

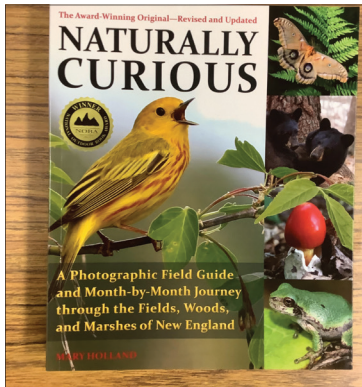
# The Brandon • Pittsford • Proctor • West Rutland • Lake Dunmore • Leicester • Whiting • Sudbury • Goshen REPORTER

A community supported newspaper

Vol. 28, No. 11

Wednesday, March 15, 2023

\$1



**LION'S CLUB**  
Provides science books for 3rd graders.

PG. 3



**OV CLIMING TEAMS**  
OV rock climbing teams compete at State Championships.

PG. 14



PG. 10

**BAIRD FARM OPEN HOUSE**  
See maple sugaring in action March 25th & 26th.

PG. 15



**GARDENING CORNER**  
Lyn takes us on a tour of Judy Reilly's gardens.

PG. 20



## Pittsford TM 2023 recap

BY STEVEN JUPITER

PITTSFORD—Pittsford voters met on March 6th in the gymnasium at Lothrop Elementary School for their 2023 Town Meeting. The agenda included reports from town officers on the previous year's activities and several articles relating to the town budget, all of which were adopted with scarcely any opposition.

Pittsford attorney Robb Spensley acted as Moderator, efficiently leading the meeting through the seven articles that had been publicly warned. On the stage behind him were the Selectboard (Chair Alicia Malay, Joe Gagnon, David Mills, Tom Hooker, and Mark Winslow), new Town Manager David Atherton, Town Clerk & Treasurer Helen McKinlay, and Assistant Town Clerk & Treasurer Liz Willis.

It was the first in-person Town Meeting in Pittsford since the beginning of the COVID pandemic in 2020, yet only half the seats were filled.

After the Pledge of Allegiance, Mr. Spensley dedicated the 2023 annual report to all of Pittsford's veterans and active-duty military, offering thanks for their service and for the efforts of all those who made the Pittsford Veterans Memorial possible. Spensley then quickly took the room through  
*(See Pittsford TM 5)*



THE ENTIRE FIELD joins in a group number at the end of the individual songs during Brandon Idol at Town Hall on Saturday, March 11. The theme was 50s & 60s and the competitors gave it their all, as always.  
Photos by Kevin White

## Brandon Idol rolls back to the 50s & 60s

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—With a wildly varied song list that included material from such disparate acts as Elvis, Sinatra, and Bowie, the contestants in Brandon Idol took the competition into the 50s & 60s on Saturday night at Brandon Town Hall.

Venus Diamandis performed the classic "House of the Rising Sun," made famous by The Animals in 1964. The impassioned

ballad, sung from the perspective of someone whose life went irreparably awry "down in New Orleans," offered Diamandis an opportunity to show off her range in a languorous 6/8 time signature.

Tonya Granger offered her take on "Hit the Road, Jack," which was a big hit for Ray Charles in 1961. Always a crowd-pleaser, the song tells the story of a man kicked to the

curb by a woman who's sick of his nonsense. Granger imbued it with the spirit it needed to really come alive.

Baker LaRock took the show into crooner territory with his swinging version of Frank Sinatra's "Fly Me to the Moon," conjuring up all the vibes of the mid-1960s Rat Pack: Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Jr. LaRock's smooth styling got  
*(See Brandon Idol, Page 8)*

## 'Dark fantasy' shot in Vermont to screen at Brandon Town Hall on Saturday

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—Buddy movies are a staple of American cinema. Two friends head off on an adventure, not sure where the road will take them but certain they've got each other's back. Liam O'Connor-Genereaux knew he wanted to make a movie that tested the limits of that kind of platonic bond: how far can a friendship be stretched while still maintaining its shape?

"Friendship is hard," O'Connor-Genereaux said in a phone interview. "And it's taken for granted on film. I wanted to

treat friendship the way romantic love is treated, as something rewarding but that requires effort and work."

And so he made "The Butterfly Queen", a "dark fantasy" with elements of "The Wizard of Oz" and "Alice in Wonderland," with some "Stand by Me" and "Princess Bride" thrown in. It's not a horror movie but, O'Connor-Genereaux said, "there are definitely some scary parts."

The film had its world premiere in Brattleboro on February 11 and will show at Brandon Town Hall  
*(See 'Butterfly Queen', Page 11)*



ROBIN (SOPHIA ANTHONY) and Casey (Kade Pintado) are best friends from a small Vermont town seeking his sketchbook snatched by the Butterfly Queen.

# As Casella aims to treat PFAS in leachate, what happens next with Vermont's forever chemicals?

BY LOGAN SOLOMAN/COMMUNITY NEWS SERVICE

Montpelier's wastewater treatment plant, where leachate from Casella is handled.

Credit: City of Montpelier's Energy Advisory Committee.

James Ehlers can't help but say something any time he passes the Winooski River's Salmon Hole and sees kids splashing around or anglers eyeing fish.

"Do you know what's in that river?" Ehlers, a steadfast water activist who founded the nonprofit Lake Champlain International, sometimes yells to those he sees.

Forty miles upstream, on a daily basis, two tanker trucks that together contain 10,000 gallons of garbage juice from Vermont's only landfill arrive at Montpelier's wastewater treatment plant. There, workers empty the tankers into a system designed to filter as many contaminants as possible. Some substances are removed from the liquids, or leachate, but one group of harmful chemicals is not.

Instead they're discharged into the Winooski River, flowing by the famed fishing spot before spewing out into Lake Champlain.

The chemicals of concern are per- and polyfluoroalkyl substances — often known as PFAS — and they've garnered increasing public attention in recent years. Even at low exposure levels, PFAS in drinking water put human health at risk. The chemicals are associated with infertility, reproductive cancers, hormone issues, vaccine immunity problems and kidney cancer. After the landfill in Coventry, run by Casella Waste Systems, started sending leachate to Montpelier in 2020, the fluid coming out of the capital city's treatment plant contained "significantly higher" concentrations of PFAS than all but one facility tested in Vermont, the state said that year. No nearby treatment plant has had the technology to remove the chemicals.

Montpelier might have a solution with a new venture by Casella. The state issued the company a permit last December to develop a framework for a pilot system at the landfill that could reduce the amount of PFAS in leachate. By the end of this year, the company is required to have the new technology running and begin studying its effectiveness. The company has been working on the pilot system but is waiting on two additional permits before all the work needed can happen, including one crucial permit approving Casella's design for the system.

If both permits are approved, company leaders expect to start studying their system later this year,

a process slated to end in 2024, said Samuel Nicolai, the company's vice president of compliance and engineering, who oversees much of the project.

The project would be one of the first on-site PFAS treatment systems at a landfill in the country. If it is a success, the build could be a model for other landfills that, as public alarm surrounding the chemicals intensifies, look to limit PFAS in leachate.

But water quality activists are trying to stop the project in Coventry, where things are so contentious that the nearby treatment plant in Newport stopped accepting the landfill's leachate in late 2019. In Montpelier — one of two primary places now taking the leachate — city councilors say the plant will stop accepting the waste by July 1 this year unless it is treated ahead of time for PFAS. And the latest battle in Vermont's wastewater world has raised new questions about officials' tolerance of an emerging

class of contaminants — and what can be done about them.

"Us downstream get the problem?"

The liquid arriving in Montpelier is what you get when rainwater passes through landfill materials and draws out toxic substances such as PFAS. Casella's landfill has a history of producing leachate with high concentrations of the toxic chemicals, according to consultants from the Waterbury engineering firm Weston and Sampson, which studied the landfill in 2018 and 2019. That's likely not surprising to company leaders — or to the waste industry as a whole — who have emphasized the ubiquity of PFAS in trash sent to the landfill. The chemicals are found in countless products, and nobody knows exactly what levels of PFAS are contained in the individual leachate loads ferried from Coventry to Montpelier.

Casella is evaluating a few methods for its new system to find a technology that removes as much

as possible of the five compounds of PFAS that Vermont currently regulates, said Nicolai.

One method would use air bubbles to remove PFAS, while another would employ chemical processes to break down the pollutants into carbon dioxide, according to a January article from Waste Dive, a digital news outlet covering the waste and recycling industry. Casella will likely use more than one method in the end, Waste Dive reported.

The project has found a familiar foe: The activist group Don't Undermine Memphremagog's Purity, a collective of Vermont and Canadian citizens dedicated to protecting the waters of Lake Memphremagog, has appealed Casella's permit to the Vermont Judiciary's Environmental Division.

"It's irresponsibly located at the edge of extensive wetlands," one of the group's leaders, Henry Coe, said in a press release announcing the appeal.

Nicolai disputed Coe's claim, saying that the wetlands are a "good distance" from where the leachate treatment system would be — the wetlands are downhill from the site.

"We are not proposing anything different than how the leachate is already being handled," he said. "It's just an opportunity to provide treatment."

Casella used to transport the liquids to the Newport City water treatment facility, less than four miles away from the landfill, where it was discharged into Lake Memphremagog, the drinking water source for 175,000 Canadians. But the practice was halted in November 2019 as part of the resolution of an Act 250 dispute. The Lake Memphremagog activist group, more commonly known as DUMP, had sought to stop a planned landfill expansion via the courts, before withdrawing its appeal after the company agreed to stop sending leachate to Newport until 2024.

(See *Forever chemicals*, Page 24)

## Brandon Selectboard takes care of housekeeping

BY GEORGE FJELD

BRANDON - The first meeting of the 2023-2024 Brandon Selectboard saw new member Cecil Reniche-Smith welcomed and Seth Hopkins re-elected as Board Chair. Tracy Wyman continues as Vice-Chair and Brian Coolidge as Secretary.

The board then completed the Designation of Selectboard as Other Statutory Bodies: a) Board of Liquor Control Commissioners, Board of Health, Board of Sewer Commissioners, Board of Sewage Disposal Commissioners, Housing Board of Review, Cannabis Control Commissioners.

The board then established its meeting schedule, time, and location: the second and fourth Mondays of every month at 7:00 p.m. in Brandon Town Hall or on Zoom.

The board adopted meeting rules and procedures for the Selectboard and for all other appointed boards, commissions, and officials.

The board designated official and alternate newspaper(s) of record: The Reporter (official) and The Rutland Daily Herald (alternate).

Appointments: a) March Appointments {term ends at first Select Board meeting af-

ter the 2024 Town Meeting} • Fence Viewers (3) • Green-up Day Coordinator • Inspector of Lumber, Shingles and Wood • Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District (2 Representatives & 1 Alternate) • Rutland County Solid Waste District (1 Representative & 1 Alternate) • Tree Warden • Weigher of Coal b) Other Appointments • Constable • Development Review Board (2 Alternates) terms end June 30, 2023 • Deputy Health Officer • Otter Creek Communications Union District (1 Rep & 1 Alt) terms: Apr 1- Mar 31, 2024 • Planning Commission (1 member) remainder of 3-year term ending June 30, 2025 • Revolving Loan Fund Committee (1 Alternate) term ends June 30, 2023

Routine appointments to the various town committees were approved. March appointments end at first Selectboard meeting after the 2024 Town Meeting:

- Fence Viewers: John Reynolds and Jon Wyman
- Green-up Day Coordinator: James Leary
- Inspector of Lumber, Shingles and Wood: Bob Kilpeck
- Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District Rep.: Tim Kingston and Sharon Stearns

• Rutland County Solid Waste District Rep: Gabe McGuigan

- Tree Warden: Neil Silins
- Weigher of Coal: Lou Faivre and Olya Hopkins
- Constable: vacant
- Development Review Board Alternates: 2 vacancies
- Deputy Health Officer: Larry Stevens

• Otter Creek Communications Union District Rep.: Bill Moore and Peter Werner

- Planning Commission (1 opening): Natalie Steen
- Revolving Loan Fund Committee Alternate: vacant
- Rutland Regional Planning Commission Alternate: vacant

The Board waived their policy against appointing Selectboard members to committees to allow Reniche-Smith to continue her work on the Planning Commission. She has put a lot of work into the Planning Commission and they have two important tasks coming up in the next 1-2 years.

Interim Town Manager Bill Moore's report focused on a Newton road property closing for flood reasons, with monies to come from FEMA.

The Public Works Department is requesting a new larger salt shed and a proposal will be forthcoming.

Monies have been obtained to allow the Historic Preservation Commission to survey Brandon over the next 18 months to help prioritize its efforts to preserve the historical importance of Brandon activities during its early days.

Brandon Area Rescue Squad is running a CPR class on April 19th. Space is limited, so those who are interested should sign up soon.

Tree Warden Neil Silins has reached out to the Vermont Department of Transportation and Green Mountain Power to work with them to preserve our shade trees.

Representative Stephanie Jerome spoke about her work in the Legislature regarding workforce development.

A site visit to the wastewater treatment plant construction is planned for 6pm on April 10th prior to the board meeting.

During a short recess of the Selectboard at 7:24 pm, the Liquor Control Board passed their consent agenda available online.

The Board reconvened at 8:27 pm to go into executive session to discuss personnel matters, Seth Hopkins not attending. No action was taken.

# Brandon/Forest Dale Lions Club helps fund science books for Neshobe

It has been a tradition for the local Brandon Forest Dale Lions Club to buy new dictionaries every year for every child in the third grade at Neshobe Elementary School. This year, however, at the request of the third-grade teachers, the Lions changed things up a bit. The third graders recently started using a new textbook for science that is specifically geared towards New England. In order to purchase these books, the school had to rely on donations from the public, and the fundraising stopped with quite a few books still not paid for. The goal was for each student to have their own book and so the Lions decided that this year they would step up and purchase the final 35 books that students needed.

What makes this bookshelf, special? That question was answered by third-grade teacher Heather Best: "It has been exciting to watch kids learn about nature, wildlife, and the environment in their own backyard (New England). This

book supports our work in a way that allows students to see firsthand the intricate changes in nature from month to month. Using the book has enhanced our hands-on field studies, as children bring more enthusiasm and are able to make more sophisticated, firsthand observations and more detailed descriptions of those observations."

While observing a lesson from one of these books, Dr. Vicky Wells, principal at Neshobe, remarked on "how engaged the students were, and how eager they were to learn and show the book off." A former third-grade student stated that "Naturally Curious" was their favorite part of third grade.

"We are so happy that the Brandon Forest Dale Lions were able to help out on such a worthy project," noted Club President Connie St. George. "We also look forward to working further with students in our district on future projects and hope to teach them about the value of service to their community."

*"We also look forward to working further with students in our district on future projects and hope to teach them about the value of service to their community."*

—Connie St. George,  
Club President



**THIRD GRADERS AT Neshobe School in Forest Dale pose with the science books that were donated by the Brandon Forest Dale Lions Club. The Lions Club stepped up to bridge the fundraising gap to make sure every student was able to get a copy. Thank you, Lions!**

**Let the Shenanigans Begin**

Join Us As We Celebrate  
Our Second Year at the Brandon Inn  
**St. Patrick's Day Party**

To purchase tickets go online to  
**BrandonInn.com**  
\$22. in advance; \$25. at the door  
if tickets not sold out.

**Friday, March 17, 2023**  
**Doors Open 5:30 - 9:30 - Cash Bar**

Featuring  
**Extra Stout**  
Vermont's Premiere Irish Band  
Playing from 6:30 to 8:30

Admission Includes Dinner  
Corned Beef and Cabbage  
Macaroni & Cheese, more

*"Make A Little History of Your Own"*  
**Brandon Inn, 20 Park Street, Brandon Vermont**

Dunmore Hose Company  
Presents

**ST. PATRICK'S  
DAY**

MARCH 17 / 8PM - 12AM  
Tickets \$15  
**Benefitting BFD**  
Featuring the Aaron Audet Band  
Live Music | Dancing | Door Prizes | 50/50  
At the Brandon American Legion Post 55

## BRANDON REPORTER

## Editorial

## Brandon Selectboard results urge reconsideration of local 'nativism'

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—A few years ago, there was an intelligent, capable candidate for Selectboard who was fairly new to town and unfamiliar to most residents, a major disadvantage in a place where long-standing personal relationships are highly valued. Moreover, much of her campaign centered on what, in her estimation, was “wrong” with Brandon. She ultimately lost and publicly blamed it on “nativism,” a perceived hostility to newcomers. The assertion, however constructively intended, wasn’t well received. That candidate is no longer a resident of Brandon, but her criticism of Brandon’s culture lingered in the air and is still sometimes a topic of living-room debate. Does Reniche-Smith’s victory last week force a reconsideration of Brandon’s supposed “nativism” or was it simply a one-off exception, especially given the comfortable wins by Messrs. Hopkins and Coolidge?

Ms. Reniche-Smith has an admirable resume with a good deal of highly relevant experience, but much of her success was due to the savvy way she ran her campaign and the particular issues she chose to focus on. Rather than discuss all the ways in which she believed Brandon needed to change, she emphasized all the ways in which Brandon was already succeeding and made suggestions on how to build on them. The message seemed to be “I

may be new, but I value this place.” Reniche-Smith had also gotten involved in various committees and organizations, making clear that she was committed to the betterment of the town. It was a successful approach, allowing her to gain a comfortable enough margin over Ralph Ethier, an incumbent with deep roots in Brandon, to say that voters had made a clear choice.

Those same voters, however, also chose to reward Seth Hopkins and Brian Coolidge for their many years of service on the Selectboard: both won re-election by wide margins. Residents seem to be generally pleased with the performance of the Selectboard. Brandon does appear to be in a secure position financially and many large infrastructure projects have been executed well, including the mammoth Segment 6 renovation of downtown. Voters recognized that Brandon is fortunate to have a competent town government, whether or not we all agree with every decision it makes. Competence deserves to be acknowledged. Marielle Blais, qualified as she is, was unable to gain an edge over Mr. Coolidge’s years of service on the board.

It’s also worth noting that both Ms. Reniche-Smith and Ms. Blais had applied for the board vacancy left after Michael Markowski resigned last year. There was some heated public discussion at the time (See Local “nativism,” Page 6)



### Wood warbler

SPRING IS NEAR and birders await the return of migrants like this Northern Parula. This small warbler is often hard to see as it forages in dense foliage of the treetops. It is easy to hear though; the male seems to repeat his song constantly from early spring through mid-summer at least.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

### Community Forums

## Brandon Area Food Shelf has moved

The Brandon Area Food Shelf has moved to the United Methodist Church, 1 Franklin Street (yellow church across from Brandon Inn), for the convenience of its clients. We will be open on Tuesdays from 12:00–3:00 p.m., beginning March 21, for anyone who needs assistance. Walk-ins ARE welcome. If you

have any questions, please call Kathy Mathis (802-247-3121) or Pastor John Hardman-Zimmerman (802-282-7532).

## Brandon Town Hall needs sponsors

The Friends of the Brandon Town Hall have been busy getting ready for another entertaining season at your Brandon Town Hall!

Through the generosity of our incredible community, we have enough sponsors for almost all of our events. We are still hoping for individuals or businesses to help sponsor all or part of our remaining events.

The following events are still in need of sponsors:

- Neshobe School Players Film Festival...6 showings of Neshobe School Players Productions from 1990-2002.

Scheduled for May 12 – 14.

- Silent Movie, "The Freshman" with Harold Lloyd...A college boy who dreams of gridiron greatness. Scheduled for September 9.

- Blues Without Borders Band...covers of Blues, Rock tunes and classics. Scheduled for September 30.

- Mamajamas...co-ed a cappella group. Scheduled for October 6.

- Silent Movie, "Through the Back Door" with Mary Pickford...A comedic classic from one of Silent movies greatest stars. Scheduled for

October 7.

- The Michele Fay Band... Original and Americana music. Scheduled for October 28.

- Silent Movie, "The Big Parade"...A sweeping saga of doughboys shipping off to France in WW I. Scheduled for November 11.

- No Strings Marionettes... "Scrooge, A Christmas Carol." Scheduled for November 18.

If anyone is interested in becoming a sponsor for all or some of the performance fee or would like more information, please contact Dennis at (See Brandon Town Hall, Page 6)

## The REPORTER

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

A community supported newspaper

The Reporter is a nonprofit, community-supported newspaper managed by a volunteer Board of Directors.

Current board members are Steven Jupiter, president; Dr. George Fjeld, treasurer; Barbara Ebling, secretary. Graphic design by Sepi Alavi

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# Pittsford TM

(Continued from Page 1)  
the town's annual report. The only comment the floor was from someone who hadn't received the report in the mail.

Article 1 of the meeting's agenda was next: reports from town officers. Board Chair Malay gave a brief rundown of the town's activities over the previous year, including hiring a Town Manager who didn't work out and then hiring David Atherton, who had been Town Manager in Brandon. Ms. Malay also discussed the many infrastructure projects undertaken and planned by the town, including repaving on Whipple Hollow, West Creek, and Furnace Roads, culvert repairs, and sidewalk installation. Malay also mentioned a typo in the report: medical insurance for the town would cost \$20,000 less than the printed amount.

Board member Joe Gagnon then outlined the activities of the town's highway crew, praising their hard work. Mr. Gagnon stated that more paving projects were planned for the coming year. He also stated that the town had sold a mower for \$15,000 and purchased an arm mower to help keep roadsides free of brush. The town also purchased a small dump truck for the water department.

Ernie Clerihew of the Water & Sewer Commission then read the Committee's report. There were no questions from the floor.

Article 2: whether to autho-

rize general fund expenditures of \$1,880,430 for operating expenses, of which \$1,460,695 would be raised by property tax and \$419,735 by non-tax revenues. An attendee asked where the "non-tax" portion of the town's revenues would come from. Treasurer Helen McKinlay stated that it would be raised through "front counter" sources, such as liquor licenses, recreational programs, sponsored programs, and the transfer station.

The Selectboard pointed out that page 24 of the annual report has a list of non-tax revenues.

The article passed with a unanimous floor vote.

Article 3: whether to authorize highway fund expenditures of \$1,196,484, of which \$1,046,734 is to be raised through property taxes and the remainder through non-tax revenues. An attendee asked whether roads would be repaired and repainted this year and, if so, which roads would be selected? Board member Joe Gagnon replied that it is hoped that cracks would be repaired with hot tar and that some roads would be striped, but the execution of the work depended on the availability of the appropriate crews.

A brief discussion ensued

about the safety of hot tar for repairing cracks, given that in hot weather the material turns to "snot," as an attendee put it, and poses a danger to motorcyclists.

The article passed with a unanimous floor vote.

Article 4: \$17,000 for "village district expenses." After a question from the floor, the Selectboard clarified that the money would be used to install streetlights for the village.

The article passed with a unanimous floor vote.

Article 5: the timeline for collection of property taxes. According to the article, the taxes would be collected on August 15, Sep-

tember 15, and November 15, 2023.

An attendee asked whether it was necessary to have the dates all in such quick succession, as opposed to spreading them out quarterly, as many other towns do. Town Treasurer Helen McKinlay responded that anyone could pay on whatever schedule they like, as long as all taxes for the year are paid by November 15.

The article passed with a unanimous floor vote.

Article 6: extending the term of the elected Maclure Library

*"I don't think it took long for the departments in Pittsford to figure out that I'm here to support them."*

—Dave Atherton

## Still Not Vaccinated? Need a Booster?

COVID-19 vaccine clinics available throughout Addison County through March 31st.

Please call  
**Mountain Community Health**  
(formerly Mountain Health Center)  
for more information at  
**(802) 453-3911.**

MCH will be offering Pfizer Bivalent Boosters for all ages 5+.

Boosters are **FREE**  
**NO INSURANCE REQUIRED.**

**\*\* Walk-in COVID-19 vaccinations available this Saturday, March 18, 9AM - 12 noon at Middlebury Rec Gym, 154 Creek Rd., Middlebury.**



 **Mountain Community Health**

 **Golf Course**  
NESHOBE  
Est. 1958

**LONG IRON RESTAURANT**  
Wed, Thur, Fri 11:30-8  
Sat 11-4  
Sun 10-2 Brunch

**St. Patrick's Day Dinner**

**\*Reservations required\***

**Corned beef & cabbage**

**Irish stew**

**Grilled corn beef reuben, served with a crock of soup**

**Deep friend jumbo shrimp, served with cocktail sauce**

**Cheeseburger with lettuce & tomato, served with fries**

**Kid's menu available**

**Sunday Brunch**  
Featuring Eggs Benedict or blueberry pancakes

**Wednesday**  
Wings Your Way

**Thursday**  
Burger & a beer



**Simulator hours:**  
Wed-Fri 10-8, Sat 10-4, Sun 10-2

**Price**  
\$34/hour except Wed-Fri 10-4 is \$25/hr

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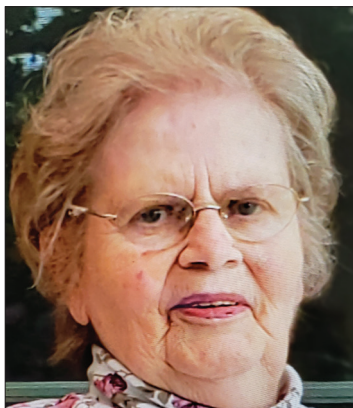
# Obituaries

## Grace Joyce Bird, 92, Forest Dale

**FOREST DALE**—Grace Joyce Bird, 92, of Forest Dale passed away peacefully, with her children by her side, on March 7, 2023 at The Pines in Rutland, where she received exceptional love and care during the last months of her life.

Grace was born on April 20, 1930 in Sudbury, Vermont to Lena and Lorillard de Lancey II. Aptly named, Grace was a soft spoken, beautiful, kind, loving, and generous woman. After receiving her education in Sudbury and Brandon, she met and married a dashing Air Force pilot, Roger Bird of Forest Dale, on August 15, 1947. Grace devoted the next 63 years to caring for her husband, seven children, and her many grandchildren. After raising her family, she spent several years working part time at Shapiro's Department Store and Nexus Electronics in Brandon as well as VT Tubbs in Forest Dale, where she enjoyed the independence and social connection with the many new friends she made.

While growing up in a large family on beautiful Echo Lake in Sudbury, Grace learned to garden, cook, knit, and sew from her mother Lena. Ever after, she loved window boxes full of beautiful flowers, vegetable



**GRACE JOYCE BIRD**

gardening, sewing (especially Raggedy Ann and Andy dolls), knitting sweaters for new babies and mittens for kids, and baking. Her raspberry squares, gingerbread boys, and chocolate fudge were ever present for guests, young and old. Grace spent her life giving to others and there was always room at her table for one more child or lonely adult. She also loved the many dogs and cats that she and Roger adopted and cared for over the years. After her husband's death in 2010, she found much solace in the company of her dog, Lily. Sadly, soon after the loss of her husband, Grace developed Alzheimer's Disease and was cared for by her children in her home

in Forest Dale for the following 10 years.

Grace is survived by her children: Shelley Poremski (Sonny) and Judy Mott (Chris) both of Florence, Jennifer Munger (Chuck) of Leicester, and Steve Bird (Nancy), Chris Bird (Cathy), and Lori Mohan (Larry) all of Forest Dale, 18 grandchildren, 18 great grandchildren, her brother, Jerry de Lancey (Claire) of Castleton and several nieces and nephews. She was predeceased by her parents, her husband, Roger, her daughter, Linda Markowski, and her siblings, Priscilla Steele, Lorraine Lewis, Lorillard (Bud) de Lancey III, Gordon de Lancey, and Norman de Lancey.

There will be no calling hours. A private graveside service will be held at Forest Dale cemetery in the spring when the sun shines warmly and daffodils are in bloom. In lieu of flowers, memorial contributions may be made to The Rutland County Humane Society, 765 Stevens Road, Pittsford, VT 05763 or St. Jude's Children's Research Hospital, 501 St. Jude Place, Memphis, TN 38105 in her name.

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

# Local 'nativism'

*(Continued from Page 4)*

about the need for "diversity" on what was then an all-male board. The board ultimately gave the vacant seat to Mr. Ethier in a closed-door process that many saw as ill-advised. To the great credit of all the candidates, even those who were frustrated by that experience, no one made the race personal. But it may be that enough voters kept in mind the frustrations of that episode to put Ms. Reniche-Smith ahead of Mr. Ethier, who was still barely settled on the board.

When those accusations of "nativism" were made a few years ago, they offended a good number of people who consider themselves natives and rankled a good number of people who good-naturedly accept the label "flatlander" as they find their places in the community. On the one hand, a lot of newcomers arrive with the best intentions and a sincere desire to contribute. On the other hand, though, there is indeed something to be said for demonstrating your commitment to the community before asking to lead it. It's not "nativism" to ask that someone understand a place by meeting its people, respecting its culture, and pitching in to make things work.

In New York City, where I was born and from which I came to Vermont, everyone is always on the lookout for the "hot new thing." The culture there sheds people and ideas like dogs shed hair. I learned very quickly that things operate differently in Vermont. Here, people cherish commitment and dedication. You earn respect by giving respect. What you did in your "past life" is nowhere near as important as what you do once you get here. Some may call it "paying your dues." I have found Vermont, and Brandon in particular, a warm, welcoming place, especially if you're willing to roll your sleeves up and help out.

Recently, a friend here in Brandon told me a story about a woman who was very involved in community life and who passed away several years ago. Whenever she met new people in town, she'd ask, "What do you do?" In any other place, the question would be taken to mean "What do you do for a living?" Here in Brandon, it meant "What do you do to contribute?"

The election results last week seem to confirm, at least to some extent, the continued validity of that question.

## Brandon Town Hall

*(Continued from Page 4)*  
denniswarden@gmail.com or leave a message at 802-247-5420.

Through our sponsorship program we have been able to

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President*

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See page 17

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# Middlebury community members hold vigil for trans lives

BY OLIVIA Q. PINTAIR/  
VTDIGGER

As candles flickered across the snow Friday afternoon in Middlebury, 20 community members gathered for a vigil to honor, mourn and celebrate transgender lives.

The vigil's organizer, Elio Farley, a student at Middlebury College who studies sex education and works as a mentor for queer youth at the Middlebury Teen Center, said they planned the vigil to provide a space for people to come together after a particularly painful few weeks.



FLAGS HANG IN a tree at a vigil for trans lives in Middlebury on Friday, March 10, 2023.

Photo by Daleelah Saleh

"I think that a lot of us — like trans people, genderqueer people and gender nonconforming people — have been mourning alone recently," Farley said. "And if we can be in community and offer space to each other and time to each other and whatever we need, then that is really healing and wonderful."

As community members arrived at College Park in town, Farley welcomed attendees, inviting them to share words, thoughts, poems or music to play over Farley's portable speaker. While the group stood in a slowly widening circle, making room for those who joined late, voices poured into the center to speak.

The vigil took place amid a sharp rise in anti-transgender policy-making, rhetoric and fatal violence occurring across the United States. In February, the Human Rights Campaign reported tracking "340 anti-LGBTQ plus bills that have been introduced in state houses across the country. 150 of those would specifically restrict the rights of transgender people." According to the Human Rights Campaign, this is the highest number on record of state level anti-trans bills to have been introduced in a single year.

"Although (Vermont) is legally a safe state to be trans in, we're definitely not (safe) politically or culturally," Farley said. "I'm thinking a lot about Fern's murder last year, anti-trans violence on campus the

year previous, and then just, like, currently, ongoing physical and verbal harassment that the kids (I work with) experience at school."

Farley was referring to Fern Feather, a transgender woman who was killed in Morristown in April 2022. The year before, Middlebury College hosted Peter Kreeft, a Christian apologetic who, in an interview with the Catholic Sun, likened a desire for gender reassignment surgery to a desire to engage in torture or murder.

M. Stiffler, an attendee at the vigil, said they want Vermont to take more extensive measures to protect and express solidarity with transgender people in the state.

"After the striking down of Roe v. Wade, the Vermont state government was all over making provisions in order to protect AFAB (people assigned female at birth) and others with uteruses in the state, and they have been oddly quiet (in light of recent anti-trans violence)," Stiffler said.

"There is sadness in this. There's grief. We shouldn't have to be doing this, but here we are," Farley said. "But we are able to come together like this — like, here is a path of candles. Here is a path forward. And the most powerful thing is fire."

Toward the end of the vigil, one attendee read aloud from a poem by Lucille Clifton that she said resonated with her: "Come celebrate/ with me that everyday/ something has tried to kill me/ and has failed."



ELIO FARLEY HOLDS a banner at a vigil for trans lives in Middlebury on Friday, March 10.

Photo by Olivia Q. Pintair/VTDigger

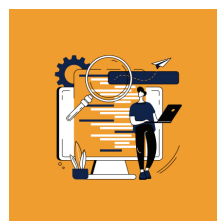
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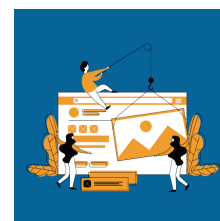
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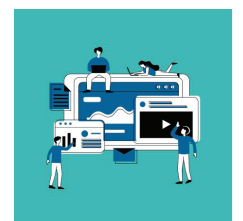
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# Brandon Idol

(Continued from Page 1)

him picked as Fan Favorite by the crowd.

Peggy Sue Rozell sang the small-town anthem “Harper Valley PTA,” a huge success for Jeannie C. Reilly in 1968. The song tells the story of a woman who turns the tables on a judgmental Parent-Teacher Association when she bursts into one of their meetings and runs down a list of the members’ own indiscretions. Rozell was able to tell the story with the righteous indignation it needed.

Logan Shaddock took to the stage with “You Don’t Own Me,” popularized by Leslie Gore in 1963. The song was remarkable in its day for its lyrics: the singer insists that she is not her boyfriend’s property. “I’m free and I like to be free,” is one of the song’s iconic lines. Shaddock delivered it with verve and confidence.

Irene Simmons started a slow burn with “Son of a Preacher Man,” the sultry Dusty Springfield classic that tells the tale of a woman’s first physical experience with a boy: the titular son of a preacher man. Simmons expertly slithered her way through the tune, which rests mostly in a breathy lower register.

Rachel Spellman took on “Bring It on Home to Me,” a 1962 classic by Sam Cooke. Written in distinctive 12/8 time, the bluesy song is a plea to the singer’s lover to “bring it on home.” Gospel-inflected tunes like this one allow the performer to put some soul into it, and Spellman didn’t waste the

chance.

Gunnar Tinsman rode close to the edge of the era with David Bowie’s 1969 “Space Oddity,” a psychedelic tale about a space mission with the iconic lyric “Ground control to Major Tom...” Tinsman got to take the show in a groovier direction with his acoustic guitar on this early Bowie mind trip.

Bethany White brought the audience back to 1961 with Elvis’s ballad, “Can’t Help Falling in Love.” A deceptively simple melody leaves the singer nowhere to hide and White delivered a charming rendition with all the sweetness of the original.

Shannon Wright delivered an electrifying version of “Delilah” by Tom Jones, a song that requires real lung power. The lyrics recount a man’s violent jealousy when he learns that his woman—Delilah—has betrayed him. Wright got the audience to sing along and ended up with the first standing ovation in Brandon Idol history.

And as an added bonus, Brandon resident Doug Ross treated the crowd to an entertaining non-competition performance of “I’m a Believer” by The Monkees.

The Brandon Idol Band—Ross Edmunds, Bryan Billado, and Kenny Cifone—managed to capture the unique spirit of each song while letting the singers shine.

The next installment of Brandon Idol will be in April: 70s and 80s music! Stay tuned!



**FROM TOP:** GUNNAR Tinsman took the audience on a trip with his acoustic guitar, playing David Bowie’s “Space Oddity;” Logan Shaddock sang a defiant “You Don’t Own Me” by Lesley Gore; Shannon Wright busts out “Delilah” by Tom Jones; Venus Diamondis lets it rip in “House of the Rising Sun” by The Animals; Tonya Granger hits the road with Ray Charles’s “Hit the Road, Jack.”





**CLOCKWISE FROM TOP left:** Rachel Spellman brought some gospel vibes to the show with "Bring It on Home to Me" by Sam Cooke; Special Guest Doug Ross entertained the crowd with "I'm a Believer" by The Monkees; Irene Simons dusted off Dusty Springfield's sultry "Son of a Preacher Man;" Peggy Sue Rozell told it like it is in "Harper Valley PTA" by Jennie C. Reilly; Baker LaRock crooned the Sinatra classic "Fly Me to the Moon."

Photos by Kevin White

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# OUR CREATIVE KIDS

ARTIST: Oliver Carapezza

GRADE: 1

SCHOOL: Otter Creek Academy

MEDIUM: Tempera and crayon

TEACHER: Matt Aucoin



#### STATEMENT FROM MATT AUCOIN

Oliver Carapezza is a first grader at Otter Creek Academy. For this picture we studied birds and used the wax resist technique, first drawing the lines with crayons and then painting the colors with cake tempera paint. Oliver worked dili-

gently on this piece. Oliver discovered the texture that a paper towel creates when you soak up some of the wet paint. Oliver used this technique to give the bird a soft looking face, and it almost looks like the bird is floating on a cloud combining their worlds, and had a lot of fun doing it!

# 'Butterfly Queen'

(Continued from Page 1)  
on Saturday, March 17.

The story revolves around two best friends, Casey (Kade Pinta-do) and Robin (Sophia Anthony), who grow up together in a small town. After high school, they take very different paths. Casey stays in town, hoping to become a cartoonist while running their grandparents' farm. Robin goes off to see the world. Five years later, they find themselves reunited back home and must join forces to recover Casey's sketchbook, which has been snatched into another world by the titular Butterfly Queen (Despoina).

Like Casey and Robin, O'Connor-Devereaux grew up in a small town: Ryegate in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont. He started making movies as a kid—he completed his first short film at 13—and hasn't stopped since. His first feature film,

"Zephyr," was filmed on his parents' farm and completed when he was 20. It centered on a band of thieves that had to become rock stars to escape the mafia. It went on to win awards at several film festivals.

"The Butterfly Queen" was also filmed in Vermont, on a budget of \$90,000. According to O'Connor-Genereaux, a significant amount of the budget went toward the "really incredible art production" by art director Seana Testa.

At 27 ("almost 28"), O'Connor-Genereaux represents a new generation of filmmakers who are comfortable with themes of gender identity that would've been controversial not too long ago. For example, the character Casey and the actor who plays them are both non-binary. Yet, gender identity is not at the center of the film.



**THE BUTTERFLY QUEEN** (played by Despoina) puts friendship to the test in "The Butterfly Queen" by Liam O'Connor-Genereaux. The film will be shown on Friday, March 17 at 7 pm at Brandon Town Hall. Q & A with the director to follow immediately.

"There are characters who happen to be queer but it's not a 'queer' movie," said O'Connor-Genereaux. "It's representation of the queer community but not

in an exploitive way. It's just an adventure story about young Vermonters."

"The Butterfly Queen" will be shown at Brandon Town Hall on

Friday, March 17 at 7 p.m. Admission is \$10 at the door. Liam O'Connor-Genereaux, the director, will be on hand to answer questions after the film.

## READER COMMENTS



**A reader from Brandon writes:**  
**"I appreciate the new front page layout and fun headlines. I appreciate equal coverage for all political candidates, regardless of push back. Local journalism matters, thank you."**

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## The REPORTER


The Vermont Supreme Court's Commission on:

# Diversity Equity & Inclusion


wants to hear from you.

**Thursday, April 13th 4-5 PM  
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Community members are invited to provide comments about the diversity, equity, and inclusion practices of the Judiciary. Join us remotely or in person.



Use the QR code for information about participating remotely, additional sessions, or to ask for an accommodation or interpreter.





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# Calendar of events

## March

### 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](mailto:allie.griffiths@rcpcc.org) with your child's name, age, and contact information for your family.

### Wednesdays

#### Ping Pong

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

The club has begun playing 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](http://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.

#### 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 Conscious, 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 cancellations, follow on Facebook and get on email list. \$15/class

### Thursdays

#### Ukulele Group

Free at the Chaffee Arts Center from 12–1 p.m., for adults & 12+. This is not a class but a group enjoying playing the ukulele together, Must pre-register, There are a limited amount of in-house instruments to reserve.

Attendees will be led through specific sheet music by musician Steven Wilson. All levels are welcome.

#### Open Mic at Red Clover in Brandon

Join us starting at 6 p.m. for a rousing good time!

### Fridays

**Chaffee Arts Center All About the Arts Free Class for kids 3–5**  
From 11am–Noon...  
FREE! Students will have

fun creating and doing activities with art, music, literature, and more!

One free book per student will be given weekly (while supplies last) thanks to our partners at Rutland Free Library. Adult must accompany children under age 4. Must pre-register by Wednesday each week Instructor: Lori Sullivan; Minimum 3

#### Maclure Library Knitting Circle

Come join us weekly to share projects from noon – 2:00 p.m.

### 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](mailto:ceastman88@gmail.com)

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### Fridays March 17th, March 31st

**St. Ambrose Annual Lenten Fish Fry Join us for "ALL YOU CAN EAT" FISH FRYS**

Meal includes Fried or Baked Haddock, French Fries, Coleslaw, Fresh Baked Dinner Roll, Beverage & Dessert.

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For more info, call St. Ambrose Church in Bristol VT @ 453-2488

## Goings on around town

## Attention Seniors! Spring Osher Series coming up

Interested in learning? Did you know that it's good for your brain and health? Art, science, cartooning, and gardening are all explored.

UVM has a program called the Osher Lifelong Learning institute that provides great lectures at a very reasonable cost. Coming this spring on Friday afternoons (1:30 - 3) from April 7 - May 12. Lectures at the Godnick Adult Center in Rutland. Registration for the series is only \$25 at [learn.uvm.edu/olli/rutland](http://learn.uvm.edu/olli/rutland)

April 7, 2023

Peter Huntoon: An Artist at Work

Peter is a well-known artist from Middletown Springs. He will explain his process and technique while he creates art before us. Peter paints from photos, sketches, on location and from his imagination using a multitude of mediums. This promises to be an entertaining program not to be missed.

April 14, 2023

Neurographic Art: Connecting Science and Art  
Mary Fran Lloyd, an abstract artist, and promoter of art in Vermont for the past 30 years, will introduce us to Neurographic Art. Russian psychologist Pavel Piskarev

created this mindfulness activity in 2014, which

connects science with art. Mary Fran will demonstrate and guide us in experiencing this art form.

April 21, 2023

Political Cartooning, Different Now?

Jeff Danziger began drawing and writing for the Rutland Herald in 1975, and was quickly picked up by and syndicated in national papers. He has won many awards and has published 10 books of drawings, two novels and a memoir. Danziger will share a description of years of cartooning Vermont and American life and politics, with his take on the recent shift in what is considered acceptable or over the line in comedy and cartooning.

April 28, 2023

The Common Loon is Back

Dr. Scott MacLachlan was a veterinarian for 31 years in Poultney. Now retired, he volunteers with the Vermont Loon project, revisiting his early career as a biologist for the NH Audubon, documenting the loon population. His program will present research about Common Loons in the late 70s when the

NE population was at a critical low. We will explore their ecology, the impact of human activity on loon survival and the loons' comeback in south-

ern Vermont.

May 5, 2023

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May 12, 2023

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## Loud and Proud! Sundays through April 30th (except April 16th)

Jeff Ladd, Extraordinary Dad, presents Loud and Proud! It's an opportunity for kids 7th grade up to 19 years to play music together. Whether bass, electric guitar, acoustic guitar, drums, bongos, come and play with other teens you know or don't know! Bring your band, bring yourself and play!

Hosted at the Brandon Town Hall, participants will enter and exit through the side door. There will be a drum kit on site. Bring your instruments or contact Jeff on FB. Upon arrival musicians must stay upstairs, because there are other events happening downstairs. It's going to be great!

## Thursday 23rd

NXT Curator Series: Poster House's Angelina Lippert

Join us from 7:00-9:00 p.m. at the Next Stage Arts presents a lecture by Angelina Lippert, chief curator

dents, faculty, staff, and alumni. Tickets can be purchased or reserved by contacting the Casella Theater Box Office from Monday through Friday between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m. at (802) 468-1119.

View Online: <http://castleton.meritpages.com/news/Castleton-University-Theater-Arts-Department-Presents-The-IT-Girl-March-23-26/34048>



## PRIDE Hike at the Whipple Hollow Trail March 26

Join us as Rutland County Audubon, Outright Vermont and Come Alive Outside will be taking a walk along our new Whipple Hollow Trail in West Rutland. 1 p.m. Approximately 1.4 miles out and back. Free, but space is limited. Find out the details and sign up here at Eventbrite.

at Poster House in New York City, the first and only museum in the United States dedicated to the art and history of the poster.

What is a poster and how is it different from a print, a handbill, or a flyer? What makes a poster valuable? Join Angelina Lippert, chief curator and director of content at Poster House in New York City, the

first and only museum in the United States dedicated to the art and history of the poster, and learn about how this ephemeral medium marries the worlds of art and commerce. This talk will cover the birth of posters in the mid-1800s, major stylistic movements, important moments in printing history, and a glimpse into the wide array of exhibitions Lippert has curated on posters.

## Saturday 25th

Come Celebrate the Vermont Tradition of Maple Sugaring at Baird Farm!

Free Sugarhouse and Sugarbush Tours  
Boiling (Weather Permitting)  
Mount Holly Beer Co. Serving Maple Themed Beer  
Maple Tastings  
Free Rosemary Waffles  
Come Alive Outside - Outdoor Maple Activities  
Maple Giveaways  
Tabling and Beef Raffle Hamilton Cattle Co.,  
Tabling with Farmblox and Information on Modern Sugaring Equipment.

1:00pm : Tree tapping with 2 special guests on both days

## Sunday 26th

Champlain Philharmonic Spring Concert Series

The Champlain Philharmonic will feature Vermont composer Kyle Saulnier with Stefanie Weigand on vocals. There will also be works by Beethoven, Rachmaninoff, Grieg, Copland, and Duke Ellington.

The Champlain Philharmonic will return to Town Hall Theater in Middlebury on March 25 at 7:30pm and Grace Congregational Church in Rutland on March 26th at 4:00pm to perform their Spring Concert Series entitled, "Nostalgia."

The program will feature the world premiere of a new work by VT Composer, Kyle Saulnier, entitled "The Sun upon a hill." VT vocalist, Stefanie Weigand will be the featured soloist who will also perform Rachmaninoff's Vocalise. The rest of the program will include Copland's Fanfare for a Common Man, Beethoven's Egmont Overture, Grieg's Symphonic Dances, and a medley of Duke Ellington hits. More info at [www.champlainphilharmonic.org](http://www.champlainphilharmonic.org).

## Monday 20th

Master Gardener Dr. Ann Hazelrigg, Professor at UVM's Plant Diagnostic Clinic, and frequent Master Gardener instructor, will brief us about some pests and plant diseases that we should be alerted to, including beech leaf disease, spotted lantern fly, and the latest information on the jumping worms. Here's hoping there are no other new threats looming by March!

At 7 p.m. at the Godnick Adult Center



## Thursday 23rd Sunday 26th

Castleton University Theater Arts Department Presents The IT Girl

Castleton University Theater Arts Department presents its spring musical, The IT Girl at Casella Theater from Thursday, March 23, through Saturday March 25 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, March 26, at 2 p.m. at Casella Theater.

Betty Lou Spence is a shop girl who falls in love with her boss, initially winning him over because she has the illusive quality, IT. When class differences divide Betty from her beau, she triumphs by putting her sense of justice -- and her special charms -- to good use.

Inspired by the language and melodies of the silent movie era, and based on the 1927 Paramount Picture, IT, the new musical offers today's audiences a light-hearted escape from life's complexities - just as silent films once gave to audiences in the Roaring '20s.

Tickets are \$15 for adults and \$10 for seniors, stu-



Affairs

is a Certified Hospice and Palliative Care Nurse. She will present how gathering friends and information in one place for our loved ones in the event we are unable to manage our affairs on our own. She will also discuss ways on how to prepare our will and other important information, and even discuss estate planning as an act of love for our loved ones.

the Meadow

Janet has a certificate in Botanical Gardens. She is a freelance writer and gardener, and this is her third book about "Playing God in the Garden." She learned to Love My Weeds," in her garden, having found their own way in Vermont, try to stave off the winter. This is not just for gardeners, but for anyone who loves the outdoors. The book from Phoenix Books is available ahead of time, or just come and enjoy the compelling rendition.



# Baird Farm Maple Open House, March 25th and 26th

Head on up to the Baird farm in Chittenden this weekend for all things MAPLE! How about some maple syrup on rosemary waffles? Maple-themed beer from Mount Holly Beer Co.? Maple tasting? Sugarhouse tours? Sugarbush tours? Maple giveaways? Yes, they're all there.

Also tree tapping with special guests. Come Alive Outside will be there with some outdoor maple activities. Hamilton Cattle Company will have a table and beef raffle. Their cattle graze on the farm during the summer. Farmblox will have information

on modern sugaring equipment.

Baird Farm has been the home to the Baird family since 1918, spanning 4 generations. Covering part of the 560-acre farm, the sugarbush is extensive. There are 11,000 taps and over 70 miles of tubing. Vacuum helps increase production and move the sap to the collection points. The sap then goes through a reverse osmosis filter to concentrate the sugar before being boiled down to make syrup. Come watch this amazing process. It's totally wild!

March 25th & 26th, 2023  
10:00 - 4:00



A FRIENDLY SNOWMAN welcomes visitors to the Baird Farm.

Photo provided



SAP DRIPPING FROM the scoop at Baird Farm in Chittenden.

Photo by Tina Picz photography



WYATT AND EMMA Davine enjoying a taste of maple syrup straight from the source.

Photo provided



MODERN ARCH IN the Baird Farm sugarhouse.

Photo provided



# Mim's Photos

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

## Recognized



Tom Whittaker confirmed the identity of the gentlemen 2nd in from the right, as Basil Walsh, not Bernard Webster.

Sue Wetmore also confirmed the identity of Basil Walsh.

Ken Brown recognized the second gentleman next to Welland Horn as Basil Walsh. Ken was born and brought up next door to Camp Thorpe in Goshen founded by Rev. Walter Thorpe. Basil was Rev. Thorpe's son-in-law, he managed the camp for decades after Rev. Thorpe died. Ken had much contact with Basil through their early lives. In the early 1950s he built the stone house that sets back at 13 Marble St. in Brandon. In 1954, when each town had a representative to the legislature, Basil was the representative from Goshen. When Ken was in 8th grade, Basil and his wife, Mae, hosted him and a classmate for a day at the legislature. He and Basil had lunch at the hotel across the street. Ken says he remembers having turtle soup!

**E-mail [ads@brandonreporter.com](mailto:ads@brandonreporter.com)**  
if you can identify someone in these photos.  
Or call us at 247-8080



Brian Trask recognized people in this family photo from left to right: "Butch" Palmer, Steven or Stephen (twins) Palmer, baby, & young woman, Darlene Palmer (Butch's wife).



Terry Ferson recognized the man holding the \$100 bill as Robert "Bobby" LaPorte of Leicester, with his two children, Bobby and Amy. The photo is from the 1990s.

Gary Gorton also recognized Robert "Bobby" Laporte and his two children, Bobby and Amy.

Tiffany Quesnel identified Robert "Bobby" Laporte, her uncle, and his two children.

Morgan Laporte recognized Robert "Bobby" Laporte, her grandpa, and his two children Bobby Laporte and Amy Laporte-James.



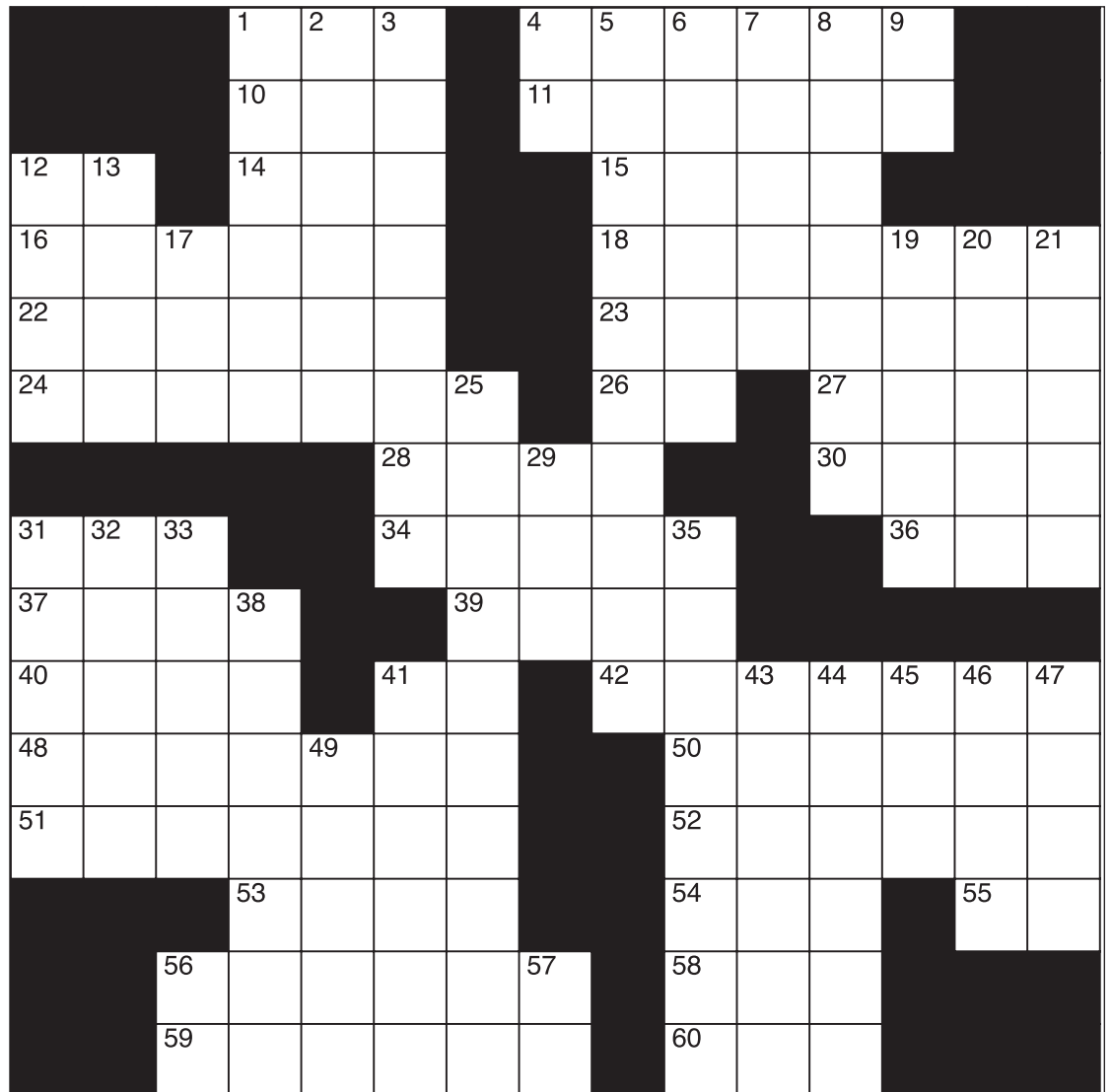
# Crossword

## CLUES ACROSS

1. Belonging to a thing
4. Pass or go by
10. Partner to cheese
11. Subjects
12. U.S. State (abbr.)
14. Bits per inch
15. Forest-dwelling deer
16. Illinois city
18. A salt or ester of acetic acid
22. Wholly unharmed
23. Cuddled
24. Bane
26. Global investment bank (abbr.)
27. Oh my gosh!
28. Arrive
30. Famed Spanish artist
31. Home of "Frontline"
34. Group of quill feathers
36. Keyboard key
37. Army training group
39. Detail
40. Pole with flat blade
41. Football play
42. Makes unhappy
48. Island in Hawaii
50. Back in business
51. Of an individual
52. Painful chest condition
53. Tropical American monkey
54. Matchstick game
55. For instance
56. Even again
58. Popular beverage
59. Evaluate
60. Time units (abbr.)

## CLUES DOWN

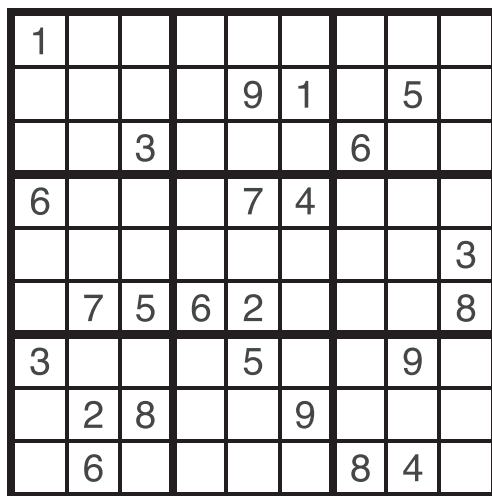
1. Stain one's hands
2. Nocturnal hoofed animals
3. Back condition
4. Popular movie alien
5. City of Angels
6. Peaks
7. Infantry weapons
8. Left
9. Atomic #99
12. Told a good yarn
13. Vale
17. Resistance unit
19. Aquatic plant
20. Bluish greens
21. About some Norse poems
25. Reinforces
29. Egyptian mythological goddess
31. Supportive material
32. Subatomic particle
33. Expired bread
35. Cereal grain
38. Goes against
41. Walkie \_\_
43. One who does not accept
44. Beliefs
45. Indicates near
46. Brazilian NBA star
47. Grab quickly
49. Romantic poet
56. College dorm worker
57. Set of data



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# 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

## Visit the Rutland County Humane Society's Website!

Do you want to stay up-to-date on events at the Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS)? Do you want to make an online donation? Are you looking for a complete list of all of the adoptable animals? Are you searching for pictures of adorable alumni animals? Do you want to know about our community services? All of this and lots more can be found at the Rutland County Humane Society's website, [www.rchsvt.org](http://www.rchsvt.org). The website is updated nearly every day, and there's terrific information about every aspect of RCHS including donations, volunteers, adoptions, stray animals, links to other shelters, and more. For quick and easy access, add [www.rchsvt.org](http://www.rchsvt.org) to your list of favorites! Check us out - you'll be happy you did!

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



#### MEET FOXY - 3-YEAR-OLD. FEMALE. PIT BULL MIX. TAN AND WHITE.

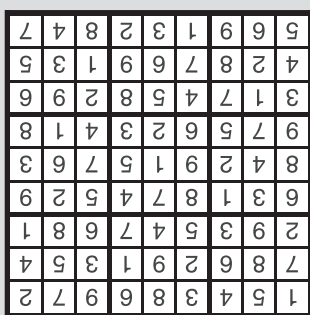
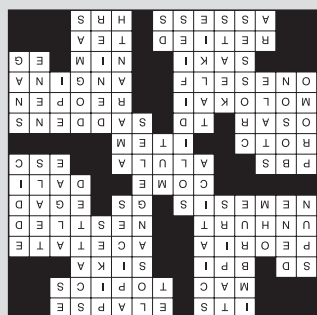
Foxy is a happy and charming pup! She will greet you with butt wiggles and a very happy tail! She has lived with both dogs and cats and did great with them. She does like to door dash, so proper training to work on that, like asking her to sit and wait each time you open the door is a great way for her to learn that she can't run through just because a door is open. She is an all-around happy pup, who loves to go for walks, and will need regular exercise like fetch, walks, hikes, jogging, or playing tug. She likes being around people and is a fairly social lady. She is currently waiting for her spay appointment, so she is available for foster-to-adopt.

#### MEET MARGARET - 3-YEAR-OLD. SPAYED FEMALE. DOMESTIC SHORT HAIR. BLACK AND WHITE.

Easygoing and content describe her best. Margaret will follow you from room to room when she is up for some head scratches or belly rubs. Other times, she is just content laying in her bed or a window, just relaxing and enjoying life. She is currently in our Community Cat Room where she is doing well with other cats. She also has lived with kids and did great, but she does like her space respected. If she sounds like the girl for you, she is currently at Petco in Rutland. Stop by to say "hi!"



## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



## RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

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# OFF THE SHELF

## NEW BOOKS AND NEWS



### New in DVD

#### Puss in Boots: The Last Wish

Puss in Boots (voiced by Antonio Banderas) is down to the last of his nine lives, and the Big Bad Wolf is out to get him. Puss must summon up his courage and journey into the Dark Forest to find the Wishing Star so he can restore his other lives before the Wolf catches up with him.

#### God's Country

While grieving the loss of her mother, Sandra (Thandie Newton) encounters two men parked on her property the day of the funeral, and realizes they're hunting in the woods behind her house. When she asks them to leave, she becomes embroiled in a small-town battle of wills that escalates into violence.

#### Peaceful

The story of a son in denial of a terminal diagnosis, a mother facing the loss of her child, and the doctor and nurse who help them come to terms over the course of the following year.

#### The Old Way

An aging gunslinger (Nico-

las Cage) and his 12-year-old daughter team up to fight for their lives when the son of a man he murdered years ago comes seeking revenge.

#### Paradise City

When bounty hunter Ian Swan (Bruce Willis) is shot and presumed dead after disappearing in the waters off Maui, his son Ryan wreaks vengeance through the city to find his murderer. Also stars John Travolta and Stephen Dorff.

#### Running the Bases

Years after a devastating tragedy changed the trajectory of his life, small-town baseball coach Luke Brooks uproots his family and takes a job at a larger school. As he begins coaching and starts each game with a prayer and lap around the bases in honor of a deceased loved one, he begins to face extreme opposition from the Superintendent, who wants nothing to do with religion in his school or his life.

#### In from the Side

A new and inexperienced B-team rugby player begins an adulterous affair with one of the A-team members who's recovering from an



injury. With their team cash-strapped and struggling, the two men attempt to hide their relationship from the team and their long-term partners, knowing that discovery of the affair could destroy the rugby club.

#### Empire of Light

Struggling with her mental health and loneliness in a small coastal town in England, Hilary, a cinema manager, begins an affair with a new employee who shares in her struggles and love of the magic of movies. Stars Olivia Colman, Colin Firth, and Michael Ward.



Storytime, Thursdays at 11 a.m.

## Who let the dogs out?? Animals and ODs abound

### Brandon Police Report

BRANDON — Brandon police were kept busy this past week with medical emergencies, disputes, and driving violations.

The week started off dramatically with an overdose on March 6. Officers were called to a residence on North Street, where a man had overdosed on heroin. Police administered two doses of Narcan to the man to revive him while waiting for the ambulance to arrive at the scene. Brandon Area Rescue Squad transported the man to the hospital for further treatment.

Later in the day, police were called to two different apartments on Center Street. The first call, shortly after 6 p.m., was to assist EMS with a patient that had fallen and was screaming for help. Upon entry, police found the man that had fallen down and helped him get up while waiting for EMS personnel to arrive. Just under three hours later, police were called to another apartment on Center Street where a second person had fallen. They assisted Brandon Area Rescue in gaining entry into the apartment and with the patient.

Porter Medical Center contacted police on March 7 to report that a woman had come into the hospital and had reported that she had been sexually assaulted somewhere in Brandon. Police have opened an investigation into the matter.

The Visiting Nurses Association in Rutland called on Brandon Police on March 8 to check on an elderly North Birch Hill Road resident who had just gotten out of the hospital and had not been answering his phone for the past couple of days. The officer checked the residence but did not locate anyone there.

Just after midday police were called to a disturbance on Jones Drive. A former tenant at the Summit Properties/Park Village was refusing to leave the building until he got his last month's security deposit back. The responding officer calmed the arguing parties and worked out an agreement with them to avoid further problems. The former tenant was also issued a verbal trespass notice per request of the property manager, ordering him not to return to the property.

After stopping a vehicle on Park Street near Marble Street for a stop sign violation, police found that the driver, Jacob Sweatt, 27, had a criminally suspended driver's license. Sweatt was issued a citation for Operating With a Criminally Suspended Driver's License. Police returned

to Park Street later in the evening to assist a family with their defiant 8-year-old, who was trying to run away from home. The child was located and brought back home by a family member.

On the morning of March 9, police received word of an injured owl on Nickerson Road. They notified Vermont Fish & Wildlife and a warden was dispatched to check on the welfare of the animal.

In the early evening police arrested Eden W. Netelkos, 28, of Brandon, and charged her with DUI-Drugs. Several hours later they served an arrest warrant on Christopher Brown, 25, of Shrewsbury. Brown, whose girlfriend had been arrested earlier for DUI-Drugs, had come to the Brandon Police Station to pick her up. Brown was arrested for an outstanding arrest warrant out of Rutland City for failure to appear. Brown was taken into custody without incident and later transported to the Marble Valley Correctional Center for lodging.

On March 10, police were notified of an online scam originating in Snapchat in which a resident's cell phone had been hacked. This is not an isolated incident, and Brandon Police strongly advise the public to be cautious when using social media and on-line outlets and to make sure that passwords and authentication firewalls are in place to avoid unauthorized access to their electronic devices and on-line accounts.

Two dogs were running amok around Prospect Street and Conant Square on the morning of March 11. An officer, with the assistance of a member of the public, managed to secure the dogs safely. They were promptly returned to their owner, who was issued a verbal warning about the Town of Brandon dog ordinance concerning unsecured dogs.

Late in the morning, police stopped a motorist for speeding on Grove Street and discovered the operator to be driving with a criminally suspended driver's license. The investigation is still open with charges to follow concerning the operator at a later time.

In the evening, a resident came to the police station to report a possible suspicious package they  
*(See Police report, Page 19)*

## THE GREAT LIBRARY RENOVATION

### A transformation is taking place!

We want to thank **Susan Johnson** and **Jeff Sachs** for some storage solutions. This week we are working on preparing the Town Hall for the lending library to move into. That includes some repairs and beginning to install bases for the bookcases. **Bill Moore** and his helpers have been moving and cleaning up the space. We bought paint from **Brandon Lumber**. As we continue to clean up the corners of the library we've had a lot of help. A big thanks goes out to **Tracy Holden, Jim Germond, Doug Robinson, George Fjeld, Connie Kenna, Amanda Berry, Ed and Cindy Thomas and Bob Lord!** There will be many more opportunities to lend a helping hand. **Please check out the BFPL website to sign up for our email to find out what's coming up.**

### IT'S OUR

# PUBLIC LAUNCH PARTY!

**THIS SATURDAY  
MARCH 18TH  
FROM 6-8PM, UPSTAIRS  
AT THE TOWN HALL**

Our renovation is about to begin! Come kick off our public funding campaign as we celebrate at our new temporary space...the Town Hall. **Join us! All are welcome!**



**HELP MOVE OUR LIBRARY! SIGN UP TO VOLUNTEER:**  
[brandonpubliclibrary.org/renovation/](http://brandonpubliclibrary.org/renovation/)

THIS AD IS GENEROUSLY UNDERWRITTEN BY AN ANONYMOUS DONOR

# Police report

(Continued from Page 18)

had received in the mail. Officers seized the package, determined that the package was safe, and will turn it in at the post office to be returned to the sender.

Upon stopping a speeding car on Grove Street on March 12 and issuing a ticket to the driver, police found that the driver, a junior operator, had unauthorized passengers in the vehicle with him. The driver was determined to be in violation of the Junior Operator Law by having these passengers. The car was grounded in a nearby parking lot and arrangements were made for the juvenile passengers to get rides home from the scene.

In other activity Brandon Police:

### On March 6

- Aided with an overdose on North Street.
- Aided a Rutland resident with finding her wallet.
- Took fingerprints for an adoption and a volunteer.
- Assisted Brandon EMS with two separate medical incidents on Center Street.

### On March 7

- Stopped a vehicle on Champlain Street for an obstructed windshield and On Grove Street for speeding. Issued a warning and a ticket.
- Took fingerprints for a nursing license.
- Enforced traffic rules on Grove Street.
- Received a report of sexual assault and opened an investigation

### On March 8

- Made a welfare check on North Birch Hill Road.
- Responded to a disturbance on Jones Drive.
- Took fingerprints for a nursing license.
- Enforced traffic rules on Park Street
- Issued a citation to a driver with a criminally suspended license.
- Aided a Park Street family with a defiant child.
- Assisted a stranded motorist on Franklin Street near Nickerson Road
- Enforced speed limit on

Franklin Street

- Enforced traffic rules on Conant Square/Champlain Street. Directed traffic enforcement

### On March 9

- Notified Fish & Wildlife of an injured owl on Nickerson Road.
- Took fingerprints for an individual participating in a volunteer program, nursing license and coaching position.
- Charged a 28-year-old woman with DUI-Drug.
- Served an arrest warrant on a 25-year-old man at the police station.

### On March 10

- Received report of an erratic driver on Grove Street near Town Line Road.
- Presented K-9 Guinness to a group of students at Lothrop Elementary School in Pittsford.
- Received report of an online scam on Snapchat.

### On March 11

- Secured two stray dogs around Conant Square and Pros-

pect Street.

- Stopped a driver for speeding who was found to be driving with a criminally suspended license.
- Received an accidental 911 call.
- Received a complaint of past vandalism to a window at a residence on Birch Hill Road.
- Carver Street, Church Street and Rossiter Street for a suspicious male that had been seen walking in the area.
- Received a walk-in complaint about a possible suspicious package.
- Enforced speed limit on Grove Street and issued two warnings.
- Made traffic stops on Frnak-

lin Street and Grove Street for using a cell phone while driving and speeding. Issued a ticket and a warning.

### On March 12

- Stopped car on Grove street for speeding and found operator in violation of Junior Operator Law.
- Made traffic stops on Grove Street and Franklin Street for failure to move over upon approach of an emergency vehicle and speeding. A warning and three tickets were issued.
- Began an investigation regarding a landlord/tenant dispute.
- Enforced speed limit on Franklin Street and Grove Street.

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

## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

**ARIES** March 21-April 20  
It is very important that you do not count your chickens before they hatch, Aries. Something you suspected was a sure thing may not pan out this week.

**TAURUS** April 21-May 21  
You have a secret desire that you want to let out, Taurus. But you're not sure of the timing. Stop letting your head dictate your heart and put plans into action.

**GEMINI** May 22-June 21  
Friendships could falter due to your insecurities, Gemini. Others want to be around you for good reason. Try to see the value in relationships and make the effort to socialize.

**CANCER** June 22-July 22  
Cancer, you could be defeating your own efforts this week. There may be something telling you that you're not

**LEO** July 23-Aug. 23  
There's a fresh development in your love life coming down the pike, Leo. Romantic feelings solidify and you might be in for some exciting adventures in the weeks to come.

**VIRGO** Aug. 24-Sept. 22  
Virgo, the crowd around you may not be the support system you need right now. Making new friends can be tough, but it's worthy pursuit at this point.

**LIBRA** Sept. 23-Oct. 23  
Libra, no matter how much you want to spend time with family or friends right now, work seems to draw you away. Focus on finding more balance.

**SCORPIO** Oct. 24-Nov. 22  
You might be feeling fed up with the pace of lessons being taught to you, Scorpio. If the teacher or mentor simply isn't effective, then you might need to find a new educator.

**SAGITTARIUS** Nov. 23-Dec. 21  
Sagittarius, it might seem like having the utmost control sets you up for security, but that's not always the case. Being too controlling may push others away.

**CAPRICORN** Dec. 22-Jan. 20  
This may be an emotional week for you, Capricorn. Your relationship will have to weather a few storms before things right themselves again.

**AQUARIUS** Jan. 21-Feb. 18  
Poor habits can keep you from getting where you want to go, Aquarius. A friend or family member may need to step in to show you where you could be going wrong.

**PISCES** Feb. 19-March 20  
Help a partner heal by being sensitive to his or her suffering. You may not know all the ins and outs, but being supportive can help greatly.

**FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS**

- March 16 Caroline Herschel, 18th-century astronomer (d)
- March 17 Mia Hamm, soccer player (51)
- March 18 Queen Latifah, actor, musician (53)
- March 19 Earl Warren, Supreme Court Chief Justice (d)
- March 20 Ovid, poet (d)
- March 21 Gary Oldman, actor (65)
- March 22 Agnes Martin, painter (d)

## REAL ESTATE

**Terrific opportunity to re-start a restaurant that includes all the kitchen equipment, dining furniture, and much of the stylish decor. Features an inviting main dining room with a massive central hearth and a comfortable separate dining area to the back. There's enough space for large functions, and there's also a semi-private area for family sized groups. The property also includes a 1,300 sq. ft. home. Great exposure at this Route 7 location. \$230,000**

**ROWE REAL ESTATE**  
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## Views in All Directions

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Plan for tomorrow by securing your future home site now. 15 lots ready for your new 'energy efficient' home. 3/4 to 1 A± with all utilities & enjoying gorgeous mountain & pastoral views. Located in the quaint village of Brandon with art galleries, shops, shopping & professional services. Convenient to Middlebury & Rutland & 45 min. +/- to Killington, Pico & Middlebury Snow Bowl. Ski, hike, bike & enjoy nearby lakes. Owner/Broker/Developer. Prices starting at \$49,000. Top view, 10/26/22. Middle view, 9/24/22. Bottom view t3/3/23.

**Whittaker real estate**

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(802)236-9076(T) (802)236-9075(C)  
Tom@WhittakerRealEstate.com  
Top of the Hill, Brandon, VT

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# GARDENING CORNER

## I'm right where I want to be

BY LYN DESMARAIS

BRANDON—"Who is the master of our gardens? Plants, weeds, weather or us?" asks Judy Reilly when I arrive. I'm not sure how I'd answer that question. Judy Reilly's art and gardens echo each other. They are full of warm colors, interesting objects—warmly human and both structured and then relaxed inside the structure. Judy grew up on a farm in New York State. Her mother had an off-farm job so Judy's job

was to tend and harvest the garden and cook meals from that day's harvest for the rest of the family: six people, three meals a day. Judy says she loved it and felt so grateful to have a job she absolutely loved.

She met her husband, George, and they moved with his job from Massachusetts to Pennsylvania to Connecticut and now Vermont, where she lives, gardens, and creates fabric art. They bought their house 19 years ago in Brandon. Judy has

Judy then added "but if it's beautiful, in the wrong place, but thriving, it's where it wants to be."

"Bette Moffat once gave me some comforting advice," Reilly said. "I asked her what I should do with my steep bank with many different plants all haphazardly mixed together and she said 'let it be what it wants to be.' I took it to heart. Now I only take out the aggressive weeds or the saplings, and let it be. I love the beauty of its wildness."

Judy's sun garden is a magnet for pollinators and vegetables. Each garden is contained, weeded, and well ordered. On the design side, Judy says she throws everything to the wind. I see structure everywhere in where the gardens are laid out, border gardens, dividing gardens, and bank gardens—each of her gardens has structure. Within the gardens Judy does allow plants to spread out and self-seed so many of them move around. The sun garden is a lovely mixture of herb, berry, vegetable, and flowers and includes an apple tree. She calls it her "edible landscape."

Hostas lead to the front door. Like many gardens, due to mature trees, gardens can be full-shade and mainly sun while being only feet apart. Having so many herbs and pollinator plants ensures that all food producing plants will be pollinated. As a deer deterrent, Judy liberally uses the pungent scents of herbs and edible flowers. The herbs can be used fresh and dried, and they all give a strong visual interest when the

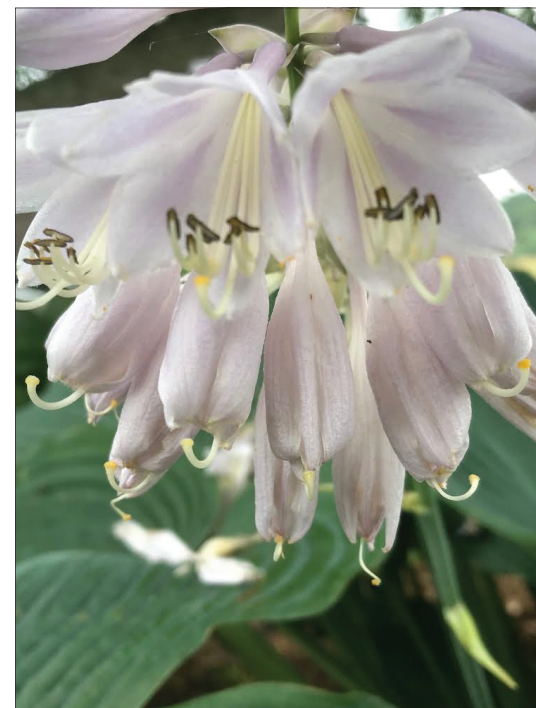
vegetable garden is harvested and leaves empty spaces in the garden. Becoming a Master gardener has its pluses, Judy says, in that it reinforced her foundation in gardening, like partnering plants such as potatoes and green beans to keep the potato bugs at bay and rotating crops even in small gardens. It also taught her what questions to ask and whom to ask.

What she loves most about gardening is simply following along as plants progress. Patience is the secret to gardening!

"I'm a caretaker. I love to nourish and watch things grow. Gardening is magical. Take the seed for instance, it has everything inside it (other than water and soil), that it needs to become what it is going to be." The really happy part is having super fresh food to eat.

Judy's top gardening tips:

- Wrap your blueberries in netting in the winter as well as summer to deter rabbits from eating them. Dress the blueberries with pine needles in the fall and ammonia sulfate in May to keep the soil acidity high.
- The best time to weed gardens



is after a heavy rainstorm and if you are patient and let them grow a bit, for when the weeds are taller, they'll come up more easily. If you love a sense of wildness, learn more about weeds and their uses and which are edible like portulaca (purslane).

- Use your grass clippings as mulch. They are an excellent source of omega 3s. If you have any hungry deer about, plant strong-smelling herbs and flowers all around your garden. Plants with pungent scent deter deer.

- And finally, be kind to yourself. Gardening is all about balance. It will never be perfect, so sometimes, "Let it be what it wants to be".



**GLIMPSES OF JUDY Reilly's beautiful gardens and produce in Brandon.** Photos by Lyn Desmarais

"Remember that you are the master of your garden so even if it's beautiful but it's in the wrong place, pull it out."

# Business & Service Directory

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# Vermont Senate Democrats poised to cut full-day pre-K to keep 100 million in increased childcare subsidies

BY LOLA DUFFORT/  
VTDIGGER

Following pushback from the child care sector, Democrats in the Vermont Senate are backing off from plans to enact full-day prekindergarten in public schools.

Currently, the families of all 3- and 4-year-olds in Vermont receive a voucher for each child to receive 10 hours a week of prekindergarten programming at the public or private provider of their choice. As part of a larger overhaul of Vermont's

kindergarten to all 4-year-olds.

The legislation also envisions dramatically increasing subsidies to child care facilities, although the bill's Senate architects have not yet settled on precisely how much additional funding private centers would receive.

"One of the things that we heard in testimony is how if we took all the 4-year-olds out categorically right away, it would devastate child care facilities," said Sen. Ginny Lyons, D-Chittenden Southeast, one of the bill's sponsors. "Because the 4-year-olds really do provide the resources for child care centers to take care of the younger kids."

The Senate Health and Welfare Committee, which Lyons chairs, is planning to vote out S.56

But the prekindergarten section of the bill will be revised to create a summer study committee to further explore the issue. (Language calling for that study is being finalized in the Senate Education Committee.)

Sen. Ruth Hardy, D-Addison, one of S.56's lead sponsors, said she would have much preferred to keep public prekindergarten in the bill. But she joked that she had "lost that battle right now" and didn't want to jeopardize the rest of the legislation, which is expected to allocate more than \$100 million in new funding to expand subsidies to more middle-class families and improve child care worker pay and benefits.

"That's huge," Hardy said. "So I think even if that's all we do, that's a major accomplishment. It's a lot of money and it will have a big impact on a lot of people's lives."

Universal prekindergarten vouchers are particularly important to child care providers because infants and toddlers require even smaller staff-to-student ratios than preschoolers. In an industry with razor-thin margins, prekindergarten vouchers essentially subsidize care for the youngest and most expensive children to care for. Child care advocates also argued that dramatically scaling



SEN. GINNY LYONS, D-Chittenden Southeast, left, speaks with colleagues at the Statehouse in Montpelier on Feb. 1, 2023.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger



SEN. RUTH HARDY, D-Addison, discusses a report issued by the Domestic Violence Fatality Review Commission during a press conference at the Statehouse in Montpelier on Jan. 25, 2023.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

child care system, lawmakers in S.56 had proposed eliminating those vouchers and instead requiring public schools to simply offer free, full-day pre-

this week, ahead of the Legislature's mid-session "crossover" deadline, once committee members have decided how much to beef up child care sub-

up public school prekindergarten programs could create an exodus of staff, who might decamp from private facilities to public schools, where pay and benefits are far better.

But Aly Richards, the CEO of Let's Grow Kids, Vermont's leading child care advocacy group, argued that resistance to embracing full-day prekindergarten in public schools now is not all — or even primarily — about money. Even if schools offer full-day programming, there will still be important gaps in coverage, she said, particularly in the summer and

after school.

"Zero to 5, kids and their families need full workday, full calendar year (care)," Richards said. "And when you expand this into schools, it's actually full school day and full academic year."

Public school groups, including the Vermont Principals' Association, remain strongly supportive of expanding to full-day prekindergarten as soon as possible. They argue that without much ramp-up time, schools can take on the new pupils, and that such an expansion would (See *Childcare subsidies*, Page 23)

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# Childcare subsidies

*(Continued from Page 22)*  
make specialized services for kids who need extra help available earlier.

But in the absence of implementation now, VPA executive director Jay Nichols said, his group will instead push lawmakers to tweak Vermont's school funding formula so that schools already providing full-day prekindergarten programming don't suffer a tax penalty. Right now, prekindergarteners are counted as part-time students, whether or not a school offers full-day programming or not. That inflates a school's "per-pupil spending" figure, which in turn raises that district's tax rate.

"We bring up the example of places like Winooski, where there are no private care pro-

viders," Nichols told the Senate Education Committee earlier this month. "So we've got the school doing it right now. But it's hurting them in their budget ... and they're one of our poorest systems in Vermont and poorest communities."

Sen. Brian Campion, D-Bennington, the panel's chair, said he wasn't ready yet to say whether he supported that proposal, although he said his committee would take testimony on the matter and forward its recommendations on to the Senate Finance Committee.

"I hate to say it does make sense only because, who knows, maybe it won't after I look deep into it, but I think this is certainly something that has to be on the table this year to consider," he said.



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### TOWN OF BRANDON, VERMONT

#### 32 Marble Street demolition project in Brandon, VT

Pursuant to Executive Orders 11988 (Floodplain Management) and 11990 (Wetlands) and Federal Emergency Management Agency's (FEMA) implementing regulations at Title 44 of the Code of Federal Regulations Part 9, FEMA hereby provides final notice of its decision to provide Hazard Mitigation Grant Program funding for an action located in a floodplain and near a wetland. Funding would be provided through VT Emergency Management to the Town of Brandon to demolish structures that have experienced repeated flood damage.

The project is to purchase and demolish a one-story home, one outbuilding, and a driveway on Marble Street in Brandon. Equipment would be staged in the driveway and no tree removal would occur. The slab foundation would also be removed. The site would be filled, graded, and seeded and maintained as open space.

The project site is within a mapped special flood hazard area (100-year floodplain and abuts the regulatory floodway) and near freshwater forested/shrub wetland habitat. Project construction could potentially adversely affect the floodplain and/or wetland temporarily;

however, the floodplain and wetland functions would be restored at the site in the long-term. Short-term mitigation would be achieved through the use of sedimentation and erosion controls and staging equipment on paved surfaces. A map of the area of available upon request.

Work must take place in the floodplain in order to remove the structures. Alternatives included no action and elevation; however, demolition provides a permanent solution to the continued flood risk. Grant conditions will also require compliance with all federal, state and local laws, including coordination with the local floodplain administrator and wetland permits from VT Agency of Natural Resources.

Map requests and comments about this project and potential floodplain/wetland impacts should be submitted within 15 days of the date of this publication to:

Karen Vale, Environmental Protection Specialist  
Federal Emergency Management Agency, Boston, MA  
karen.vale@fema.dhs.gov; (202) 699-0650

# Forever chemicals

(Continued from Page 2)

The group, along with the entire Quebec National Assembly, called for making the moratorium permanent in 2021, after Canadian officials found traces of PFAS in a drinking water intake area connected to the lake. Casella denied a connection between its landfill and the findings, and state testing found no link between the landfill and the small amounts of PFAS found. That summer the state extended the moratorium to 2026.

Since the moratorium in 2019, Casella has sent most of its leachate to Montpelier and Plattsburgh, New York, two places where from 2020 to 2022 nearly 37 million gallons — almost 95% of the liquids that left the landfill — has arrived at wastewater treatment plants that discharge into rivers that flow into Lake Champlain, according to monthly permit reports from Casella. The Montpelier plant's share represents nearly 3 out of every 5 of these gallons.

In May 2022, officials at the Montpelier plant stopped taking leachate for eight months after a bacterial contamination disabled a disinfection system at the plant, according to Montpelier Public Works Director Kurt Motyka.

Montpelier began accepting the

liquids again this year at a smaller volume — to ensure there are no other issues with the disinfection system. That led to the plant only taking in about \$8,500 of revenue for January 2023, Motyka said, a far lower total than before the pause.

But if the system has no issues, the plant will return to full capacity, which Motyka estimates would lead to a roughly fourfold increase in monthly revenue — about \$300,000 for the year.

That could have notable implications for city officials. Montpelier is in the midst of addressing challenges in revenue, something noted in the city's 2023 budget. While this year's budget is balanced, the city still projects to have 6.5% less revenue than in 2021, due to no longer having an influx of federal pandemic funds.

Ehlers feels Montpelier officials have been prioritizing money by accepting leachate that the city's plant can't treat for PFAS. The criticism mirrored past critiques of officials in Coventry — where the town's budget is supported almost entirely by payments from Casella.

"Montpelier really should be saying, 'We don't want it at all,'" he said. "But Montpelier doesn't suffer the consequences. They get

the money, and those of us downstream get the problem."

He's right that the leachate goes downstream. But it's raising concerns in the capital too. In October 2021, a half-dozen Montpelier residents showed up to a public hearing in Newport — more than an hour north — to speak against the leachate being treated in their city, records show.

A few weeks later, in a public comment on Casella's permit, the Montpelier City Council described resident opposition and said the municipal plant will no longer accept leachate by July 1 this year if it contains PFAS at levels that exceed the state's PFAS drinking water standard. In effect: If Casella doesn't start treating leachate for PFAS before that date, the city will stop accepting the waste.

Nicolai, the Casella engineer, said he plans to meet with councilors before July and is "cautiously optimistic" they will be pleased with Casella's progress, even if the company can't meet the deadline. But he isn't sure what will happen.

"Ultimately, it is their choice whether or not they would like to continue to receive leachate," he said.

Regulatory whack-a-mole

There are more than 9,000 identified types of PFAS, but Vermont regulates only five.

Several types of PFAS have been found in several spots in the Win-

ooski River, according to state testing in 2021. The five types regulated by Vermont were found at lower concentrations than the state's limits for drinking water.

But some unregulated PFAS have been found at alarming levels, said Marguerite Adelman, coordinator of the Vermont PFAS/Military Poisons Coalition, a project of the Women's International League for Peace and Freedom.

Adelman, a Winooski resident like Ehlers, points to Vermont's selective regulatory system as one reason that the state should ban all PFAS. She compared the current system of regulating each individual substance to a game of whack-a-mole.

"Every time you outlaw one or one gets criticized, (the manufacturer) just switches the molecules around a little bit and they are good to go," Adelman said.

At minimum, she said legislators should amend Act 21, the law regulating PFAS in drinking and surface waters, to allow for no PFOA or PFOS, the most widely used and studied types of PFAS.

Adelman's rationale is based on an update made last June to a federal Environmental Protection Agency lifetime drinking water health advisory. The advisory set a limit that is 3,000 times more stringent than the previous one. The concentrations involved are so small that certified lab technology cannot

measure them, Adelman said.

This means that even if current PFAS drinking water testing technology registers no amount of the two compounds, there is still a chance concentrations may be above the level at which federal officials have deemed people would experience adverse health effects after a lifetime of exposure, which is considered 70 years of drinking the water.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation website currently cites the older federal health advisory from 2016. The state's regulatory standards will remain in place while officials work to understand how the updated advisory could change Vermont's policies, said Stephanie Brackin, a spokesperson for the Agency of Natural Resources, which oversees the department.

The federal government last December also came out with a suite of recommended best practices for states dealing with PFAS discharges, as well as recommendations for more precise monitoring.

For every chemical found in the river, Ehlers finds a further social and economic injustice done to Winooski's public waterway and its recreation potential for residents.

"The root of the problem," he said, "is using our river as sewer pipes and Lake Champlain as a cesspool."

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