie folk/pop duo Chuck E. Costa and Mira Costa. They have garnered features across all music platforms, including Apple Music "Best of the Week" and "A-List Singer/Songwriter," and appeared on live performance broadcasts of Mountain Stage, Audiotree, and Paste Music/Daytrotter. The group's 2020 release "Stumbling Home," dubbed "otherworldly" by Rolling Stone magazine, marks the duo's third full-length album.

Tuesday 17th:

Find out how you can welcome refugees and asylum seekers to their new homes in our community

The Montpelier Senior Activity Center and the Central Vermont Refugee Action Network are holding a joint event, CVRAN: Getting Involved, 5 to 6:30 p.m. in the activity room at the Senior Center. CVRAN provides housing, financial, medical, legal, and educational support, as well as friendship, to asylum seekers and refugees living in our communities. We invite you to come hear our panel of volunteers, refugees and asylum

Otter Valley Unified Union School Board Meeting

Starting at 6:00 p.m. at the Lothrop School & Online/Dial In. All board documents and a link to participate remotely can be found at www.rnesu.org.

3447 US-7
Pittsford
05763

Deppman Law Estate Planning Presentation

Everyone has an estate, consisting of everything you own: your car, home, other real estate, checking and savings accounts, investments, life insurance, furniture, personal possessions. Estate planning is making a plan in advance, naming the people or organizations you want to receive the things you own after you die, and taking steps now to make carrying out your plan as easy as possible later.

The presentation begins at 3:30 p.m. in the Fellowship Hall of the Shoreham Congregational

Wednesday 18th:

RNESU School Board Meeting

Starting at 5:00 p.m. at the Lothrop School & Online/Dial In - All board information, including a link to participate are available at www.rnesu.org.

3447 US-7
Pittsford
05763



Chaffee Art Center kids' painting class, January 19

Acrylic on 4x4" canvas
\$25

Instructor: Dale Bills

Pre-registration required 802-775-0356,

info@chaffeeartcenter.org

Prepay: <https://chaffeeartcenter.square.site/>

Min 5 students

16 South Main Street
Rutland
05701



A LONE FIGURE walks toward the snowless trails at Blueberry Hill Inn in Goshen. The lack of snow this winter has forced winter tourism centers to adapt and rethink their offerings.

Photo by Will Ross

Snowed Inn

(Continued from Page 1)

and access to the Moosalamoo National Recreation Area, along with its own private trails. But recently, the Outdoor Center has had to consider new ways to bring people in, because of less-than-ideal skiing conditions. The organization has begun expanding the range of activities it offers.

Operations manager Shari Brown said that recently there has been below-average attendance because of the weather and snow conditions. Brown believes that the snow and skiing opportunities are what bring people to Vermont in the winter and that this mild weather can be discouraging for travelers. She noted that wet, muddy roads from increased runoff and rain can also be a factor that limits accessibility.

“It certainly has been a trend,” Brown replied when asked if she thought this mild weather would be a continuing pattern, implying that they had seen inconsistency in the snowpack over previous winters as well.

Laura Contin of the Mountain Top Resort noted they were experiencing similar challenges in Chittenden. The mid-winter melts are limiting the opportunity for recreation activities, such as cross-country skiing and sledding. Clearly, the outdoor centers will be working to encourage all sorts of activities going beyond Nordic skiing.

So how are these local businesses that benefit from winter

tourism adapting to the mild temperatures?

Brown said that Blueberry Hill has seen many people who just want to get outdoors and are more accepting of the variables. To accommodate these folks, Blueberry Hill is encouraging hiking and has begun renting out micro spikes to increase access to the trail system.

Mountain Top Resort has taken a different approach, implementing snowmaking to provide an opportunity for skiing despite warmer weather. Their team blows enough snow during the cold season to cover a 1–2-kilometer loop, which is sustained even throughout the melts. This lets Nordic skiers continue using the grounds when there is limited snow. Another draw for guests of Mountain Top Resort is the horse-drawn sleigh rides. Their special sleigh can dash through the snow on rails, but it can also meander around the scenic mountain roads on wheels.

The Brandon Inn does not offer winter recreation activities but gets business from the overflow of the local ski resorts during the busy holiday weeks. To further promote winter tourism, they have begun leveraging their location between Killington and Sugarbush, offering deals during the President’s Day and Martin Luther King, Jr. Day weekends. Guests who have an IKON pass, which grants access to both resorts, can stay their third night at the Inn for free. Families that come to stay in Brandon will be

situated right between the two mountains, allowing them easy access to both resorts. So far, the Inn has had a positive response to this promotion.

Events are another way these local inns stimulate tourism. Blueberry Hill has Sunday morning pancake breakfasts, which will resume in late January. They have also collaborated with the folks from Adventure Dinner of Shelburne to put on the third annual, chef-prepared, four-course meal that is hosted along a two-mile trail loop. This is an event that can happen with or without snow, and it has proven to be a great way to encourage folks to get out in the woods during winter. Mountain Top Resort hosts music and events in their tavern and encourages guests to look beyond winter recreation for the many other attractions Vermont has to offer, such as maple syrup and local breweries.

Though the ground may not be covered all winter long, there are still many opportunities during the cold stretches to get out in the snow. And when the weather is milder, people are still encouraged to come visit, explore, and experience all that Vermont’s natural areas have to offer. Folks at these local businesses are treading on new ground, finding ways to be flexible and accepting of the weather we are given. Still, despite the changes and adaptations being implemented, the sentiment that rang through was pray for snow.

Pine Grove

(Continued from Page 1)

Grove, even comes from a mountain near where they grew up. Yelnosky eventually went off to Denison University in Ohio, while Hsiung and Reitman attended Duquesne University in Pittsburgh. As laws prohibiting marijuana were either relaxed or completely repealed in various states, the three started thinking that their recreational interest in cannabis could be something more.

“I’ve been passionate about the plant for a long time,” said Yelnosky. Whereas Reitman and Hsiung held corporate jobs in the health and medical sphere, Yelnosky was out on the West Coast learning the cannabis trade, working at retail and growing facilities in Seattle, Portland, and Spokane.

When they decided to make a go of it as cannabis retailers, they came to Vermont specifically because of the state’s attractive legal framework. “I read the bill [legalizing retail sales],” said Yelnosky. “It looked appealing to a bootstrap entity.”

Reitman added, “Within Vermont, we conducted a very large search. We needed a town that allowed sales. We had to find a suitable commercial building. It had to be affordable. And it had to be someplace comfortable for us to be. We found Brandon.”

“Everything is happening as we hoped. Permits, licenses...the town has been easy to work with,” said Hsiung.

“And having Grassroots [medical marijuana dispensary] in Brandon was a plus: people were already driving to Brandon to buy cannabis,” said Yelnosky.

“And it’s hard not to draw inspiration from Red Clover,” added Hsiung.

Indeed, Vermont’s craft-brewery craze of the past decade provides something of a template for the trio. A range of extremely high-quality products, chosen for both flavor and “effect profile,” is central to their business model. Just as a craft brewer might hold forth on the subtleties of different small-batch IPAs, these guys can discourse on the nuances of the various strains

they offer. Their menu could most definitely be called “curated.”

“I’ve toured over 200 [marijuana] farms,” said Yelnosky. “I can pretty quickly assess whether [growers] are doing things the right way. The standard for quality here is really high.”

“We see our growers as partners, not just suppliers,” noted Reitman.

When asked if they personally sample everything before they sell it, the guys laugh.

“We try it all,” said Hsiung. “We get lots of solicitations from small growers. But a lot of it is ‘just some weed.’ That’s what we call the mediocre stuff. ‘Just some weed.’”

Yelnosky adds, “I like to say, ‘Everyone can make a pizza, but not everyone can make a great pizza.’”

What they sell, however, is not “just some weed.” They’ve got 12 strains currently on their menu, plus a range of edibles. 75% of what they sell is “flower,” the actual buds of the female marijuana plant; 20% is edibles; and 5% is pre-rolled joints.

When they open a jar of flower, they hold a small fan over it to bring out the aroma. Sounding very much like wine stewards, they point out hints of cherry in a particular strain. They insist that all the edibles they sell taste good on their own. In fact, on Fridays they invite vendors to their space to hand out uninfused samples of cookies and gummies, to prove that their products are delicious as well as effective.

But don’t be intimidated if you’re not an experienced user. Pine Grove sees cannabis education as part of its mission.

“I love talking to newbies,” said Yelnosky. “Breaking it down so they can get the most out of their cannabis experience.”

“There’s no better feeling than when people come back because they had a good experience,” added Reitman.

For now, the guys are focused on getting Pine Grove off the ground, but their long-range goal is “vertical integration,” where they would grow and sell their own product. While other states allow retail sales, most don’t allow both cultivation and distribution by a single entity. Vermont, however, does offer both licenses to single businesses.

According to Yelnosky, “the future of cannabis is in Vermont.”

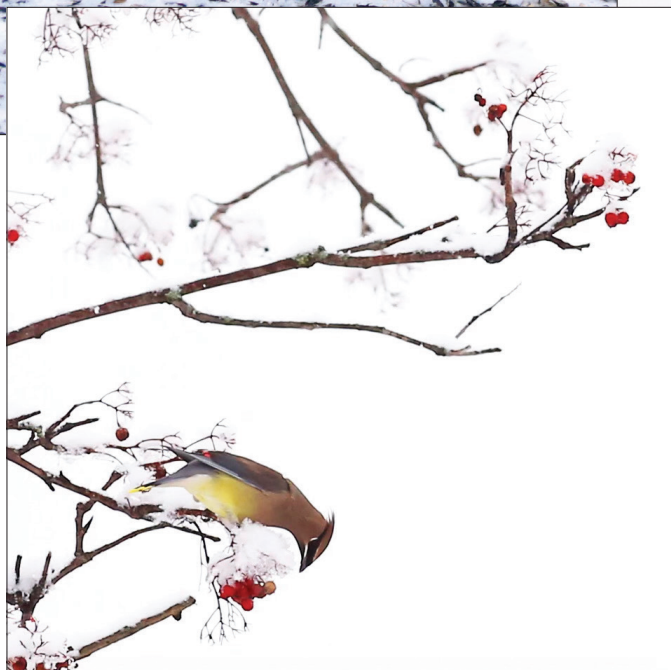


CLOSE-UP OF CRAFT the Cannabis at Pine Grove Organics.

THRIVING THROUGH THE COLD

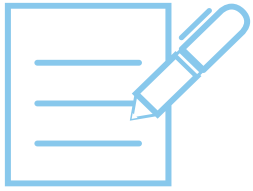


**Photos by
Dale Christie &
Steven Jupiter**



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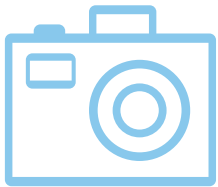
While we will hire a reporter to cover hard news, we'll need "community correspondents" to also cover clubs and organizations (Lions, 4-H, Rotary, American Legion and others), as well as town news for each community and elementary school news (PTA meetings, social outings, and the like).

PROVIDE SPORTS COVERAGE:



We'll need interested parents and others to cover some of the school's sports teams. So if you're a parent who attends most of a team's games, we're eager to train you to write brief game summations and take a few pictures. We'll still strive to cover home varsity sports, when we can, but extra hands will provide the much better news coverage.

TAKE PHOTOS:



If you're a good photographer with a single-reflex lens camera, perhaps with a telephoto lens, we're always looking for good scenics, sports and other special event coverage.

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THESE COLORFUL VINTAGE necklace & earring sets were snapped up on eBay by a Hollywood movie studio's costume department, says Janet Mondlak of Across the Street antique shop in Brandon. Photo provided

The customer behind the sale: the afterlife of antiques

BY JANET MONDLAK

BRANDON—One of the things I like best about selling antiques and collectibles is learning about our customer. Every time someone makes a purchase, either at Across the Street—our shop in downtown Brandon—or from our eBay store, there is a story behind the sale.

When someone buys an antique or collectible, they are usually becoming the third owner of the item. First time around was the original sale when an item

was new or had just been hand made. Then there was the middleman, when an antique dealer buys it. And then a third time when a buyer in a shop like ours takes it home. In some cases, something could have had many previous owners. For example, many of the things we buy have been inherited or passed down through families for decades, so there could have been a number of owners before we bought it.

When someone buys something, I find myself wondering why they are buying it. What is

the appeal? Usually, we have no idea. Once in a while, a buyer from our eBay store might express gratitude and give a story, but usually these sales are cut and dried with no side chatter. But here are a few tales that we've collected over the years that we have found heartwarming, amusing, or fascinating.

We had a beautiful pair of fireplace andirons in the shop several years ago that were a bit pricey but absolutely wonderful. They were owl-shaped with orange glass eyes. I imagined how cool they would look with a blazing fire behind them. A customer was browsing one day, saw them, and almost started crying — her grandma had owned

identical looking ones but someone else in the family had inherited them. She was thrilled to be able to purchase back a piece of her childhood, even if this pair wasn't original to her family.

Last year, we sold a box of three ping pong balls from our eBay store. Not an expensive sale but the 1950s box was very

retro with great graphics. The balls were original to the box and in unused condition. When I printed the shipping label, I noticed the name of a very famous person [who I won't mention but let's just say he is an internationally known crossword puzzle creator]. The name made me curious and I used my Google skills to discover that this crossword-puzzle guru indeed lived in

Whether the items we sell are going on to their third life as a collector's item, a nostalgic memory, or for adaptive reuse, it's a good feeling to know that indeed, there is a lot of life left for the objects we have all around us

the town where the item was being shipped and was an avid ping pong player!

Recently we sold three sets of 1950s retro costume jewelry necklaces and clipback earrings from our eBay store. We are talking bright and bold colors — a purple set, an orange one and my favorite — the avocado green & white pair! They were fabulous and they went to the Costume Design Department of a Los Angeles film studio. I hope to one day be watching a movie and to see an actress strutting across the street wearing one of these sets.

About a year ago, we were contacted by a gentleman from

Massachusetts who had seen an on-line listing we had for a wooden foundry mold that originally been used to make a gear in the mid-1800s. This was a 36" diameter mold. He came to Brandon to pick it up and loved it. He explained that he is a steampunk art designer. His company name is Modvic and if you want to check out his super cool website, its at modvic.com. He does huge commercial installations all over the US and even in other countries. A couple of weeks ago, he contacted us again — we had another foundry mold online and he was interested. It was a 39" wheel. He was working on a new project and had one very similar to ours but he needed two of them. Back to Brandon he came to purchase the second one. I look forward to periodically checking his website to look at his new installations to see how he repurposed the mold that came from 19th-century small town Vermont.

Whether the items we sell are going on to their third life as a collector's item, a nostalgic memory, or for adaptive reuse, it's a good feeling to know that indeed, there is a lot of life left for the objects we have all around us. You know the old saying, "one woman's trash is another woman's treasure!"

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BRANDON REPORTER

Sports

Three at the buzzer lifts Otter boys' basketball over Eagles, 58-55

BY ANDY KIRKALDY

BRISTOL — About two seconds remained in the boys' basketball game at Mount Abraham Friday evening when Otter Valley Union High School freshman guard Connor Denis launched a contested three-pointer from the arc's right side.

Eagle senior Gavin Bannister had just scored with nine seconds to go to tie the score, 55-55. That bucket had followed an OV rally from down by 40-28 to open the fourth quarter, one sparked by two sophomores: In the fourth period, forward Drew Pelkey went for 10 points, and guard Logan Letourneau sank three three-pointers.

Denis's high-arching shot hit the backboard, and then the front of the rim. The ball rolled slowly around toward the back of the iron.

As the final horn sounded, the ball dropped through the hoop. OV had won, 58-55.

A blue wave of Otters surged off the bench and washed over Denis, the game's smallest and youngest player, who had come through in

its biggest moment.

The Otters moved to 3-3 heading into a Tuesday visit from Mount Anthony, a record compiled all on the road and includes two close losses. OV Coach Mike Stark, was, like his team, pumped.

"We continued to claw back and claw back and didn't give up. And this group has a lot of chemistry and they work hard, and they never give up. That's what I love about this team," Stark said. "And Connor Denis, game-winning shot, and he's a freshman. How can you not love that?"

Stark also pointed to Pelkey, who stepped into a larger role after senior starting center Ben Adams injured an ankle during warmups, an obstacle for the Otters given the Eagles start the six-foot-five Bannister and six-foot-four junior Ian Funke.

"Drew Pelkey was a difference-maker for us tonight," Stark said. "He's had some injuries lately. For him to come back and have the game he had tonight was huge."

Coach Martin Clark saw his

Eagles fall to 2-3. He credited the Otters.

"They played hard. They're a team that never gives up," Clark said.

But he also pointed to his team's turnovers and defensive errors.

"We made some mistakes there and let them back in the game," Clark said. "In a close game anything can happen, and it did. We made a great play to get it tied, and they hit a great shot at the end. That's the way the ball bounces some days."

The first half ended with the Eagles holding a 23-20 lead after dominating the boards, 20-11 including team rebounds. But the Otters' press troubled the Eagles' passing and ballhandling, and the Eagles were at times careless with the ball (11 first-half turnovers) when they tried to force the ball inside against the OV zone.

"There's no doubt we have to do a better job taking care of the ball," Clark said.

Bannister, seniors Norman Benoit and Brenden Oxford, and junior Owen Frizzell led the Eagles with four points each in the half.

Stark liked his team's work on the defensive end: "Defensively we were on point." Offensively in the half, five points from senior guard Owen Thomas in the first quarter and six points from sophomore sub Lucas Politano in the second helped OV stay close.

In the third quarter the Eagles switched to a zone that offset the Otters' quickness. They also took better care of the ball and apparently also took control of the game by outscoring OV, 13-5, including six transition points in the period.

Funke broke loose for six points in the third quarter, while Benoit scored four, and a three by senior guard Chance Denecker set the score at 40-28 heading into the fourth. At the other end Pelkey scored five of the eight OV points in the quarter.

The teams traded buckets to open the fourth, with Eagle sophomore guard Hayden Lutz cashing in a Denecker steal to answer a Denis three to make the score 42-31.

Then OV erupted for 13-2 run to tie the score at 44-44 with 4:04 to go, solving the Eagle zone and by attacking along the baseline.

"I think it worked in our favor because it was so high," Stark said. "It helped our baseline cutters in their finishing."

Clark said the tactic was sound,



MOUNT ABE SENIOR forward Gavin Bannister tied Friday night's home game vs. Otter Valley with this late layup, but OV had a dramatic response.

Photos by Steve James

but the execution was not.

"The biggest thing was our low post, he was getting drawn up with everybody else," Clark said. "We'll learn from it."

With only a Bannister layup answering for Mount Abe, Pelkey drove for three hoops in that surge, adding a free throw after one; Letourneau nailed a three; and Denis and senior Aiden Decker combined for three free throws.

Then the teams traded baskets before a Lutz three gave Mount Abe a 53-

48 lead. Letourneau then sank two three-pointers to put OV on top, 54-53, at 2:35. At about 2:00 Denis hit a free throw to make it 55-53.

The Eagles got the ball back with less than a minute to go. Two non-shooting fouls took time off the clock until Bannister got position on the right block, took a feed from Funke, and laid it in over his left shoulder at 0:09.

Overtime loomed, but the Otters, Denis, and a friendly backboard and rim had other ideas.

Pelkey led the Otters with 16 points. Letourneau scored 12,

Denis had eight; and Decker and Thomas chipped in seven apiece.

Stark said pulling out a close game on the road should give his team a shot in the arm.

"I think this is going to lift them to where we want to be," he said. "This could be a huge confidence booster."

Bannister scored 14 to lead Mount Abe, Lutz finished with 10, seven in the fourth quarter; Funke and Benoit notched eight apiece; and Frizzell added six. Denecker



OV JUNIOR AIDEN Decker, left, and Eagle senior Chance Denecker go after a loose ball in front of Eagle forward Domenic DeNapoli, who took a tumble during Friday night's hoop game at Mount Abe.

sparked the team defensively.

The positives Clark saw were good offensive balance and ball movement, and he expects improvement where it is needed.

"Up 12 in the second half, we should put it away," Clark said. "We're going to get better."

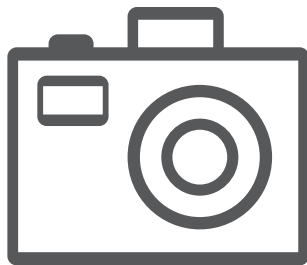


OTTER VALLEY'S DREW Pelkey defends the basket against Eagle forward Domenic DeNapoli during Friday's basketball game at Mount Abraham.



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!



E-mail
ads@brandonreporter.com
if you can identify someone in
these photos.

Or call us at 247-8080



Recognized



Sanford Rouse of Neshobe House called in recognizing Mr. & Mrs. Sullivan. Sanford could not remember their first names. But they used to live on River St. in Brandon years ago.

Jaqueline Doty also recognized the couple as Robert (Bud) Hannah and Marion Hannah at their 60th wedding anniversary breakfast at the Lilac Inn in October '92 or '93.

Gordon Naylor of Brandon recognized his Aunt Marion and Robert Hannah as well. The couple lived in Brandon at the time. This is a photo that was taken at an anniversary party that was thrown by their children. The party took place at the Lilac Inn on October 23, 1993. Both Hannahs are now deceased.

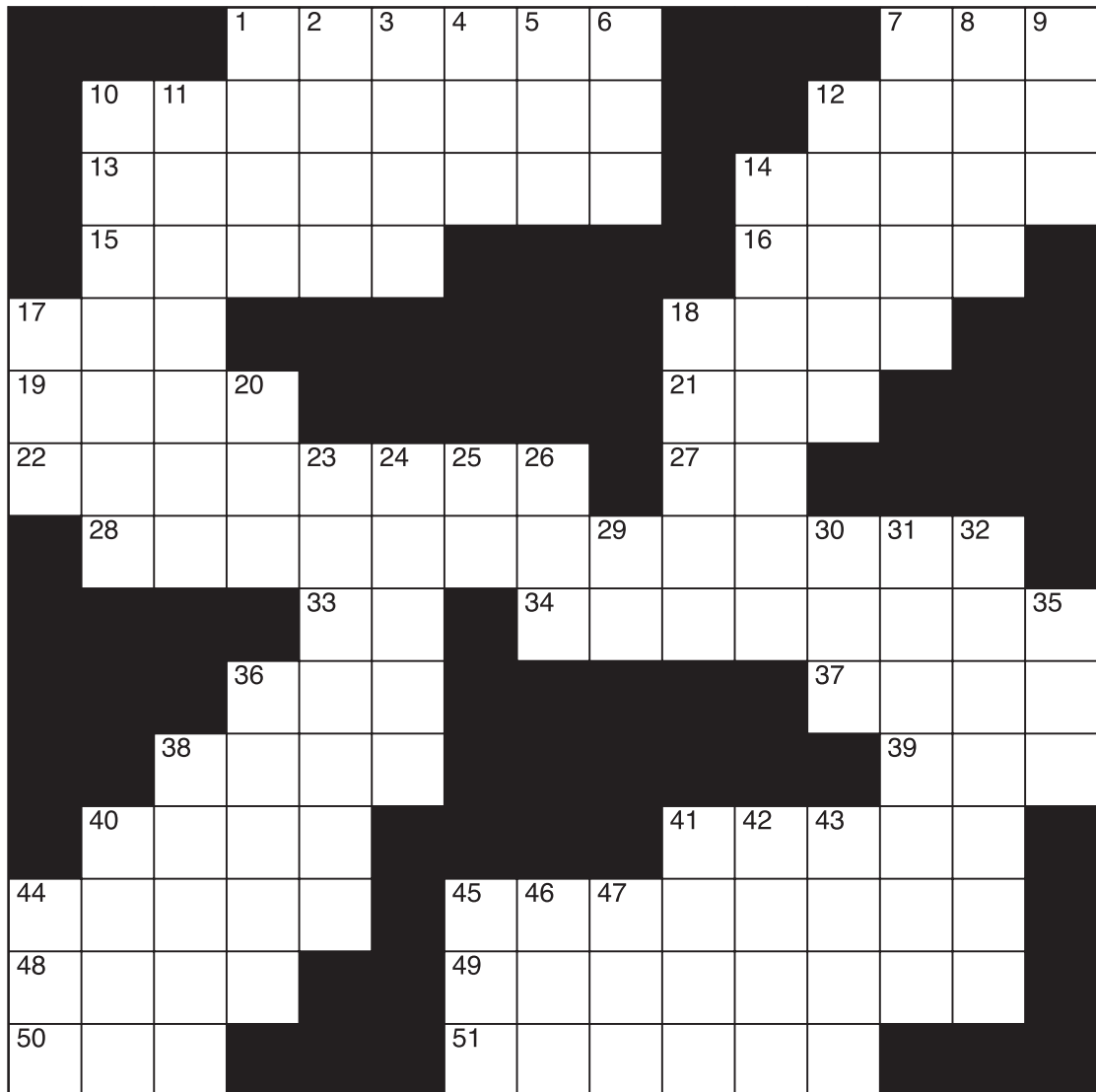
Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

1. Respiratory disorder
7. Bulgarian mountain peak
10. Group of important people
12. South American nation
13. Amazes
14. ___-Castell, makers of pens
15. Perlman and Seehorn are two
16. Early medieval alphabet
17. Legislator (slang)
18. Tasty crustacean
19. Course of action
21. Airborne (abbr.)
22. Permanent church appointment
27. Larry and Curly's pal
28. Famed American journalist
33. 12th letter of Greek alphabet
34. In a way, vanished
36. Afflict in mind or body
37. Egyptian Sun god
38. Source of the Blue Nile
39. Egyptian unit of weight
40. Be the source of pain
41. Esteemed award ___ d'Or
44. Partner to pains
45. Deep blue
48. No longer living
49. Country in the UK
50. Not even
51. Arizona city

CLUES DOWN

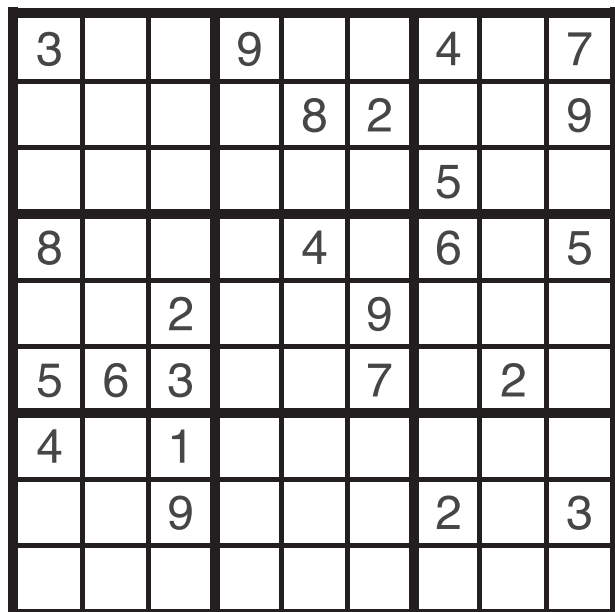
1. Wager
2. Classical portico
3. As a result
4. Bird
5. A type of "Squad"
6. Autonomic nervous system
7. Dish with food on a stick
8. City northwest of Provo
9. C. European river
10. One out of jail
11. Henry Clay estate
12. Heathen
14. Refrained
17. Parts per billion (abbr.)
18. "The Stranger" author
20. Not old
23. Periods of starvation
24. Language of tribe in India
25. Savings account
26. Pitching stat
29. Megabyte
30. Ribonucleic acid
31. A place to put your feet
32. The fun part of a week
35. We all have our own
36. Partner to "oohed"
38. African nation
40. Breezed through
41. Sets out
42. Other
43. Not fattening
44. "Much ___ about nothing"
45. Central Time
46. Former EU monetary unit
47. Charles S. Dutton sitcom



Sudoku

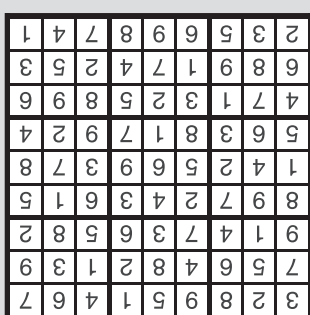
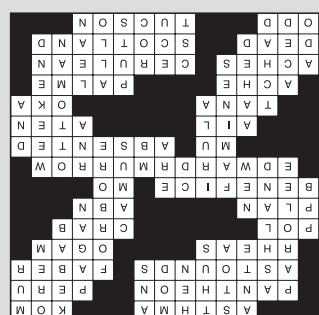
Here's how a sudoku puzzle works:

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.



Level: Intermediate

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



The Rutland County Humane Society Says Thanks!

The Board of Directors, staff, and animals at the Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS) would like to thank everyone in the community who has supported our End-Of-Year \$35,000 Matching Challenge! We're so appreciative of the donations we've received from animal lovers county- and state-wide. Not only were we able to reach our goal, but surpassed it! The grand total came in at \$41,587.39!! Our community has always been there for us, and we wanted to take a moment to let you know how much we appreciate you. We couldn't do this without you!

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



MEET GRACE - 2-YEAR-OLD. SPAYED FEMALE. PITBULL MIX. BLACK.

Grace is a sweet girl, who needs someone to give her patience and time to settle in. Grace was adopted from RCHS earlier this year, but she ended up being too much and was brought back to us on December 2. She has definitely come out of her shell, and is very exuberant, loves her toys and treats. She will get the zoomies and prance around in excitement when it is time to go for a walk. She is very strong on the leash and will need to work on leash manners. She is also very reactive with other dogs, so someone will need to be willing to work her through that. Having strong leadership and clear communication with her is key, but she has made tremendous strides and wants to be the best she can be. She can still be a little wary of new people, but she has made great strides with how quickly she adjusts to them.

MEET VIRGINIA - 5-YEAR-OLD. SPAYED FEMALE. DOMESTIC SHORT HAIR. GREY TIGER.

Virginia is a sweet lady who isn't a huge fan of being handled. She loves her pets but does get a little overwhelmed with handling them at times, so we feel she would do best without young kids. She also does not like other cats or dogs. Virginia would do best in a quiet home.



RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

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ADOPTION CENTER OPEN BY APPOINTMENT ONLY.

Off the Shelf

New books at the Brandon Free Public Library

We just received a bunch of DVDs! Here are some of the new titles available for checkout:

Heartstrings (Not Rated)

An anthology series based on the songs of Dolly Parton, showcasing memories, stories and inspirations.

The Loneliest Boy in the World (Rated R)

In this modern "fairytale," lonely Oliver decides to dig up a new family at the cemetery. Both satire and celebration of family, horror films, the American Dream, and death.

Operation Seawolf (Not Rated)

Based on the true story of the German Navy, one of the last remaining U-Boats, and their last-ditch attempt to attack the United States Homeland during the final days of WWII.

Watcher (Rated R)

After moving to Bucharest with her husband, a young woman notices a neighbor across the street

Did you know?

January is Mental Wellness Month. We've got a great display of related books, and self-care items like bath bombs, face masks, and more!

watching her from his apartment, and she begins to suspect he may be a local serial killer who is decapitating his victims.

Tár (Rated R)

As the first female principal music director of the Berlin Philharmonic, Lydia Tar's life begins to spin out of control as fame and stress begin to chip away at her carefully crafted persona exposing secrets and the ease with which power corrupts.

Mack and Rita (Rated PG-13)

After a wild weekend in Palm Springs, 30-year-old Mack wakes up and finds she's transformed into her 70-year-old self.

The Good House (Rated R)

New England real estate agent

Hildy Good finds her life turned upside down when she reconnects with an old flame in New York. Based on the novel by Ann Leary.

American Murderer (Rated R)

Based on the true story of Jason Derek Brown, a conman who funds his lavish lifestyle through running scams. When the money starts to run out, he concocts his most outrageous scheme and ends up on the FBI's 10 Most Wanted list.

Call Jane (Rated R)

In 1968, housewife Joy finds herself with a life-threatening pregnancy and her only option is abortion. With no legal place to turn to, she discovers the "Janes," a network of suburban housewives who facilitate finding the help she and other women need.

Jerry and Marge Go Large (Rated PG-13)

When a retiree learns of a math loophole in the Massachusetts state lottery, he and his wife go on to win 27 million dollars and use the money to revitalize their small Michigan town.

Drinking and dragging: Police officer dragged by driver

Brandon Police Report

ON JAN. 3

- Received a call about suspicious individuals looking into a Carver Street resident's car as well as other vehicles in the neighborhood.

- Provided K9 Guinness assistance to the Rutland County Sheriff's deputies with a search warrant on a motor vehicle.

ON JAN. 4.

- Responded to Whipple Hollow Road in Pittsford to assist Pittsford Police for a mental health issue.

- Responded to a report of a suspicious person looking into the windows of vehicles parked in the Hannaford's parking lot.

- Responded to a call about a suspicious vehicle on Town Farm Road near the intersection of Richmond Road.

- Assisted Pittsford Police with a domestic disturbance call at a residence on Hendee Lane in the Town of Pittsford.

- Arrested Lisa M. Forbes (57), of Brandon, after officers responded to a call of a citizens dispute on Mulcahy Drive. Forbes was cited to appear at Rutland Superior Court, Criminal Division on Feb. 27 at 11 a.m., to answer to the charges of Unlawful Mischief and Disorderly Conduct.

- Responded a suspected DUI on ParkStreet and felt with an assault.

ON JAN. 5

- Received two 911 hang-ups from Carver Street. Both declined police assistance.

- Responded to Carver Street for a report of someone trying to break into a residence, finding that the incident actually involved a verbal domestic disturbance between a female and her boyfriend at the residence. Police later responded to the same residence, in the same day, at a home on Carver Street for a third domestic disturbance call in a row between a girlfriend and boyfriend.

ON JAN. 6

- Responded to a report of possible break-in at a home on Fox Road. The police department had been doing property checks on the home while the homeowner had been recently out-of-town and knew that she had recently returned home. When contacted, the homeowner affirmed that there was no problem.

- Received a call from a therapist in southern Vermont advising (See Police report, Page 19)

BRANDON — Just after 11 p.m. on Jan. 4, police responded to a report of a male driver who had almost hit a tour bus on Park Street and was possibly intoxicated. When they arrived on the scene they found the bus parallel parked on Center Street and a silver GMC Sierra on the curb by the side walk. The operator of the GMC, later identified as Jason Wood (45) of Pittsford, appeared to be sleeping. When officers made contact with the Wood, he said he was waiting for the Chinese Restaurant to open, even though it had been closed for three hours. Wood appeared to be extremely intoxicated. One of the officers asked him to turn the truck off and step out of the vehicle. Wood refused, and became defiant towards the officers.


Officers then informed Wood that he was being detained at this point. After repeated orders to exit his vehicle, Wood then began to shift the truck from park into drive. One of the officers ran to his cruiser and positioned it in front of the vehicle in an attempt to prevent Wood from fleeing. Officers ordered Wood to give them the keys to the truck, but he refused. When they attempted to open the vehicle door, they found that it was locked. An offer attempted to reach into the truck to unlock the driver's side door at which point Wood struck out at the officer. When the officer then tried to grab Wood's keys from the ignition Wood put the vehicle in reverse and drove six to seven feet with the officer trapped in the window. A second officer attempted to break the passenger side window with his baton. The first officer was able to access his taser and convince Wood to stop, which he did, briefly.

The second officer was able to run over to the driver's side of the car and assist the first with de-escalating the situation and convincing Wood to stop trying to flee. They also managed to open the driver's side door and remove Wood from the truck. After a brief struggle, they took him into custody. Wood was transported to Porter Hospital in Middlebury by Brandon Area Rescue for a precautionary medical evaluation before being released back into the custody of the arresting officers. After being processed by Brandon Police, Wood was transported to the Rutland County Superior Court-Criminal Division on Jan. 5, for arraignment on the charges of Aggravated Assault, Assault on a Law Enforcement Officer, Gross Careless And Negligent Operation, DUI-Alcohol (forth offense) and Driving With a Criminally Suspended Drivers License-Third Or Subsequent Offense (DLS).

In other activity Brandon Police:

SPREAD THE WORD!
Have an event to add to our calendar?
EMAIL US AT NEWS@BRANDONREPORTER.COM

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE



off in the days to come, Cancer. Expect an email or personal meeting from a supervisor to discuss.

LEO: July 23-Aug. 23
Practical matters, such as the household budget, may need your attention this week, Leo. A big purchase is on the horizon, so get your finances sorted out.

ARIES: March 21-April 20
You may be in a meditative mood this week, Aries. You may think about mundane things or even complex issues. It's an ideal time to stay indoors and relax with your thoughts.

TAURUS: April 21-May 21
Obligations to friends or family could interfere with other things you had intended, such as spending time with your partner. As more people call upon you, step back and consider.

GEMINI: May 22-June 21
You have a strong desire to clean and organize your home this week, Gemini. Spring cleaning certainly comes early. Conquer that clutter.

CANCER: June 22-July 22
All of that extra work on the job will pay

provide an investment in friendship.

CAPRICORN: Dec. 22-Jan 20. Some people know exactly which buttons to push to get a rise out of you, Capricorn. Try to be the bigger person and turn the other cheek.

AQUARIUS: Jan. 21-Feb. 18
A momentary loss of confidence may catch you off-guard, Aquarius. Brush these feelings aside and take on any task or challenge that comes your way.

PISCES: Feb. 19-March 20
Nostalgia could hit you hard this week Pisces. Enjoy an unexpected trip down Memory Lane. Contact others who might enjoy it as well.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 12 Issa Rae, actor (38)
Jan. 13 Julia Louis-Dreyfus, actor (52)
Jan. 14 Allen Toussaint, Jazz musician (d)
Jan. 15 Regina King, actor, director (52)
Jan. 16 Lin-Manuel Miranda, actor, singer-songwriter (43)
Jan. 17 Michelle Obama, former First Lady, author, lawyer (59)
Jan. 18 A. A. Milne, children's author (d)

Brandon Sb

(Continued from Page 2)

The town usually keeps \$450K - \$900K in cash reserves, which represents 15% - 30% of its typical budget. Hopkins stated that even with the withdrawal, the reserve would still be within its target range. Hopkins also stated that he was concerned that the town was holding onto more cash than it needed.

"A lot of other towns would envy our situation," Hopkins said. "Preparing the budget is a 2-month process involving 15 people over 100 hours of meetings. Not everyone

agreed on everything, but I think we're presenting a thoughtful, balanced budget that respects the taxpayers."

The proposed budget was approved 4 to 1, with Selectman Tim Guiles the sole nay vote.

In other business:

The Brandon Sewer Commission approved \$20K to repair the pumps at Country Club Road. According to Town Manager David Atherton, the electrical panel that controls the pumps had given out, necessitating manual operation of the pumps by

town employees.

Tree Warden Neil Silins stated that he was working on a plan to manage the town's shade trees, which are defined by state law as ornamental or shade trees planted by the municipality in public spaces. Vermont law authorizes a town's tree warden to survey all such trees within the town and come up with a preservation plan. Silins informed the committee that he could deliver his plan this week.

praisal requirements in July.

- Assistant to the town manager, Ann Reed, was appointed delinquent-tax collector and fuel coordinator.

- Rob Spencely was voted in as a moderator for town meetings.

- Rich Bowman has stepped into the role of Animal control officer for the town.

Pittsford Sb

(Continued from Page 2)

making it worse.

The board agreed that the primary safety concern is the bridge, and they hope to table the redirection of traffic flow until a later date. The board implied it would be submitting an

appeal within the 30-day window as per Rule 5 of the Vermont Rules for Environmental Court Proceedings.

OTHER BOARD NEWS:

- Discussed the necessity and timeframe for town reappraisal, noting they will receive word about ap-

Police report

(Continued from Page 18)

that one of their juvenile patients reported that they had been sexually assaulted on several occasions by a juvenile male classmate. A preliminary report was taken and the complaint was subsequently forwarded to the Rutland County SIU for further investigation.

- Conducted a sex offender registry check on individual that was not in compliance with the registry.

- Responded to an alarm at a Forest Dale Road property. Alarm was false and the scene was cleared.

- Arrested Jacob A. Chevalier, 30, of Plattsburgh, N.Y., late Friday evening on at a Carver Street residence for domestic assault. Chevalier was released on conditions and ordered to appear before the Rutland County Superior Court-Criminal Division on Jan. 9, at 12:30 p.m. for arraignment.

ON JAN. 7

- Located a male shouting racial slurs and walking in and out of the roadway on Center Street. The perpetrator told police he was heading for New York and looking for a church to stay. He was sent on his way without further incident.

- Assisted the Brandon Fire Department on Church Street with a report of a trash can fire.

- Referred a report of a stray Black Lab on Grove Street to the Animal Control Officer.

- Investigated a possible sex crime at Otter Valley Union High School. Investigation ongoing.

ON JAN. 8

- Patrolled Mulch Drive but wit-

nessed no activity.

- Assisted a hiker that had lost her car key while hiking in the Brandon Gap with arranging to get her vehicle towed.

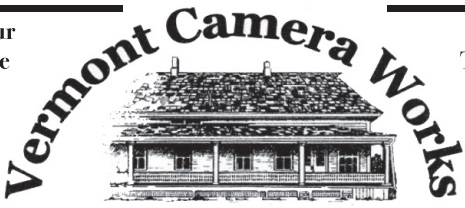
- Received report of two silver trucks passing vehicles at high rates of speed on Franklin Street in the area of Hawk View Road. Two

trucks matching the description were later stopped by police, but both drivers denied involvement.

- Assisted Brandon Rescue with a medical incident on Triangle Court. The subject was then transported to the hospital for further care and evaluation.

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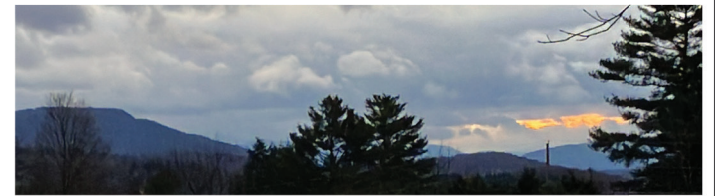
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Tom@WhittakerRealEstate.com
Top of the Hill, Brandon, VT

****2023 Calendars are here.**
Stop at 14 Mt. Pleasant Dr. or give a call and we'll deliver.
Merry Christmas!

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GREAT BUSINESS OPPORTUNITY

Coupled with a residential unit in the center of downtown Brandon! The ground floor is currently an operating restaurant - Li's Chinese - with an impressive kitchen. The sale includes all restaurant equipment. Upstairs is a 3,540 SF living space. Beautiful hardwood floors, ornate ceiling and trim, and the glass storefront overlooks the Central Park & gazebo. Updated infrastructure: plumbing, windows, furnace & heating system, hot water, A/C and wiring. Brandon is bustling with galleries, shops, pubs, restaurants, and a grand list of events! **\$595,000**



802-236-9112 | Wendy@RoweRealEstate.com
RoweRealEstate.com

State may extend pandemic-era Town Meeting options for 2023

BY KEVIN O'CONNOR/
Vt DIGGER

The Vermont Legislature is considering whether to allow continued pandemic-era flexibility in how and when the state's 247 cities and towns decide local leaders, spending and special articles.

Lawmakers passed several bills in the past two years letting communities make short-term, Covid-safe changes to Town Meeting — traditionally held on or around the first Tuesday in March — and to gather municipal governing boards solely online.

"The citizens of Vermont should be able to protect their health, safety, and welfare," each bill said, "while also continuing to exercise their right to participate in annual municipal meetings."

Some 80% of communities in 2021 and almost 75% in 2022 used the temporary laws to replace shoulder-to-shoulder decision making with mailable ballots, while most of the rest tapped the legislation to reschedule proceedings until residents could open windows or move outdoors in warmer weather.

This week, the House Government Operations Committee is set to consider a bill modeled on the last biennial session's Act 1 to continue the options of switching from floor voting

to ballots, rescheduling Town Meetings to a later date, and holding public information sessions online.

"I have been working with stakeholders to address a temporary extension of some of the provisions," said the committee's newly named chair, Rep. Michael McCarthy, a Democrat from St. Albans.

The Vermont League of Cities and Towns municipal support organization has heard from a rising number of selectboards wanting Covid options to continue another year, it noted in a recent legislative report.

The move isn't expected to affect Vermont's 28 cities and towns with 5,000 or more people, as they annually vote on local leaders and spending using ballots. But most of the 219 communities with smaller populations traditionally hold some sort of Town Meeting, which must be warned at least 30 days in advance — or by Feb. 5 this year for those seeking to take municipal action on the traditional first Tuesday in March.

Covid-19 struck Vermont a week after Town Meeting Day in 2020. As the pandemic continued in 2021, only five communities gathered in person, with each having little on the agenda or gaveling in for the sole purpose of adjourning to a later date. In 2022, the figure

rose to about 40 — or 15% of the state's cities and towns.

The number could increase this year if communities follow the example of Brattleboro, whose local leaders just voted to return to an in-person Town Meeting after a three-year absence.

Brattleboro is the only municipality in the state allowed to hold an annual Town Meeting electronically, as its unique gathering of elected representatives is the sole one that can limit online participation to official members and let everyone else watch on public access television. But that has resulted in recent sessions as long as 15 hours over two days.

"Much as I like sitting at home for Town Meeting and being able to get up and go to the refrigerator anytime I want," Brattleboro physician Franz Reichsman told the selectboard this month, "I do think there's real utility in having an in-person meeting and avoiding the prolongation of what has already become a difficult and lengthy procedure."

As for health concerns, the doctor quipped "do we really want to interfere with the centuries-long tradition of Vermonters giving each other viral illnesses at Town Meeting?" before noting that, "as people have gotten vaccinated and had previous infections, the viru-

lence of the virus has gotten considerably less."

Statewide, many people want the Legislature to permanently allow public bodies to conduct year-round business online, citing greater access, partici-

The chairs of the House and Senate Government Operations committee are set to explore such options.

Said McCarthy: "We plan to have a broader discussion this biennium, with an inclusive



A MAILBOX OUTSIDE Brattleboro's Municipal Center awaits Town Meeting Day ballots in 2021. Photo by Kevin O'Connor/VTDigger

tion, safety and transparency.

Electronic sessions have allowed Vermonters to attend from anywhere and "keep quorums during inclement weather, while recovering from illness, or simply when childcare and eldercare duties prevented in-person attendance," the League of Cities and Towns noted in its legislative report.

and more extended process to address the long-term issues."

And Sen. Ruth Hardy, a Democrat from Addison County, said: "These are temporary provisions, which will be followed by a longer discussion of whether more permanent action is necessary."

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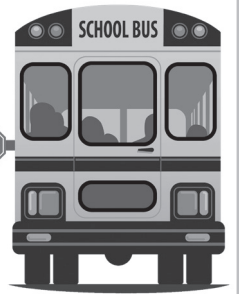
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Girl Scouts kick off the 2023 cookie season

BEDFORD, NH — Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains have kicked off the 2023 Girl Scout Cookie season in New Hampshire and Vermont as Girl Scouts and their troops rally their communities to support the world's largest entrepreneurial program for girls. Every box of cookies sold provides valuable experiences for Girl Scouts, such as service projects, troop travel, and summer camp for girls across the country.

If you know any Girl Scouts, ask them how to get cookies! Most Girl Scouts are already taking orders in person and online, and can personally deliver cookies to their local customers starting about Feb. 10. Order your favorite cookies for shipment directly to your front door starting Feb. 27. In addition to online ordering, you may use the Cookie Finder to locate a booth near you and purchase cookies in person from girls at the iconic cookie booths, which will run from mid-February through March 19.

New this year, the Raspberry Rally cookie is exclusively offered through digital channels for direct shipment only, enhancing girls' e-commerce sales and entrepreneurial skills. This latest approach will help to guide the evolution of the cookie program for the digital future.

Girl Scouts' newly updated Financial Literacy badges offer entrepreneurial playbooks for

every age level. From the Cookie Goal Setter badge earned as a Daisy to the Entrepreneur Accelerator for girls in high school, the Girl Scout Cookie Program teaches girls financial literacy, planning, budgeting, teamwork, innovative thinking,

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want to climb to the top of a tree or the top of their class, lace up their boots for a hike or advocate for climate justice, or make their first best friends.

Girl Scouts of the Green and White Mountains serves girls throughout New Hampshire and Vermont. Visit www.girlscoutsgwm.org to learn more.

Time Machine:

Blackouts were once a matter of national security

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—We tend to think of blackouts today as the consequences of some natural violence, whether it be snow, rain, earthquake, or fire. In fact, many in the Brandon area endured prolonged outages during the storms of this past Christmas week. But throughout World War II, they served a strategic purpose: planned blackouts were meant to keep German and Japanese airplanes from making stealth runs at night by depriving them of light on the ground by which to navigate and identify targets. After the attack on Pearl Harbor by Japan, and the “Blitz” on London by Germany, the U.S. was on high alert.

Vermont may seem an unlikely destination for foreign attackers, but citizens here were subject to blackouts just like those in big coastal cities. Even in Brandon, blackout sirens would ring out and everyone was expected to turn off all their lights.

This clipping from The Brandon Union of January 15, 1943, makes clear, though, that the execution of these blackouts was far from flawless. Lights were often left on in businesses when the owners weren't close by to turn them off. Some people tried to get away with leaving lights on at home, perhaps figuring that a small reading lamp wouldn't

Minor Violations Mar Blackout

The blackout here last Friday night was reported successful to about the same degree as previous ones although there were a few minor violations including lights left burning in two stores, stopping of a driver of an oil truck who said he did not hear the signal. Lights were also left burning in several homes.

Director F. L. Smith has cautioned residents and storekeepers against such “careless violations.” He said that arrangements should be made beforehand to have lights put out.

Dr. J. S. Estabrook was called to the Brandon Inn to attend a patient during the blackout and before the test was over had received another call and was forced to drive in darkness.

The blackout was reported successful in Goshen, Salisbury, Orwell, and Whiting. In Leicester, however, the whistle failed to blow due to lack of steam pressure.

even be noticeable. But when folks got caught with the lights on—“careless violations”—fines and penalties could be imposed.

A blackout didn't mean everything ground to halt, however. Dr. Estabrook, for whose family a lone of our local parks is named, still carried on his trade, albeit in the dark.

So the next time our power goes out and we curse the darkness, we should be thankful that we don't have to wonder whether enemy planes are cruising overhead.

NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

BRANDON DEVELOPMENT REVIEW BOARD (DRB)

On Wednesday, January 25, 2023 at 7:00 PM; both in-person at Town Hall, 1 Conant Square (ground floor) Conference Room and via Zoom remote conferencing; the Brandon DRB will hold Public Hearings to review the Following:

Application #6229, from Matthew & Mary Cram (Applicants) & Jennifer Keeler (Owner), a request for setback waivers to construct a Single Family Residence with porch at 121 Furnace Rd. (Parcel #15-20-17.1), in the Aquifer Protection zoning district. Pending a final determination if the proposed structure is within the FEMA Flood Hazard Area, this application may require Conditional Use review.

Application #6230, from Mark Brothers (Owner), Conditional Use request to construct a mini-golf course at 2573 Grove Street, in the Rural Development zoning district. This commercial project will also require review of VT Land Use (Act 250) Criteria 6, 7, & 10.

Concise copies of these applications are posted at www.TownofBrandon.com. Complete copies are available for review at Town Office, 49 Center St. Brandon.

This Meeting & Hearing will be conducted remotely by Zoom audio & visual program. Log on instructions are attached and are posted on Town website, Post Offices, and Town Office.

Interested Parties are to be registered and present testimony, or have submitted written testimony to the Town, by 7:10 pm of the Hearing date or they may forfeit their right to appeal any decision of the DRB to VT Superior Court (Environmental Division).

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Sunday, February 19 | 7:00 PM

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Monday, February 20 | 7:30 PM

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Friday, February 24 | 8:00 PM

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Thursday, April 20 | 7:30 PM

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Saturday, April 15, 12 PM

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