

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

A community supported newspaper

Vol. 29, No. 4

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

\$1



**NAMES LOST IN VERMONT**  
Genealogist Michael Dwyer shares his research into the Blackbird family of Brandon.

PG. 2



**'MORNING, MORNINGSIDE!**  
Gourmet Provence in Brandon has been reborn as Morningside Bakery. Matt & Carrie Lewis have changed more than the name.

PG. 3

**THE STATE OF EDUCATION**  
Education finance has caused great concern throughout the state.

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**LEGISLATIVE UPDATE**  
State Rep. Butch Shaw of Pittsford/Proctor brings his constituents up to date on his work in Montpelier.

PG. 8



**WHAT'S YOUR GUESS?**  
See whether you were able to guess last week's street in "Can you guess the street?" and try your best on this week's photo.

PG. 15



## Brandon SB reverses on K-9, gets pushback on cop EVs

BY STEVEN JUPITER

**BRANDON**—The Brandon Selectboard convened for its regular meeting on Monday evening, much of which was taken up by continued, active debate over electric vehicles for Brandon's police fleet, the potential hiring of an additional police officer, and the Board's decision to eliminate the Brandon Police Department's K-9 unit.

During the public-comment segment of the meeting, the Board received significant pushback against the proposal to purchase two electric police cruisers. Attendees once again criticized the cost, maintenance, and environmental impact of the vehicles.

Though electric vehicles may normally be more expensive than comparable gas-powered cruisers, the town has received grants and other incentives that would bring the cost slightly below gas cars, said Brandon Town Manager Seth Hopkins. Nonetheless, several attendees remained unconvinced that

(See *Brandon SB*, Page 14)



## Shiny and new

**DENNIS MARDEN, PRESIDENT** of the Friends of the Town Hall (FOTH), shows off the Brandon Town Hall's new floor. Installed over the last month, the floor is a fitting cap to Marden's tenure at the head of FOTH. Under FOTH and the Brandon Rec Department's joint stewardship, the Town Hall has become central to Brandon's cultural life, hosting concerts, films, auctions, Town Meeting, and many other events. Read more about the project on page 8.

Photo by Steven Jupiter

## 'The Art of Life': Brandon's Robert Black lets the world see through his eyes at the Chaffee in Rutland

BY STEVEN JUPITER

**RUTLAND**—All art is, on some level, an outward expression of an artist's inner world—how that artist sees, feels, and thinks. The artist takes in their environment, processes it, and presents it to the public, with the hope that it will resonate and cause people to see the world even just a little bit differently.

Robert Black's new show at the Chaffee in Rutland—"The Art of Life"—is precisely such a window into a restless mind. Constantly looking, seeing, perceiving, Black has filled the first-floor gallery with photos, collages, drawings, books, and even bricks, all with seemingly one goal: to get viewers to stop and consider the world around them.

"I don't pretend to be an artist," said Black. "I'm a guy who sees the world."

Now, Black is indeed an artist, as the work in the show confirms. He may examine the world, but he expresses his findings with great charm. The photocollages in the show, for example, display a keen aesthetic. They may examine the confluence of the manmade and natural worlds, with architectural and even spiritual elements juxtaposed with botanical imagery, but they also work on a purely visual level.

A trained and still-practicing architect, Black has long been preoccupied with the clash of humans and nature.

"My story is man vs. nature," he said. "How do they come together? There really isn't a separation."

An entire wall in the gallery is given to photographs of bricks, (See *Robert Black*, Page 11)

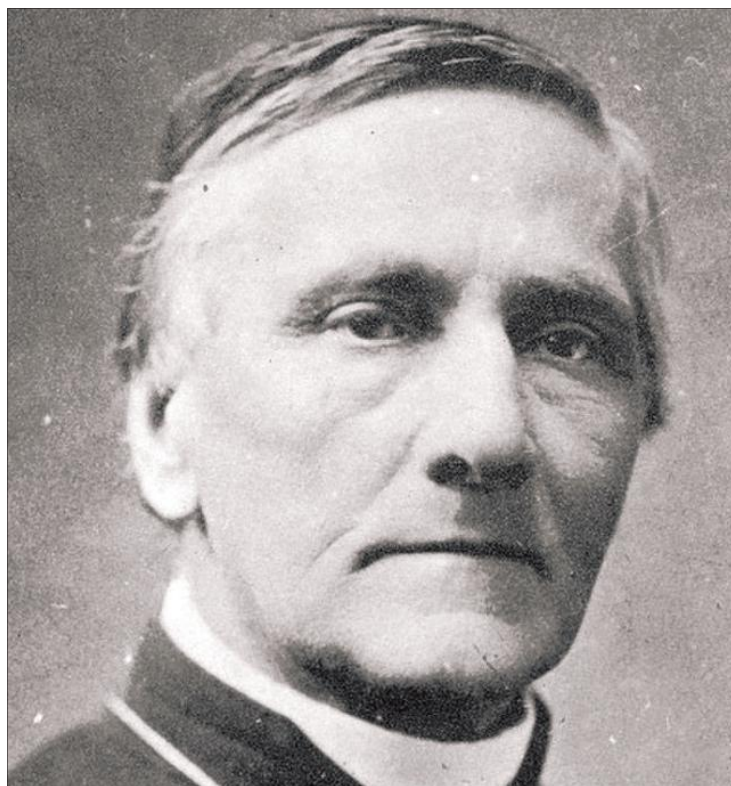


**A WALL OF photos of walls.** More specifically, a wall of photos of bricks as assembled into walls. The use of brick is common to cultures all over the world and, for Black, the brick represents humans turning the chaotic natural world into something ordered.

# Names lost in Vermont, Part 16: Blackbird/Blackburn and Bashaw

BY MICHAEL F. DWYER

Elucidating one set of “Lost Names” puzzles always opens a window to a new unexplored family. The first part of this article could be titled “A Tale of Two Blackbirds.” Francis Blackbird was married in Brandon on June 18, 1842 to Vermont-born Eliza Field, their wedding officiated by Barzillai Davenport, Justice of the Peace. François Létourneau was born in Saint-Hyacinthe, Québec on June 5, 1810, son of Antoine Létourneau and Marie Louise Chagnon. Étourneau is the French word for starling, and with l’ affixed to the word, it became a nickname. We have not yet fully addressed why a French name would be translated. “Frank” Blackbird assuredly would have spoken English with a heavy accent. His changed surname name would not have concealed his identity. Perhaps, as we contrast him with other members of his family who settled in Brandon, he deliberately left French Catholicism behind, never to return to the faith of his cradle. In his embrace of a new language and culture, was he reacting to xenophobia? His two surviving daughters married



**BISHOP LOUIS DE Goesbriand (1816-1899), served as Vermont's first Roman Catholic bishop from 1853 until his death. He made visits to the Bachan home in Brandon.** Photo provided.

Yankee Protestants: Theros Howard and Frederic Moore. At the time of his death, from liver disease, on December 30, 1860, age 50, Frank's name had morphed into WASPy-sounding Franklin

Blackburn. A sturdy gravestone endures today in Pine Hill Cemetery, speaking volumes that this family chose not to be buried in Brandon's Catholic cemetery.

Just before the beginning of the Civil War, Vermont represented 44.3 per cent of the French-Canadian population of New England. This statistic fueled an already smoldering nativist backlash. Vermont poet and author Rowland Robinson (1833–1900), consistent with his Quaker roots, made his home, Rokeby, a stopping point on the Underground Railroad. While sympathetic to the plight of slaves, Robinson thundered against French-Canadians immigrants:

...swarms of Canadian laborers came flocking over the border in gangs of two or three, baggy-breeched and moccasined inhabitants, embarked in rude carts drawn by shaggy Canadian ponies... they have become the most numerous of Vermont's foreign population... They were an abominable crew of vagabonds, robust lazy men and boys, slatternly women with litters of filthy brats, and all as detestable as they were uninteresting... The character of these

people is not such as to inspire hope for the future of Vermont, if they should become the most numerous of the population.

This alarmist view may have diminished with time, as many Vermont French-Canadian families later moved to southern New England for jobs in the mills. Nonetheless, it still persisted as a strain in Vermont's eugenics movement in the early twentieth century.

Frank Létourneau/Blackbird (1810–1860) had joined an already burgeoning French-Canadian community in Brandon, with many ties between and among families. One sister, Louise Létourneau, wife of Charles Touchette, was the mother of Angeline Shortsleeve [See Names Lost, Part 15]. Another sister, Julie Létourneau, had married Francois Xavier Bachand at St. Charles-sur-Richelieu on 24 January 1832. In Brandon by 1840, the Bachand/ later Bashaw family remained staunchly Catholic. With no resident Catholic priest in Brandon, they brought their daughter Delphine, three weeks old, for baptism in their native church of St. Charles-sur-Richelieu, Québec, a

(See Names lost, Page 7)

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# Still ‘gourmet’ in all but name: Morningside Bakery reopens after revamp

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—After an all-hands-on-deck renovation this past month that brightened the space, “Gourmet Provence” has re-opened as Morningside Bakery. Owners Matt and Carrie Lewis still offer all that people loved about Gourmet Provence—the coffee, pastries,

sandwiches, and gourmet provisions—with the addition of wood-fired pizza (evenings from Thursday to Sunday), everything bagels (shipped in from New York), and gluten-free and vegan offerings from the local Friday Harvest Bakery. “We’re continuing to add new products,” said Carrie, who spent this past Sunday

*“It’s been fun getting to know people in town.”*

—Matt Lewis

greeting brides-to-be at the Rutland Regional Bridal Show at the Brandon Inn. Morningside can even provide dessert tables for weddings and other events.

If you stop by the bakery on one of the pizza nights, you’ll likely see Matt manning the wood-fired pizza oven, turn-

ing out crispy artisanal pizzas that have become a huge hit with folks beyond the Red Clover crowd next door. They can produce only a limited number of pizzas every night and they often sell out. Call ahead during the day to reserve a pizza that night. Gluten-free crust is (See *Morningside Bakery*, Page 9)



MATT AND CARRIE Lewis outside the newly renovated Morningside Bakery in downtown Brandon. Long a town fixture as “Gourmet Provence,” the Lewises have renovated the interior space and expanded the offerings to include artisanal wood-fired pizza.



CARRIE LEWIS SHOWS off some of Morningside’s desserts at the Rutland Regional Bridal Show, which was held at the Brandon Inn this past weekend.

Photos by Steven Jupiter



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4:30 p.m. - Restorative Yoga (60 minutes)

Brandon Yoga Center, 1340 Grove St., Brandon, VT 05733 brandonyogacenter@gmail.com

## Editorial

### Brandon SB sets things right

BY STEVEN JUPITER

In a representative democracy, the people elect officials to enact policies that reflect the people's will. The theory is that the decision-making process will be simpler if a smaller number of people formulate policies than if the entire population must vote on every decision.

But the system works only when the elected representatives heed their constituents. Representatives who replace the will of the people with their own views can be seen as betraying the trust placed in them by those who voted them in, often leading to resentment and anger.

We've seen this play out on the national stage, when the federal government enacts policies that make one or more groups feel as if they haven't been heard. And we've also seen this play out on the local level, here in our own community, when our elected Selectboard members make decisions that run counter to the community's general wishes.

The Brandon Selectboard's recent decision to eliminate the Brandon Police Department's K-9 unit, and now the reversal of that decision, is a powerful lesson in the dynamics of representative governance.

A single vote, that of Selectboard Chair Tracy Wyman, ultimately determined the fate of the K-9 program. And Mr. Wyman reversed his earlier votes to eliminate the program after having heard from members of the community who were unhappy with the Board's prior decision. Kudos to Mr. Wyman for recognizing that the Selectboard had denied the community something that it had largely expressed a desire to maintain. Whatever Mr. Wyman's reasons for his initial

votes against the program, he was able to put them aside and restore a program that many people in the community valued.

In a town as small as Brandon, where voters live side by side with their representatives, it's impossible that those representatives remain unaware of prevailing sentiments and important that the community feel that those sentiments have not been dismissed.

That said, our representatives always retain the right to vote according to their own beliefs and judgment. Board member Tim Guiles, for example, offered his principled reasons for remaining opposed to the program, despite the public backlash against its elimination. Mr. Guiles has in many other contexts expressed his concerns about the amount and type of policing in Brandon and his opposition to the K-9 program is consistent with the policies he's long espoused, policies that have won him re-election to the Board.

At the end of the day, the voters of Brandon will decide whether those who voted for the program (Mr. Wyman, Cecil Reniche-Smith, and Heather Nelson) and those who voted against it (Mr. Guiles and Brian Coolidge) should be rewarded or rebuked at the ballot box.

Along these lines, the Board voted to put to the public, as a non-binding advisory question on the March ballot, the issue of whether the town should hire another police officer in order to provide 24/7 on-duty coverage. The Board is seeking input directly from the community before it makes an official decision on the matter.

On the one hand, this is com-  
(See *Set things right*, Page 5)



### Why choose?

THIS UNUSUALLY PLUMAGED cardinal can't decide if it is a male or female.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

### Community Forums

## Brandon writes solar history for the solar eclipse on April 8th

A full solar eclipse has not occurred in Vermont since August 31, 1932. On April 8, 2024, the town of Brandon will find itself on the edge of the path of the eclipse as it passes across the country, from the Southwest

to the Northeast. According to NASA, an eclipse "happens when the Moon passes between the Sun and the Earth, casting a shadow on Earth that either fully or partially blocks the Sun's light in some areas."

How can Brandon play a role in this historic spectacle?

Brandon is a crossroads of north-south and east-west traffic, with Routes 7 and 73 converging in the center of town.  
(See *Solar eclipse*, Page 5)

## Waterfowl blinds must be removed

Waterfowl hunters who did not remove their hunting blinds from the waters of the state earlier must do so before February 15 on Lake Champlain or May 15 on inland waters according to a reminder from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department

State law requires removal of the blinds before these deadlines to protect natural areas and to prevent boating accidents after the ice melts.

"Removal of the blinds and any posts that may be below the surface of the ice is important because of the danger they present when boat-

ers are on the water in the spring," said State Game Warden Colonel Justin Stedman.

Stedman says wardens annually record names and addresses of blind owners and will follow up with inspections

## The REPORTER

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

Periodicals Postage Paid at Brandon, Vt. 05733

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# Set things right

(Continued from Page 4)

mendable: it's a serious question and the Board should absolutely seek guidance from the community. On the other hand, the Board already had guidance in the form of six citizen advisors on the Budget Committee, where the decision to eliminate the K-9 program was first made despite protestations from the advisors. By the end of the budget process, the advisors were openly expressing their frustration at feeling disregarded. One of those advisors, Neil Silins, went so far as to call the process "not honest."

One can't help feeling that the last few weeks of public recriminations could have been avoided if the Board had listened when the advisors conveyed to them that the community at large wished to retain the K-9 program.

As for the additional officer,

we'll see how the voters respond to the advisory question on the March ballot. It may turn out to be vindication for the Board members who oppose expanding the police department or vindication for the advisors whose advice went unheeded.

Regardless of that specific outcome, it's crucial for the Board to remember that its communal legitimacy rests in the voters' belief that their views, wishes, and desires are being taken into account in the decision-making process. And it's crucial for the Board to recognize that when the relationship between itself and the community has broken down over a particular issue, the Board may need to reverse course.

Even after several votes against the K-9 program, the Board did the right thing by reinstating it.

# Solar eclipse

(Continued from Page 4)

Brandon has long been a welcoming stop for travelers from all directions. Eclipse-chasers who travel from the south, heading north to see the full eclipse will travel through our town. Neighbors from nearby towns will visit, especially as there are town-wide celebrations planned for the week-end leading up to the Monday eclipse.

It may seem unrelated, but in 2021, Brandon was chosen as the new hometown of SolarFest, an organization dedicated to promoting the power of solar energy as an alternative to fossil fuels. As home to SolarFest, it's only fitting for Brandon to celebrate a once-in-a-century event where the sun disappears from view for roughly three minutes. A full

solar eclipse provides a golden opportunity to reflect on the essential role that sunlight plays in our lives.

As the town, the state, and the country gear up for a rich menu of events during the eclipse weekend, the Brandon Museum and The Bookstore are joining forces to host a "Brandon: Writing Solar History" project.

Starting on February 1, the Brandon Museum will host facilitated weekly gatherings where telling your story, or putting pen to paper, regarding local historic tales - past, present and future - will be the focal point of conversation. We are looking for people with stories, novice or seasoned storytellers, published authors, or people who just love to write. With your consent, the stories emerging from these gather-

## BRANDON REPORTER Guest Essay

# What does it mean to be fiscally responsible?

*This commentary is by Rep. Sara Coffey (D-Guilford), chair of Vermont's House Transportation Committee.*

What does it mean to be fiscally responsible? When it comes to Vermont transportation, it means being clear about where the rubber meets the road.

Like other states, in Vermont we pay for our transportation program using a mix of funding sources. Revenue comes from the gas and diesel tax, a portion of the motor vehicle purchase and use tax, revenue and fees associated with the use of the state's airports, and fees for driver's licenses and vehicle registrations.

In turn, these state transportation revenues unlock federal dollars to maintain and repair state and town roads and bridges, im-

prove Vermont's railways and airports, fund public transportation, provide municipal grants to address clean water and climate resiliency and create a 21st-century transportation system that's clean and affordable for everyone.

In most cases, for every two dollars the state invests, we can draw down eight dollars in federal matching-grant funds. Since entering office, Gov. Scott has touted his track record for not raising fees. On the face of it, that approach may appear to benefit Vermonters, but in fact it means that Vermont is losing out on opportunities to receive federal funding. This places an additional tax burden on Vermonters to make up the difference not collected in nominal fees.

Last February, the chief fiscal

officer from Gov. Scott's Agency of Transportation testified to the House Transportation Committee that our state transportation fund was on trend to be \$15 million short. In other words, we wouldn't have enough money to cover the projected budget or to "meet the match" — the amount Vermont must contribute to tap into those important federal funds.

Rather than provide a solution to address this financial gap, last winter the governor presented a transportation budget that had a \$10 million deficit. His solution was to fill the \$10 million gap using a transfer from our general fund, rather than cutting expenses or proposing a new source of revenue. When Vermonters are struggling to make ends meet, redirect-

(See *Fiscally responsible*, Page 18)

ings will be featured in The Reporter leading up to the April 8th eclipse. The idea of a small publication of shared stories is also being considered. Finally, at the solar event weekend, you will be invited to read snippets from your creations, or have another reader share your story. The goal of this project is to foster a shared community project and to preserve a moment in time.

No writing or storytelling experience is necessary to participate. For those who like to tell rather than write, we have audio recording, transcription and editing resources available. And for anyone who loves to assist in offering these "behind the scenes" tools, we welcome assistance in these areas. (Transportation to the event is available upon request - please contact Jennie Masterson at

802-779-5825.) For more information regarding "Writing Brandon's Solar History" project, please reach out to Dorothea Langevin at 802-458-1847.

Offered in collaboration by: The Brandon Museum, The Bookstore, and Dorothea Langevin (Facilitator)

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# Obituaries

## Sandra Lee Earle, 78, Wallingford

Sandra Lee Earle, age 78, passed peacefully, Monday, January 15, 2024, with family by her side.

Sandy was born in Mechanicville, NY on February 9, 1945. The daughter of Merrill & Lillian (Battease) Wetmore. She grew up in Brandon, where she received her early education and graduated from Otter Valley Union High School. On October 13, 1962, she married the love of her life, Joseph Rufus Earle, at St. Mary's Catholic Church in Brandon. They made their home for the first few years in Rutland and later moved to Wallingford in 1967. Sandy worked as the Activities Director for both Beverly Manor Nursing Home and later Eden Park Nursing Home, from which she retired following more than 30 years of service. She enjoyed cooking and travel, especially to the Amish farm lands



**SANDRA LEE EARLE**

in Pennsylvania and the Smoky Mountains of Tennessee. She loved family gatherings and taking her grandchildren on vacation.

Surviving is her husband, Joseph Earle of Wallingford; two sons, Terry J. Earle of Wallingford and Shannon M. Earle of Warwick,

RI; one daughter, Robin M. Fyles of St. Albans; and a sister, Joanne Raleigh of Brandon. 12 grandchildren, 1 great-grandson, and many nieces, nephews, & cousins also survive her. She was predeceased by her parents and her sister June.

A Mass of Christian Burial was celebrated on Friday, January 19, 2024, at 11 AM, at Our Lady of Good Help (St. Mary's Church) in Brandon. Rev. Maurice Moreau, pastor was the celebrant.

A private graveside committal service and burial followed the mass, in the family lot, at St. Mary's Cemetery.

Following the ceremony, the family received friends at Brandon American Legion Post #55 for a time of remembrance.

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



**VERMONT TAX COMMISSIONER Craig Bolio.**

Photo by Mike Dougherty/VTDigger

## Concern mounts in Montpelier about the newest changes to education finance

BY ETHAN WEINSTEIN/  
VTDIGGER

In a letter directed toward school boards and superintendents on Friday, two leaders of legislative tax committees warned of the “unintended consequences” of the state’s newest education finance law, which, they suggested, could have districts trying to spend “free money.”

These fears come as Montpelier’s education finance analysts predict education property tax increases will top 17%, driven by a predicted 12% increase in education spending.

Conversations around education finance — often lamented as one of Montpelier’s most complicated and least-understood policy sectors — have taken on an alarmed tenor as lawmakers and Gov. Phil Scott’s administration fear the latest changes to the system might be driving up education spending in unexpected ways.

Now, lawmakers must grapple with their most recent rejiggering of education tax law during a uniquely challenging budget season. Last year, the Legislature passed Act 127. Put simply, the law was meant to direct education money toward students who need it by providing schools with more money to educate students who are more expensive to teach. Ideally, that change in “pupil weighting” would create a more equitable funding structure.

As a result, wealthier, more urban districts with fewer English language learners saw their pupil weights decrease, which would require those districts to increase taxes to pass the same budget as the year before. To soften that change, Act 127 capped increases to the home-  
stead property tax rate at 5% for the next five years. (The cap does not consider the effects of the Common Level of Appraisal, (See Education finance, Page 9)

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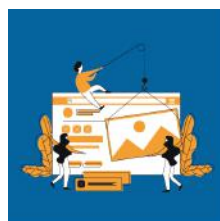
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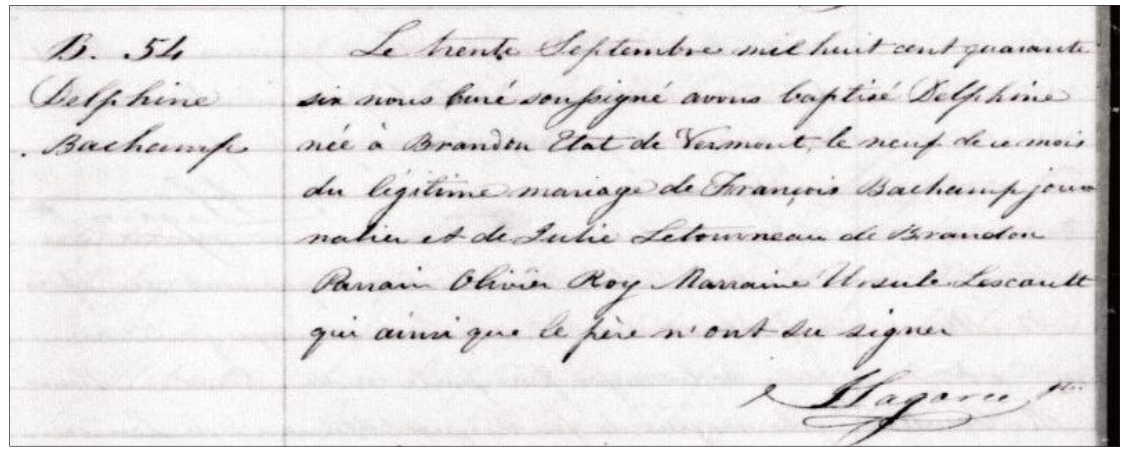
# Names lost

(Continued from Page 2)  
journey northward of almost 150 miles!

In Brandon's 1860 census, Francis Bashaw, age 50 [sic], wife Julia, age 57 [sic], and two children Alford, 11, and Austin, 5, lived in close proximity to the Shortsleeves, Cole, and Simes families, most likely all along present-day Maple Street, which was once known as Canada Street because of all the Canadian immigrants living there. Creating confusion in tracking families, Francois Xavier Bachand's son of the same name, F. X. Bachand (1833-1911), married Ellen Blackbird/Letourneau, his first cousin, and if that were not already thoroughly entangled, he was also known as Levi Bashaw in Brandon! As Francis Bashan, however, in Brandon's 1900 census, he headed a household which included his

Woman Dead at 98 years." In fact, her age was off by eight years—she was truly 90! From the census, we know she bore 11 children, only six of whom were living. The article continues to record the number of her progeny: 40 grandchildren, 105 great-grandchildren, and 10 great-great grandchildren. Oddly, neither she nor her husband has a surviving gravestone. Alluding to her marriage to F. X. Bachand, her obituary stated, "Mr. Bachand, who died nine years ago, often drove to Boston and back with freight, and Bishop Louis de Goesbriand, the first Roman Catholic bishop of Vermont, stopped at the home of the couple frequently when in Brandon."

Bishop De Goesbriand, born in France, served 46 years from 1853 to 1899, making his episcopate one of the longest in American Catholic history. Did he in-



**BAPTISMAL RECORD, FROM St. Charles-sur-Richelieu, for Delphine Bachamp. Translation: B[aptism] 54. 30 September 1846, we the undersigned [priest] baptized Delphine, born on Brandon on the ninth of this month of the legitimate marriage of Francis Bachamp, day laborer, and Julie Letourneau of Brandon. Godfather, Oliver Roy, godmother, Ursule Lescault, who with the father are not able to sign [the baptismal register].**

ramental record from St. Mary's Church reveals their true names: Leon Letourneau and Louisa Courtmanche! Peeling back one more layer, Leon's father Camille Letourneau was Julie Bachand's and Frank Blackbird's nephew. In Vermont records, Camille went by Campbell Blackbird. Six of his children, baptized at St. Mary's Church, always had their names written in the church register as Letourneau.

"Camil" Blackbird, shoemaker, unemployed for three months, appears for the last time in Brandon's 1880 census. Mirroring the demographic of French-Canadian migration out of Vermont to Massachusetts, Camille Blackbird, age 63, died from asthma in Deerfield, Massachusetts on February 14, 1892, but his gravestone in Calvary Cemetery in Greenfield reads "Letourneau." French-Canadian? American? Both!



**BLACKBURN GRAVESTONE IN Pine Hill Cemetery.**

Photo by Janet Emmons Pringle

MARRIAGE - GROOM.			
Name of Groom	Blackbird, Leander 2914		
Name of Bride	Shortsleeves, Louisa		
Residence of Groom	Brandon		
Date of Marriage	Apr. 25, 1876		
Color	Age in Years	No. of Marriage	Widowed Divorced
Occupation	Laborer		
Place of Birth	Spencer, Mass.		
Father's Name	Campbell Blackbird		
Birthplace			
Mother's Name	Bassor		
Birthplace			
Name Party Officiating	L. De Goesbriand - Cath. Bishop		
Town	Brandon per. Briggs Town Clerk.		

**VERMONT VITALS MARRIAGE card for Leander Blackbird and Louisa Shortsleeves, once again demonstrating the dual identities of the couple.**

aged, widowed mother, Julie, who claimed to be 90.

Julie (Létourneau) Bachand's long life merited an unusually detailed obituary in the Rutland Daily Herald, on March 13, 1905: "Mrs. Julie Bachand: Brandon

deed make stops at the Bachand's home? According to the Brandon town record, on April 25, 1876 Bishop De Goesbriand solemnized the marriage of Leander Blackbird and Louisa Shortsleeves. The corresponding sac-

## Spotlight On Business NO. 28 PARK



BRANDON AREA  
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of Commerce  
Brandon.org for more info

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Expectations!



### No. 28 Park

This historic 4 bedroom, federal-style colonial originally built in 1823 is located in Downtown Brandon, Vermont. Fully renovated from top to bottom in 2020 it sits on an acre of land. It abuts the Neshobe River, and is steps away from shops, restaurants, breweries, bakery, galleries

and shopping making it the ideal vacation location. Fully experience the beauty of Vermont with this exquisite vacation rental all year long. Visit [www.no28park.com](http://www.no28park.com) for more info.

Owner and Developer,  
Lance LaFave

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# As Brandon Town Hall spruces up with new floor, Friends Of Town Hall getting ready to wind down

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—Built in 1861, the Brandon Town Hall has had its ups and downs—the town once even considered tearing it down. But after a major renovation years ago, it's become a center point for Brandon's cultural life. Shows, movies, events, even disc golf all take place in its main hall. And as a result, the floor (already a replacement for the 1861 original) had taken quite a beating and was worn too thin to be refinished yet again.

Friends of Town Hall (FOTH), under its longtime president Dennis Marden, worked hard for years to raise the funds to replace the battered wood. Finally, the group's labor has borne fruit: a beautiful new floor has been installed and is ready for public use.

"We started in early December and finished in mid-January," said Marden, as he proudly showed off the gleaming new boards. "There are still a few things left to do, but we're going to be open for Brandon Idol this weekend."

The project entailed not only pulling up all the existing wood, but also shoveling out a dump-truck's worth of sand from between the underlying joists before the new subfloor and hardwood could be installed. The sand had been placed there as a low-tech way to help muffle

sound back in the day.

Marden collected some of the old materials—square nails and wood—and will make mementos with them to be sold to raise funds for the building. The project cost a total of \$54k, of which FOTH contributed \$18k and the town contributed \$18k. The remaining \$18k came from a Cultural Facilities Grant sponsored by the Vermont Arts Council.

Brandon Deputy Town Manager and Rec Department Director Bill Moore praised FOTH.

"We were happy to partner with them to get this done," he said.

Marden has been an indefatigable advocate for the building, having been president of the FOTH for the last 16 years. He's helped turn it into the locus of local culture it currently is. But at 80, he's ready to pass the baton. And now that the floor has been finished and the town has earmarked funds for repair of the slate roof, it's a perfect time to end his tenure on a high note.

The Town Hall will now be operated completely by the town, said Marden. Until now, the Rec Department managed the building in the winter and the FOTH in the warmer months. But FOTH will wind down its operations when Marden leaves and turn the building over to the town's stewardship.

The town is eager to keep the



**WHEN THE EXISTING floorboards were pulled up, the spaces between the joists were found to be filled with sand, a decidedly low-tech method to muffle sound when that floor was installed. All the sand had to be shoveled out, filling an entire dump truck, before the new subfloor could be installed.**

Photo by Dennis Marden

floor looking great: the upholstered chairs that are used during shows have been cleaned and their legs capped with protective felt to keep from scuffing the new wood.

A new concession stand will

also be built by local contractor Tim Shields to replace the make-shift counter that had occupied a corner of the main hall.

Though Marden says nothing of interest was discovered during this renovation, a collection

of antique and vintage objects discovered during the building's earlier reno can be seen in the display case in the basement lobby, just outside the Brandon Library's current location.

## A new Senate bill contemplates a 'hybrid requirement' for public meetings

BY BABETTE STOLK AND KRISTEN FOUNTAIN/VTDIGGER

MONTPELIER — A discussion about whether online-only public meetings should continue is heating up under the Golden Dome, as a pandemic-era state policy that allowed them will expire this summer.

Both the House and Senate government operations committees have discussed bills that would impact the landscape of public meetings. Specifically, the proposals consider whether public bodies should be allowed to continue to meet in an entirely digital milieu, as many came to do because of the social distancing required by the Covid-19 pandemic, and whether a state commission tasked with studying the impacts of historical discrimination should be able to limit public access because of safety concerns.

In the Senate, the current

draft of S.55 would require public bodies to provide both an option for online meeting participation and an in-person physical meeting location.

The latest draft, which the Senate Committee on Government Operations discussed on Thursday, is a response to push-back from the Vermont Secretary of State's office to an earlier version of the bill that would have allowed public bodies to jettison physical meeting locations going forward.

The latest version of the bill "is essentially saying that for these bodies you have to have some sort of electronic access in addition to your physical meeting," said Tucker Anderson, a lawyer with the Vermont Office of Legislative Counsel.

The draft cites exceptions to this hybrid requirement during a state of emergency or "local incident."

It also exempts any public body that is advisory in nature.

A public body is considered advisory if it "does not have supervision, control or jurisdiction over legislative, quasi-judicial, tax, or budgetary matters."

One example of the latter discussed were cemetery commissions. (The bill also includes a requirement that the advisory body make "reasonable accommodation" for either physical or virtual participation for a member of the public upon request.)

"Advisory bodies could meet fully remotely or fully in person or hybrid. It would be up to them to decide," said Sen. Ruth Hardy, D-Addison. "And they could also do some meetings fully remote and some meetings fully in person. That would be up to them, as long as they warn it correctly."

States of emergency are well defined because they're declared by the governor. But lawmakers discussed who

would determine when the regular meeting location is in an area "affected by a hazard or local incident" and how.

"It can't just be, like, oh well, the weather's not too great, we're going to hold a remote-only meeting or an in-person only meeting, or whatever. There needs to be guardrails," Hardy said.

She pointed to powerful windstorms earlier this month that left thousands of homes and businesses in the dark.

"There are parts of the state that were without power or internet for days and we want public bodies to continue to meet, and they can do it old school," she said.

In testimony before the House Judiciary Committee on Jan. 11, Deputy Secretary of State Lauren Hibbert had expressed her office's opposition to remote-only meetings — such as those that are accessible only by phone — because

of the challenges associated with following whose speaking and the "tenor and tone" of the debate.

But on Friday, Ted Brady, the executive director of the Vermont League of Cities and Towns, urged lawmakers in testimony to continue to allow fully remote meetings under all circumstances, arguing they are "easier to run, more accessible to the most people and less complicated" than hybrid remote and in-person options.

The draft bill asks the Secretary of State, the Vermont League of Cities and Towns and the Vermont School Boards Association to adopt and publish "best practice guidelines" for electronic, hybrid and in-person meetings of public bodies.

To help offset the cost of acquiring the necessary equipment and training to "host effective electronic and hybrid (See Hybrid requirement, Page 23)





# Legislative Report

BY BUTCH SHAW

## Steps taken to update the aging State House, and mandatory staff training for discrimination prevention and bias awareness

After three weeks into the 2024 legislative session, the Vermont House of Representatives is settling into the daily routine of committee meetings, House and Senate floor meetings, and other required duties. The house has received annual mandatory training on the recognition and prevention of sexual harassment, the prevention of implicit bias in the workplace, and discrimination awareness and prevention.

The chairs and vice chairs of committees had been instructed on managing tricky situations and unwanted bystander intervention in our respective committee rooms. This type of training may seem a little over the top to some people but with the very diverse subject matters each committee faces, we deal with sensitive issues that can bring out the best or worst in very passionate witnesses, which may create an uncomfortable situation that takes careful and skillful leadership to keep control of committee decorum.

Over the past years of my legislative career, I have spoken of the great privilege the voters of my districts have afforded me to be able to work for you in our iconic Vermont State House. The building has been proclaimed “as the oldest active legislative building in the United States that has been preserved to its original luster.” Members of the General Assembly work in a living museum visited by thousands of people annually from all over the world. This is a point of immense pride for me personally, as I get to show off the beauty of the building to our visitors.

I remind you of this history because the recent pandemic has pointed out the deficiencies in the building as it relates to workplace safety and security, public accommodations, and access. During COVID, minor interior changes were made to allow the legislature to meet in a relative safe and healthy environment. However, with these changes public access is now limited and there are no longer large meeting spaces available

in the building for legislative meetings. In the FY24 Capital Bill, the legislature was directed to look at the future use of the State House. The legislature directed the Joint Legislative Management Committee, of which I am a member, to investigate the needs of the legislature and how they relate to the 1857 statehouse.

After conferring with members, staff, and others, JLMC engaged an architect to assist us in our work. I should interject here the last major renovation of the State House was accomplished in the mid-1980s, so the needs of a modern legislature were of significant importance to create a functioning space without changing the structure of the historic 1857 architecture. After extensive meetings in the off session, and collaborating closely with our chosen architectural firm, four options have been chosen to accommodate our needs. As you may expect the chosen renovations will prove extremely expensive: upwards of \$38 million.

The committee asked the consultants to design interlocking concepts that could be accomplished in phases over an extended period. JLMC has chosen to focus on safety, security, public access, and accommodation, including bathrooms and handicap facilities. We have also learned that several areas of the State House do not have proper ventilation, fire suppression systems, and the needed handicap access throughout our building. To alleviate these basic life-support systems’ deficiencies and bring the building up to today’s modern codes, JLMC has advised the legislature to start the process of a \$11.1 million project to be accomplished over a three-year time frame. We are now in the process of engaging the public by asking for your comments through public hearings on how we should move forward to bring the famous historic structure into the 21st century.

Questions, comments or conversation? I can be contacted

by e-mail at [bshaw@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:bshaw@leg.state.vt.us), by phone at 802-483-2398 or by mail at PO Box 197, Pittsford, Vermont 05763. I am always available to have a conversation concerning our legislative district and your Vermont State government.

*Representative Butch Shaw  
Rutland-8*

*Pittsford-Proctor*

*Vice Chair House Committee  
on Transportation*

*Joint Legislative Management Committee*

*Legislative Advisory Committee on the State House*

## Education finance

(Continued from Page 6) which can further increase taxes.) Through the new law, however, districts can increase per pupil spending up to 10% this year without triggering any further state-level review, regardless of Act 127’s effect on their pupil weights.

If a district’s per-pupil spending increases by 10% or more, a district must submit its budget to the state for a tax-rate review led by the Agency of Education. The review would decide whether the increase in spending is “beyond the school district’s control or for other good cause.”

If the budget is deemed to contain “excessive increases in per pupil education spending that are within the school district’s control and are not supported by good cause,” the district’s property taxes would not be capped.

With the cap in mind, lawmakers and the Scott administration think school districts may be packing extra spending into their budgets during a rare time when those increases won’t necessarily be directly felt by all of their taxpayers. Current predictions indicate a “majority” of districts will hit the 5% cap.

The concern, then, is that districts may increase spending in the next five years to utilize the cap. One idea thrown around is that because Vermont’s schools have hundreds of millions of dollars in deferred maintenance,

## Morningside Bakery

(Continued from Page 3) available as well.

“It’s been fun getting to know people in town,” said Matt. “It’s been a lot of work, but it’s also been really gratifying. I didn’t expect to make so many new connections.”

“We’ve been pleasantly surprised by the community’s positivity,” adds Carrie. “We’ve

gotten really good feedback. People are really happy with the quality of what we’re offering.”

So, whether you’re looking for a quick bite, a bottle of wine (they have an entire room with some less-common styles and varieties), a unique pizza, or something sweet and indulgent, stop by Morningside.

# S — BSCRIBE

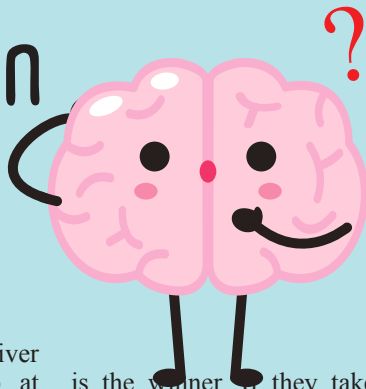
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## WE NEED U

# Brandon Brain Buster



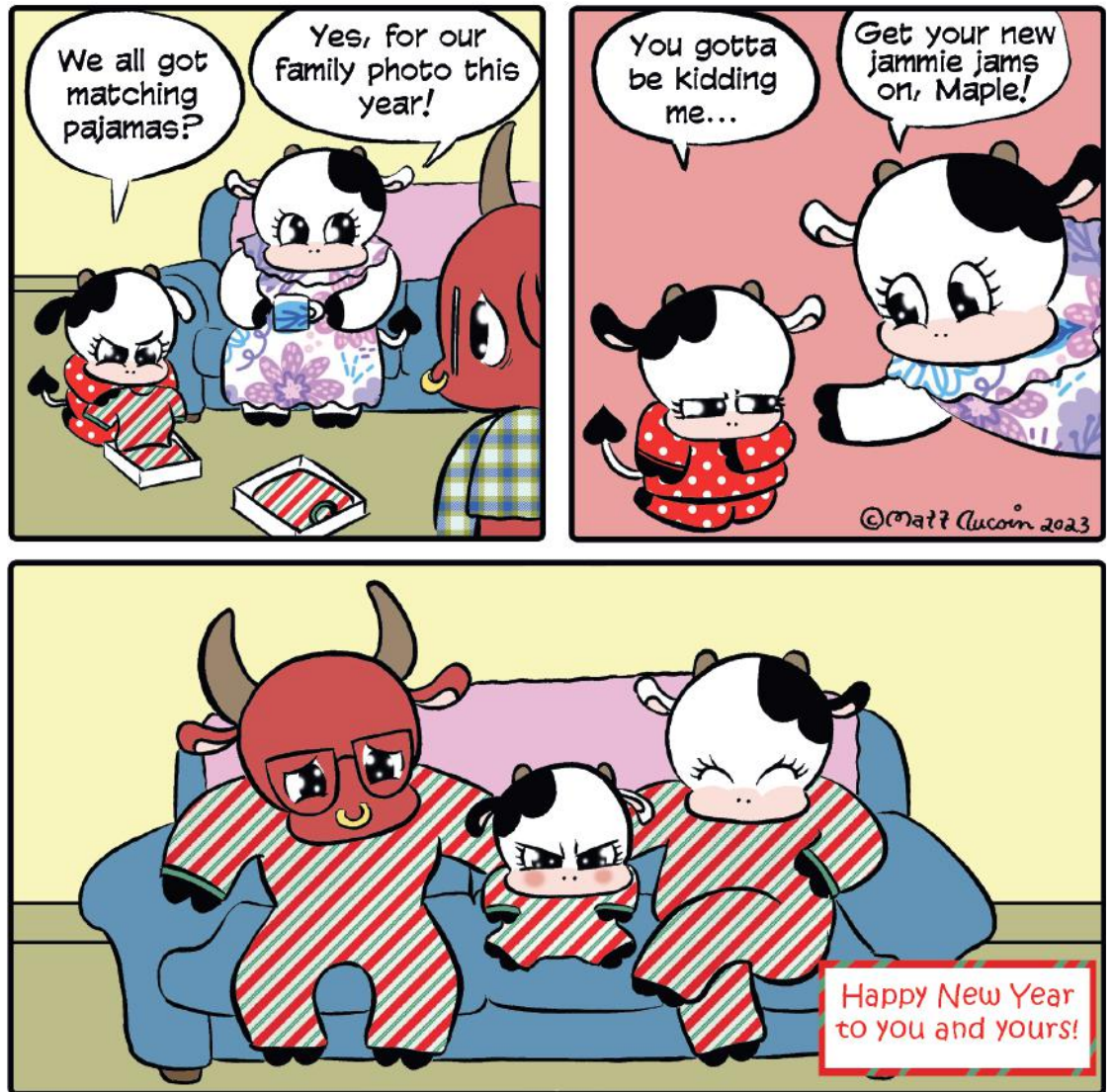
Guinevere and Gulliver belong to a dart club at their local pub. Guinevere is an excellent player, hitting the bullseye 80% of the time. Gulliver is much less accurate, hitting the bullseye only 10% of the time. Somehow, they both make it to the finals of a club tournament and must compete against each other, all other competitors having been eliminated. According to the rules of the tournament, the two players will throw until one or both of them hit bullseyes. Whoever gets a bullseye in fewer attempts

is the winner. If they take the same number of throws to land bullseyes, no one wins and the tournament is a draw. Before the tournament begins, observers are allowed to bet on which player will win and how many attempts it will take. Which of the following is a better bet?

- A) Guinevere wins on her 3rd attempt
- B) Gulliver wins on his 2nd attempt

Answer on pg. 21

# MAPLE the COW™ by Matt Aucoin



# Robert Black

(Continued from Page 1) with some of the actual articles on display as well. For most people, a brick is an object so mundane as to be invisible. For Black, it becomes

a symbol of humans' ability to bend the natural world to their will. A card next to these photos reads:

"I am inspired by the symbolism of a single brick in symbiosis with



THESE STONES AND bricks on display in the show illuminate the transformation of the natural (stone) into the manmade (brick) when they are essentially the same material.



THE SWIRLING PATTERNS on the surface of water recall images of galaxies and outer space. Black focuses on details in order to see the bigger picture of life.

thousands of others. The clay used to make bricks is a common material—found all over the world and was used by diverse cultures across history.”

Black writes in his artist statement, “the world unfolds as a rich

tapestry of images dancing in light and shadow, texture and form. I aspire to share this ‘earthly cosmos’ through my photographs and collages.”

And to put this philosophy into (See Robert Black, Page 20)

# Calendar of events

## January

### Mondays

#### Brandon Rec offers Aikido classes

Come to Brandon Town Hall for Youth classes at 5 p.m., and adult classes at 6 p.m. Beginners and spectators welcome. Visit [www.aikidovermont.org](http://www.aikidovermont.org) for more information, including fees.

### 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](mailto:allie@rcpcc.org).



griffiths@rcpcc.org with your child's name, age, and contact information for your family.

#### Friends Zone

The Friends Zone will be initially open 3 hours per week at the Brandon United Methodist Church on Tuesdays from 12-3 p.m. at 1 Franklin Street, Brandon. Socialize with old friends, make new ones. Sip some soup while you sip a drink. Be puzzled for a bit, sorting out a puzzle, or hold an Ace in the hole until the right moment to play it. If so inclined, you can bring to the table a struggle of your own to work on or your thoughts on developing the Friends Zone or improving our lives.

The door is open. Our minds are open. Our hearts are open.

All are welcome in.

For more information contact pastors Reverend John Hardman-Zimmerman ([hzfm@hotmail.com](mailto:hzfm@hotmail.com) or (802) 282-7532) or Vicki Disorda ([vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com](mailto:vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com) or (802) 345-4125).

#### Pins & Needles Craft Club at the Brandon Free Public Library

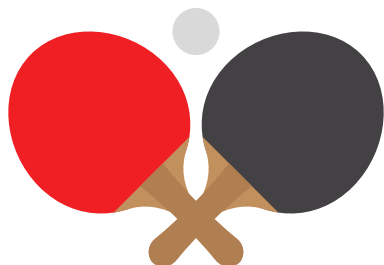
Drop in from 5:30–7:00 p.m., and bring your projects to work on.

### 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, visit our club's website at [www.gmttc.com](http://www.gmttc.com).

#### 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 reap 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 you 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.



#### Corn Hole at the Godnick Adult Center

By request, we will have drop-in cornhole in the Rec Hall on Fridays from 2–4 p.m.

Play with whomever shows up each time or just practice your cornhole skills!

### Saturdays

#### Bingo at the Brandon Senior Center

First Saturday of each month from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. Bring lunch, and the Center will provide beverages, desserts, and a good time. A great way to pass a Saturday afternoon. Please direct any questions to Kathy Mathis at 247-3121.

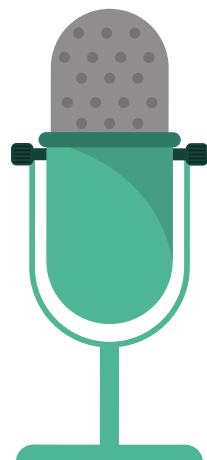
**Storytime at the Brandon Free Public Library**  
Join us every Saturday at 10:30 a.m. for picture book storytime. All ages welcome.

### 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)

"The study of art is the most important study a garden designer can pursue."



## Brandon Town Hall

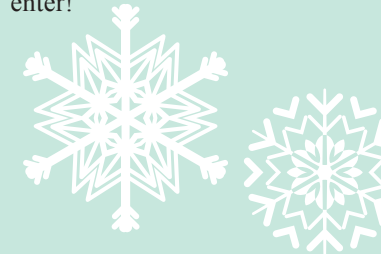
**Brandon Idol** begins Jan 26th, a \$1,000 first prize! Take your music to the next level in this competition for singers over 18 on each month!

**Kennedy Park and End User Bands** hit the stage with originals in a first local show in a hot minute, with a special performance!

**Loud and Proud Sundays, 1-3** Jeff Ladd oversees future musical form bands!

**Friday Night at the Movies**—popular movies will be on the big screen at the OV, and is also a local groups in our community! The 9th grade class at OV, and is also a same day over and over again! Ad

**Kids Festival!** Sat Feb 10th, 11am–1pm and families! EmmaJeanne Hoops by Marek Heitmann and a Cake G



## Friday 26th

The Underground - Listening Room, Reed Foehl

Advance: \$14 // Day of show: \$17

Doors: 7:00 // Show: 7:30

BYOB

Reed Foehl: Born in a small country town in New England and into a musical family, Grammy-nominated songwriter Reed Foehl writes stories of the human condition with a lyric and voice that push boundaries while paying homage to tradition. Dusty and patient, his music is genuine Folk/Americana.

Foehl released his sixth studio album – "Wild Wild Love" – in May 2022 which was recorded with The Band of Heathens in Austin, TX.

"From traditional folk ballads to barroom sing-alongs, this tunesmith's emotional, deeply personal lyrics and indelibly infectious choruses... leave the listener with an overriding sense of optimism" (Glide Magazine) — something we could all use a little more of these days.

He was nominated for a Grammy Award for his song "Fly" co-written with Brent Cobb which was covered by country legend Lee Ann Womack.

Foehl now resides in the Green Mountains of Vermont and continues to tour across the globe.

Visit <https://www.reedfoehlmusic.com> for more info.

## Saturday 27th

Birds of Vermont Museum January Bird Monitoring Walk

Join our monthly monitoring walk to record birds at the Museum's trails, forest, and meadow. Learn something new, share what you know, or both!

All birders —current, experienced, newbie and would-be— welcome! Most fun for adults, older children.

Please bring your own binoculars and dress for the weather. We recommend bringing tick repellent (seasonally) and a water bottle.

Max: 12 people

Free, suggested donation \$10

Register here of call 802 434-2167.

Outdoors

If the walk fills, we'll have a waitlist; we also offer these bird monitoring walks the last Saturday of every month.

From 8:00–9:00 a.m. at the Birds of Vermont Museum, 900 Sherman Hollow Road, Huntington.

Next Stage Arts Project Workshop: Middle Eastern and Eastern Mediterranean Percussion— Styles and Techniques

A seminar that will take its audience on a journey through the sounds and rhythms of the percussion instruments used in the Middle East and Eastern

Mediterranean regions.

World-recognized percussionist George Lennis will go over the origins, styles and techniques of those instruments by demonstrating and performing: riq (Arabic tambourine), darbuka (goblet shape drum), daire (frame drum with zills) and bendir (frame drum). George is a Cooperman endorser and will be presenting this workshop on Cooperman made drums. Participants are encouraged to bring their own drums, or use one of the drums provided by Cooperman for the duration of the workshop.

This workshop will be followed by a Jazz performance in the evening at the Next Stage theater. George Lennis's quintet will perform the music from his latest album "Between Two Worlds". The name of his album was inspired by the 15th century Turkish mystic Hacı Bayram Veli's poem "Between Two Worlds" and depicts George's journey as an immigrant originally from Nicosia, Cyprus who eventually moved to the U.S. The music showcases George's bi-musicality, blending Jazz and Middle Eastern music in a tasteful and respectful manner to both of these rich musical traditions. Lennis's quintet features a stellar group of musicians including the wonderful Turkish vocalist, Heiraza AKA Burcu Gülec, Swedish born bassist Bruno Råberg, American trumpeter Emiel De Jaegher, and Turkish piano, oud, and ney player Mehmet Ali Sanlıkol.

From 3:00–5:00 p.m. at Next Stage Arts Project, 15 Kimball Hill, Putney.

Artist Reception with Dodji Koudakpo; "Historic Figures & Nature" Exhibition

VTSU Castleton Bank Gallery presents Artist Dodji Koudakpo at the opening reception for his Exhibition "Historic Figures & Nature". Stop in for light refreshments and to meet the artist.

Join us for the Artist Reception: January from 5:30–7:30 p.m.

Dodji grew up in Togo where he first fell in love with art. Dodji embodies the spirit of artistic resilience. From childhood, he

drew or painted on any surface he could find, his talent illuminating even the humblest corners. He uses everyday experiences, people, places, and things as a basis for his art. Dodji adopted a unique yet flexible approach to art by tapping into the moment and letting the artwork come to him as opposed to chasing the artwork. While in the United



States, his passion for oil painting persisted. He honed his craft with unwavering dedication, winning prestigious awards and acclaim. A graduate of Syracuse University, he now navigates computer technology professionally. Despite his demanding career, he carves out time to paint, infusing his art with the rich tapestry of his life's journey, bridging continents and cultures with every brushstroke.

Artist Quote: "I never force my art; I let it come to me. I treat every artwork as a project of its own, as a structure, and build it with the best technique I feel appropriate for it at that moment, the best way I can."

Website: <https://www.djallstarart.com>

Instagram: @DJAllstar\_Art

Youtube Channel: @ArtbyDodji

Free event

## Goings on around town

Chaffee Art Center Kids Pour Painting Balloon Technique Class

POUR PAINTING BALLOON TECHNIQUE Saturday, January 27th 11am-12:30pm  
Instructor: Lorrie Amerio Manieri

Saturday, January 27th

11am-12:30pm

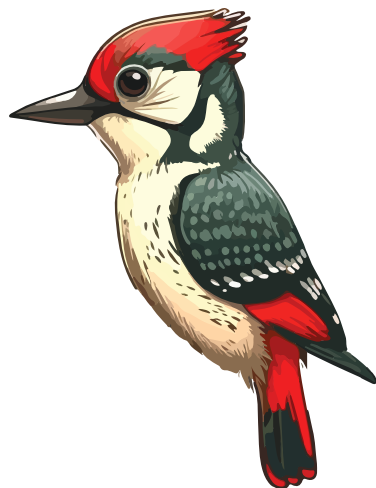
Instructor: Lorrie Amerio Manieri

\$40 per person includes all supplies

Min: 5, Max: 12

Learn the pour painting "balloon" technique. Follow along with an instructor and leave with a finished painting.

Must Pre-register



## "Constellations" at Northern Stage

Jan 24 at 7:30 p.m.–Feb 11 at 5:00 p.m.

Constellations is a play that reveals the vast universe of possibilities in our lives.

What if you'd made a different choice? What if you'd said the thing that popped into your head just after you walked away? Nick Payne's Olivier Award-winning modern romance Constellations follows Roland, a beekeeper, and Marianne, a scientist, from their first meeting through a multitude of possible futures. From marriage to heartbreak, through sickness and health, and back again, Constellations is a play that reveals the vast universe of possibilities in our lives.

### Constellations



Northern Stage  
74 Gates Street  
Hartford VT 05001  
\$69.00

## all Winter Series

7pm, \$5. Talented singers vie for musical skills to another level with 16. Follow their path and cheer

Jan 27th, 7pm \$10. Local Rock and covers! Kennedy Park, in its 16th ever fav End User! Brandon Town Hall. Band Dad stars as they try instruments and

The First Friday of each month, on screen! These will be put on by the first movie night is hosted by a rodent who keeps living the mission by donation!

11am-3pm. Fun activities for kids at 11, Try It Drum Kit at 12:30 and Cake Game is \$5 to



# Brandon TM's 1.22.24 report to the Selectboard

## FOLLOW-UP ITEMS FROM PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Brandon Industrial Corporation has voted to approve a lease option for the proposed self-funding solar array at the Brandon Industrial Park. At the same time, they have voted to approve the terms of the lease itself, should the Town exercise its option after the Town Meeting vote. The lease is available for examination at the town office.

We conducted a public bid opening for the proposed self-funding solar array on Friday 12 January, the results of which are provided for board action.

## FOCUS AREAS DURING REPORTING PERIOD

The Town was awarded two "Electrify Your Fleet" grants in the amount of \$2,500 per vehicle for two electric cruisers to be lease-purchased to replace the most deficient four vehicles in the police fleet. Best quotes from the dealers the Chief has been working with indicate that the \$2,500 award together with a \$7,500 federal IRA refundable credit under IRS section 30D, will reduce the cost of a lease-purchase electric cruiser to just slightly below the cost of an internal-combustion

engine cruiser, which surely was the intent of policymakers encouraging a shift away from fossil fuels. Further research and consideration continue. I have not yet accepted the grant awards.

At the request of Hailey Morgan of WCAX, Chief Kachajian and I interviewed to discuss Brandon police consideration of electric cruisers.

Collaborative work with FEMA and town staff is ongoing to recover from July 2023 floods.

Collective bargaining with NEP-BA (police union) is ongoing with a team from the selectboard. Further work to pull the town report book together was time-intense but productive.

Board Chair Tracy Wyman arranged a meeting with a knowledgeable and experienced local slate roofer regarding our plans for the Town Hall and the proposals received. After examination of the proposals and considerable informed discussion, and still pending assessment of the roof by the consultant who has agreed to do that inspection to assist with developing bid specifications, it appears the Town is on the right track with this

project. No update on preservation grant funding.

With Bill Moore and Sue Gage, I have created a "Brandon Budget Tax Estimator" to help clarify real-dollars impact of the proposed FY25 Town operating budget. This is geared for residential taxpayers. Any Brandon homeowner may enter the assessed value of their home from their tax bill (or if the tax bill is not handy, by checking the town website and using the map function under "Resources"). The Estimator will return both the Bottom-Line Upfront impact (total Town tax FY24 and FY25, and the increase per year and per month) and a year-over-year and department-by-department allocation of what their property tax pays for. This is on the Town website, was posted to Front Porch Forum, and appears on the Town Clerk's Facebook page. It may be accessed directly from this link: <https://www.jotform.com/form/240155750385052>

I had many meetings, scheduled and unscheduled, with town officers, staff, and townspeople. Some of these were lengthy. As a best practice and a courtesy, I would ask that unscheduled, drop-in visits or phone calls, while welcomed, be kept to 15 minutes, and that if lon-

ger time is required, an appointment be set in advance for some mutually agreeable time.

of Public Safety while our FEMA application is perking along so that all is in order as far as meeting re-

## FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

Operating Expenses (includes tonight's warrant)	59.67% thru funds /58% thru year
Unrestricted / Unassigned Fund Balance	\$718,865
1% (Local Option) Tax Fund Available / Undesignated	\$193,903
Unobligated ARPA (will report only until fully obligated)	FULLY OBLIGATED
Known Grant Matches Not Yet Designated	UNION STREET
Delinquent property taxes (prior years)	\$339,809 (was \$367,115)
Delinquent wastewater (prior years)	\$199,958 (was \$212,054)
Number of payment plans for delinquent accounts	24 active; 4 await taxpayer signatures

## FOR AWARENESS OF THE SELECTBOARD

A considerate driver reported witnessing a box truck hit the Sanderson covered bridge on Thursday, January 11. The Town crew photographed minor resulting damage to the siding. The driver of the box truck, and the truck itself, are unidentified.

I attended a virtual training with VLCT and state and federal partners regarding eligibility for public assistance related to the July 2023 flooding. We identified a step that we can take with the Vermont Department

requirements for receiving funds.

The 6-inch water supply line at Wastewater suffered a failure and emergency repairs have been completed. Some further restorative site work after the water line repair is anticipated.

Comcast offers an affordable connectivity initiative called "Internet Essentials" to bring below-market-rate home internet to Brandon residents who qualify for programs like Medicaid, SNAP/EBT, or free school lunch. Information is on the Town website and posted in the (*See Town Manager report, Page 19*)

# Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 1)

EVs were financially prudent.

There was also significant concern that EVs would be difficult to maintain, that they were not suitable for Vermont's harsh winters, and that the lithium-based batteries were too expensive and posed a major risk to the environment.

Brandon resident Eric Mallory, owner of Mallory's Automotive, suggested that the town purchase one EV to gauge the suitability of the vehicles before committing to a second one. Other attendees recommended that the town consider hybrids rather than all-electric.

Mr. Hopkins reminded the room that even if the proposed budget passes, no decision on EVs would take place before July, when the new budget kicks in. The town has not committed to buying any EVs and any eventual purchase would have to be approved by the Board in a public meeting.

Attendees also asked where the Board currently stood with regard to the hiring of another police officer in order to provide 24/7 on-duty coverage. Currently, Brandon has 24/7 coverage but must summon on-call officers, who are paid a higher rate, during certain hours when no officers are on active duty.

Ultimately, the Board agreed to gauge the community's interest in hiring another officer by placing on the March ballot a non-binding, ad-

visory question that will ask voters whether they would like the town to hire another officer to provide 24/7 on-duty coverage. If the majority of voters respond "yes" to the question, the Board will take up the issue in next fall's budget workshops knowing that voters have specifically requested the additional officer. The vote to include the advisory question on the ballot was 4 to 1, with Brian Coolidge the sole nay.

Board chair Tracy Wyman had placed on the meeting's agenda a revisit of the police department's K-9 program, which the Board had voted to eliminate during a budget workshop in December and then failed to reinstate during a subsequent revote earlier this month.

Mr. Wyman stated on Monday that he had rethought his position on the program and was now ready to vote in favor of maintaining it. The Board's decision to eliminate it had provoked a public backlash, though Mr. Wyman attributed his change of heart to a reassessment of the program from a businessman's perspective.

Board member Tim Guiles, who voted to eliminate the program in both of the previous votes on it, expressed his respect for the political process that can lead to reversals such as this but also reiterated his opposition to the program. Mr. Guiles stated that Brandon was

not large enough to necessitate a K-9 program, that he did not want to enlarge the police presence in Brandon, that the dedication of a vehicle and handler was expensive and inconvenient, and that the history of police dogs in the United States was troubling.

Attendees spoke in favor of the program, noting that the dog, Guinness, had recently assisted with the discovery and confiscation of a large supply of fentanyl. One attendee noted asked rhetorically, "What price do you put on the lives destroyed by fentanyl?"

The final vote on the K-9 program was 3 to 2, with Mr. Guiles and Mr. Coolidge both voting against it once more.

## OTHER BUSINESS

The Board authorized the inclusion of a bond vote for a town-owned solar array on this year's March ballot. If approved by voters, the town would borrow \$500,000 to finance a solar array on leased land at the Brandon Industrial Park off of Arnold District Road. The Board also approved a bid by Green Earth Energy of Brandon to construct the array at a cost of \$468,500. No construction will occur if the bond is not approved.

The votes on both the bid and the bond were 3 to 2, with Mr. Wyman and Mr. Coolidge voting against them. Mr. Wyman stated that he

did not want the town to take on any more infrastructure that it couldn't maintain. Mr. Guiles, a longtime proponent of the project, noted that the cost of maintenance was included in the bid and that the income from the array will offset the bond payments.

Town Clerk Sue Gage requested that the Board approve an article on the March ballot asking voters whether to allow residents a grace period on delinquent payments of town bills before any penalties are assessed. Ms. Gage stated that she felt it was "unnecessarily punitive" to begin assessing penalties immediately when some residents simply need a few extra days to submit payments. "I'd like to see us be a little kinder," she said. The Board approved the request unanimously and the question will now be put to voters in March.

The Board approved the final warning for Town Meeting, which will include the grace period, the solar bond vote, and the advisory question on an additional officer.

The Board authorized the replacement of the plate glass windows in the Town Office at a cost of \$14,637.85. The windows have been cracked and discolored for years.

The Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department requested and received a letter from the Board in support of the Department's pur-

chase of a parcel of swampland along Brandon's border with Sudbury. The land will be added to the Department's holdings there in the Brandon Swamp Wildlife Management area. The Department has purchased ten similar parcels in Brandon since 2020. The town will continue to receive property tax on the land.

The Board approved a new blanket authorization for payroll, to reflect the increase in the hourly rate paid to a police officer, Ethan Kelleher, who had just received his B.A. in criminal justice and was now eligible for training at the Police Academy, thus triggering an automatic raise as per the Police Union contract.

Greg Poelker-McKee of the Rutland Regional Planning Commission addressed the Board to request that anyone interested in helping the Commission update its regional plan visit its website ([rutlandrpc.org/plan2026](http://rutlandrpc.org/plan2026)) to take a survey. The survey will let the Commission know what local residents want for the region.

The Board's final public business of the evening was the approval of a warrant in the amount of \$121,981.57 for the town's expenses and obligations and a warrant in the amount of \$98,047.50 for the distribution of grant money to the Brandon Free Public Library.

# Can you guess the street?

BY LAURA PETERSON

Last week's "guess the street" photo was Bank Corner (at the corner of Center Street and Park Street, where Bar Harbor Bank is now.) Perhaps the most recognizable building in that line-up is the Brandon Inn at the end, but upon close inspection the building that was Browns of Brandon and is now occupied by the National Bank of Middlebury, is the same. The buildings that replaced those that are missing were built in 1918 and 1919, after major fires destroyed much of what had been there. I wish I could find a picture of the gap that appeared when the old buildings came down and before the new buildings went up.



BANK CORNER, AND circa 1900.



We have another one for you. Can you guess this street?

## THE REPORTER NEEDS YOU!



### What we need:

#### Writers

We need people who can attend Selectboard, School Board, and Committee meetings in Brandon and/or Pittsford and write up summaries of the proceedings. We will pay \$50 per meeting/-summary.

We need feature writers who are interested in going out into the community on assignment, interviewing people, attending cultural events, and writing about it all. We will pay \$75 per assignment.

#### Managing editor

We need someone to supervise the layout of the paper on Tuesdays in conjunction with our graphic designer. Duties include ensuring adequate content to fill each issue (including summaries of meetings), determining

placement in paper of the various stories, ensuring that content has been proofread. Will train in specifics of our process.

**Must be available all day on Tuesdays** and have access to the internet and Zoom. Hourly rate commensurate with experience.

#### Ad manager

1 or 2 days per week. Responsible for the solicitation and follow-up of advertisements.

Coordination with managing editor required. Hourly compensation (based on experience) or commission.

#### Sports reporters

Cover your local games! Whether your children are on the team or you're just a booster, send us photos and details of the games! Submit to news@brandonreporter.com with "sports submission" in the subject line.

**We are looking for folks who appreciate community-based journalism and want to get involved.**

## REAL ESTATE

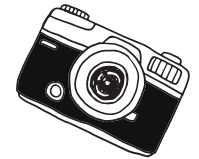


### IN-TOWN BUSINESS

Great business opportunity coupled with a residential unit in the center of downtown Brandon! The ground floor is currently an operating restaurant - Li's Chinese - with an impressive kitchen. The sale includes all restaurant equipment. Upstairs is a 3,540 SF living space. Beautiful hardwood floors, ornate ceiling and trim, and the glass storefront overlooks the Central Park & gazebo. Updated infrastructure: plumbing, windows, furnace & heating system, hot water, A/C and new wiring. Brandon is bustling with galleries, shops, pubs, restaurants, and a grand list of events! \$495,000



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



# Mim's Photos

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

Or call us at 247-8080

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

## Recognized



Kenny Bannister of Chittenden wrote in to identify himself as the toddler in the grocery cart while his mother stood there talking with Mim Welton (who took the picture) at Humiston's Grocery store where Walgreen's currently stands. This photo was taken in December 1972 and published in the Dateline Brandon. His mother's name is Wannetta Bannister. While Kenny was obviously too young to remember this moment in time, he knew he had seen this photo some place before, in his baby book. He showed this picture to his mom. "She remembers that she was just out doing her weekly grocery shopping at Humiston's and Mim was there and took a picture of both of us and published it in her paper. No reason really. Mim Welton was mom's math teacher at Otter Valley just a few years prior to this picture." Wannetta currently lives in Richford, VT and Kenneth lives in Chittenden, VT.



Linda Russell, of Brandon identified Julie Delphia as the graduate in this photo. Linda is, in her own words, Julie's favorite mother in law.

Terry Ferson of Brandon also recognized the honors graduate from Otter Valley Union High School as Julie Delphia, daughter of Nancy and Bernie Delphia. Julie was the valedictorian of the class. Terry said that it was probably 1985. Julie is now the town clerk of Leicester.



Kathy Mathis identified both Bill Mathis on the right and Leo Derepetigny (Chair of the Whiting Bd) putting on a new roof at Whiting School in 1983.



Terry Ferson also called to recognize a man in the group photo. He thinks it was a class trip. The man at the bottom of the steps is Doug Bailey of Brandon.



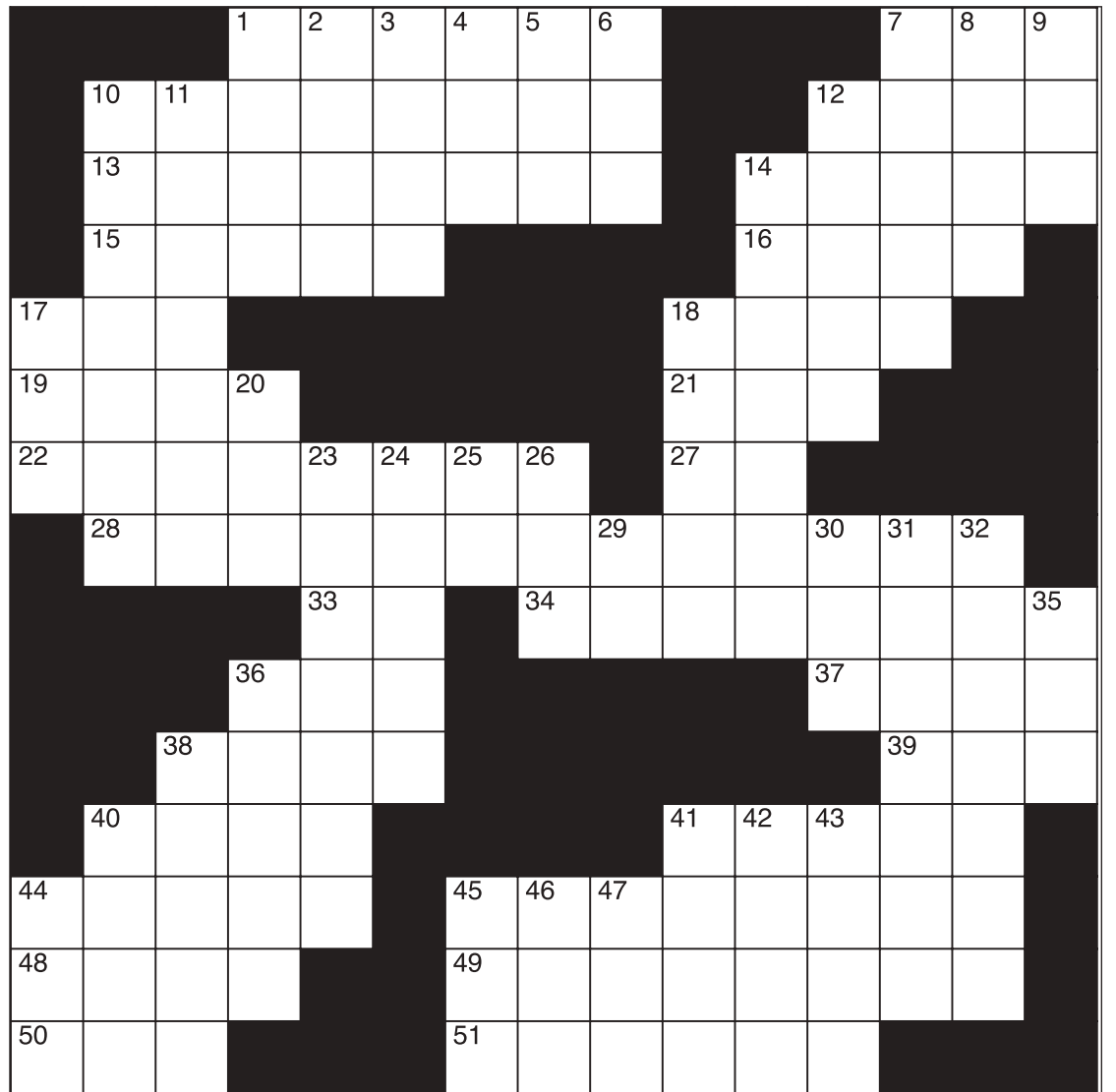
# Crossword

## CLUES ACROSS

1. Winged nut
7. \_\_\_ Humbug!
10. One who sets apart
12. Circle above a saint's head
13. Unpleasantly loud and harsh
14. Expressed pleasure
15. Feminine given name
16. Company of badgers
17. Popular Dodge pickup truck
18. Witty sayings
19. Leader
21. Autonomic nervous system
22. Premolar
27. Atomic #28
28. Holiday decorative item
33. Exclamation of surprise
34. Rusk or cracker
36. Returned material authorization (abbr.)
37. Scottish or Irish Gaelic language
38. Eat
39. Marxist economics theory (abbr.)
40. Ceases to exist
41. Male Arabic name
44. Series of ridges on an organ wall
45. Places where bees are kept
48. One-time Yankees sensation Kevin
49. Church office
50. Single lens reflex
51. Pieces of fibrous tissue

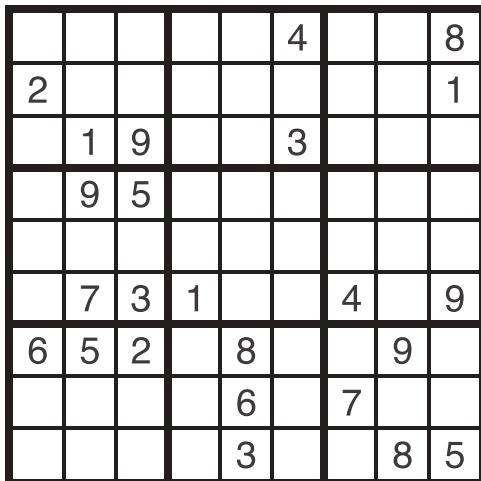
## CLUES DOWN

1. Classify
2. Dismounted
3. Produced
4. Consumed
5. Director Howard
6. The products of human creativity
7. Thai monetary units
8. Away from wind
9. Builder's trough
10. Relating to Islam
11. It can sometimes ache
12. Small quantities (Scot.)
14. Poisonous plant
17. Laugh at
18. Vogul
20. C. European river
23. Type of cat
24. Exclamation of disgust
25. Stephen King novel
26. Without armies
29. Expression of sympathy
30. Relative biological effectiveness (abbr.)
31. Previously
32. Illegal drug
35. Kiloelectronvolt
36. Large, flightless birds
38. For smoking
40. Binary
41. Competition
42. Mark resembling an arrow
43. Containers
44. Root mean square (abbr.)
45. Commercials
46. I.M. \_\_\_, architect
47. 007's creator



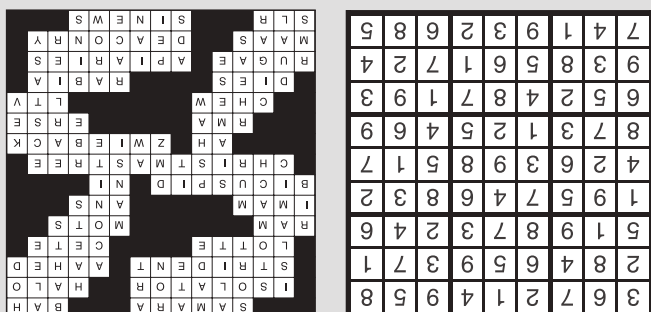
# Sudoku

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



Level: Intermediate

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



## February is Adopt-a-Rescued-Rabbit Month!

The Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS) would like to remind you that February is Adopt-a-Rescued-Rabbit month! Did you know that rabbits are the third most likely animals to find themselves looking for a new home? Rabbits make excellent companions. They can live eight to ten years and bond closely with their adopters. Quiet but inquisitive, rabbits can also be trained to use a litter box. To learn more about the rabbits at RCHS that are looking for new homes, call the Adoption Center at 802.483.6700 or visit [www.rchsvt.org](http://www.rchsvt.org).

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

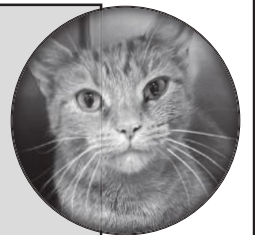


### MEET BLUEBERRY - 10-MONTH-OLD. SPAYED FEMALE. MIXED BREED. TAN.

This little lady is looking for a patient person to open their heart and home to her. Blueberry came to RCHS from a busy shelter in Texas. She spent some time in a foster home where we were able to learn a little about her. She is very timid at first and needs someone to help build her confidence. She loves playing with other dogs, and then will happily curl up with you after. She enjoys her time in the kennel and is doing well with house training. She would do best in a quieter home where she can get to know her new family and routine. She would do best in a home with older kids, as younger ones seem to be too busy and loud for her. She has not lived with cats or other small animals. Blueberry is eager to learn and seems to like treats. She is currently being treated for Anaplasmosis but can be adopted with her medication. She hasn't shown any symptoms of it. If you would like to meet her, please stop by the Adoption Center Tuesday-Saturday 11 am-4 pm to meet her.

### MEET HANNAH - 2 YEARS OLD. SPAYED FEMALE. DOMESTIC SHORT HAIR. ORANGE.

Hannah is a gorgeous girl who is ready to find her forever home! Hannah did give birth in the shelter and was a great mom! However, she is ready to leave motherhood behind and live a life of luxury. She has a go-with-the-flow personality! She absolutely loves attention. She will often ask for attention! She has so much love to give (and receive)! Hannah came to us on November 3rd as a stray from Rutland. Therefore, we have no known history on how she will do with dogs or children. We assume that she likes other cats because she has not shown any concerning behavior towards her feline friends. If this big lovebug sounds like the right fit for you, please stop by and visit with her. The Adoption Center is open Tuesday through Saturday 11am to 4pm.



**RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY**

802-483-6700 • [WWW.RCHSVT.ORG](http://WWW.RCHSVT.ORG)  
765 STEVENS RD. • PITTSFORD



**OUR ADOPTION CENTER IS OPEN TUESDAY-SATURDAY FROM 11AM-4PM. NO APPOINTMENT NEEDED.**



# OFF THE SHELF

## NEW BOOKS AND NEWS



### DID YOU KNOW?

We have robots available for checkout? Sphero's Indi and Mini and Wonder Workshop's Dash are a fun way to teach coding basics to kids.

not have been who or what she seemed.

### Wild and Distant Seas by Tara Karr Roberts

Evangeline Hussey has made a home for herself on Nantucket, though she knows she is still an outsider to the island's close-knit community, one that by 1849 has started to feel the decline of a once-thriving whaling industry. Her husband, Hosea, was once all she needed—but now Hosea is gone, lost at sea. Evangeline employs a curious gift to glimpse and re-form the recent memories of those who would cast her out from her home. One night, a sailor called Ishmael appears on her doorstep, seeking only food and a bed. Unsettlingly, her careful illusion begins to fracture. He soon sails away to hunt an infamous white whale, and Evangeline is left to forge a new life from the pieces that remain. Her choices ripple through generations, across continents, and into the depths of the sea.

### Adult fiction

#### The Fury by Alex Michaelides

Lana Farrar is a reclusive ex-movie star and one of the most famous women in the world. Every year, she invites her closest friends to escape the English weather and spend Easter on her idyllic private Greek island. Finding themselves trapped there overnight, what follows is a game of cat and mouse, a battle of wits, full of twists and turns, building to an unforgettable climax of murder and deceit amongst the old friends.

#### Diva by Daisy Goodwin

A fictionalized account of famed opera singer Maria Callas, from her beginnings in Nazi-occupied Greece, to meeting the fabulously rich Greek shipping magnate Aristotle Onassis. For the first time in her life, she believed she'd found someone who saw the woman within the legendary soprano and fell desperately in love. He introduced her to a life of unbelievable luxury. And then suddenly, it was over. The international press announced that Aristotle Onassis would marry the most famous woman in the world, former First Lady Jacqueline Kennedy, leaving Maria to pick up the pieces.

#### Radiant Heat by Sarah-Jane Collins

The blaze came out of nowhere one summer afternoon across the countryside in Victoria, a wall of fire fed by blustering wind. Yet, somehow, Alison is alive. She rode out the fire on the damp tiles of her bathroom, covered in a wet woolen blanket. The wildfire sets in motion a chain of events that threatens to obliterate the carefully constructed life she is living. When Alison emerges from her sheltering place, she spots a soot-covered cherry-red car in her driveway, and in it a dead woman. Alison has never met Simone Arnold in her life . . . or so she thinks. So, what is she doing here? As Alison searches for answers across Australia's scorched bushlands, she soon learns that the fire isn't the only threat she's facing.

#### Martyr by Kaveh Akbar

Cyrus Shams is a young man grappling with an inheritance of violence and loss. Cyrus is a drunk, an addict, and a poet, whose obsession with martyrs leads him to examine the mysteries of his past—toward an uncle who rode through Iranian battlefields dressed as the angel of death to inspire and comfort the dying, and toward his mother, through a painting discovered in a Brooklyn art gallery that suggests she may

transportation-related services, fees that had not been raised since July 1, 2016.

The new DMV fee increases (effective Jan. 1) are expected to yield \$10 million for the current fiscal year to fill that \$10 million gap. For most Vermonters, the impact will be a \$9 increase for two-year driver's license renewal and a \$15 increase for annual car registration. These revenues maintain the transportation infrastructure we all use and depend on. Had Gov. Scott followed Vermont's prior, long-standing practice of proposing a fee bill once every three years, these fee adjustments would have been much smaller and incremental. However, even with this increase, Vermont's driver's license fees are among the lowest in the Northeast.

In early January, the House

Transportation Committee received a transportation revenue update from the Joint Fiscal Office. Transportation revenues are coming in \$5 million below budget for the current fiscal year. Had we not increased the fees, we'd be looking at a \$15 million gap, much more difficult to manage. On Jan. 12, Gov. Scott's administration presented their proposal for the midyear FY24 budget adjustment, which was thin on details about how we might address this shortfall in the current fiscal year.

With or without the collaboration of the governor, House Democrats are committed to finding equitable solutions to the fiscal challenges we face. We're building a Vermont that works for all of us, and a responsible transportation budget will help us get there.

# Brandon Police Report

## January 15

- Served a subpoena on Wood Lane for the Rutland County State's Attorney's Office.

- Attempted to locate a wanted individual reported to be on Deer Run Road. The suspect was not located.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for driving at varying speeds and failing to maintain travel lane. Warning issued.

- Directed speed enforcement on McConnell Road.

- Vehicle stop on McConnell Road for speeding. Warning issued.

- Directed speed enforcement on North Street as a result of complaints by area residents.

- Vehicle stop on North Street for speeding. Warning issued.

- Vehicle stop on North Street for defective equipment and failure to display license plate(s). Warning issued.

- Received a complaint about an ATV operating on property owned by Green Mountain Power.

- Attempted to locate a vehicle involved in a crash in Middlebury that had left the scene. The vehicle was not located.

- Vehicle stop on Frog Hollow Road for erratic driving. Warning issued for defective equipment.

- Served an outstanding arrest warrant on Rydon Acres. The individual was taken into custody and lodged at Marble Valley Correctional Facility on \$50 cash bail.

- Served a cite and release arrest warrant for a failure to appear on Franklin Street. The individual was issued a citation to appear before the Rutland County Superior Court on 1/16/2024 at 12:30 p.m.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for a stop sign violation. Warning issued.

## January 16

- Received a complaint from a concerned parent about his child's out-of-control behavior at home.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for following too closely. Warning issued.

- K9 Unit was requested by an elementary school for a police dog demonstration.

- Received a complaint from a resident whose car was struck by an egg during the night while parked at her residence.

- Vehicle stop on Park Street for a faded, unreadable license plate. Warning issued.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for illegal passing and for driving at imprudent speeds due to weather conditions. Tickets issued.

- Assisted a woman on her way to the Sugarbush ski area, who was unfamiliar with the area and with

driving in snow. She was located on Champlain Street near Hollow Road after her vehicle had spun out in the snow. She was escorted to downtown Brandon where she was able to park safely.

- An off-duty officer on his way home assisted a driver who had slid off the road on VT-73 and School House Road in Sudbury. The officer contacted a tow company for the driver.

- An off-duty officer on his way home assisted a driver who had slid off the road on VT-30 and Huff Pond Road. The driver was able to get back on the road.

## January 17

- Responded to Otter Valley Union High School for a report that a student had pulled the fire alarm.

- Received a call from a parent regarding another student harassing her daughter at the Otter Valley Union High School.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for defective equipment. Warning issued.

- Served a subpoena to two individuals at a residence on Park Street.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for failing to move over for an emergency vehicle. Warning issued because the officer had to respond to an emergency.

- Responded with the Brandon Area Rescue Squad to Hannaford's supermarket, where a vehicle had collided with a woman leaving the store. Officers rendered aid to the patient, who was transported to the hospital.

- Took fingerprints for a nursing license.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for suspicion that the driver had a criminally suspended driver's license. The driver indeed had a suspended license and was issued a citation to appear before the Rutland County Superior Court for arraignment on 4/22/2024 at 10:00 a.m.

- Attempted to locate a suspect in Salisbury, as part of an ongoing investigation in Brandon, so that he could be issued court paperwork. The individual was not located.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for failure to maintain travel lane. Tickets were issued for failure to maintain lanes and for operating without a driver's license.

- Vehicle stop on Center Street for failure to yield.

- Vehicle stop on McConnell Road and Paint Works Road for failure to display license plate(s). Warning issued.

## January 18

- A vehicle went off the road on (See Police report, Page 19)

# Fiscally responsible

(Continued from Page 5)

ing dollars from public safety or human services did not seem socially or fiscally responsible.

In 2021 Congress passed the bipartisan Infrastructure Investments Job Act (IIJA), which authorized \$1.2 trillion for transportation. This presents Vermont with amazing opportunities to address many of our transportation infrastructure needs and provide good-paying jobs for Vermonters. To tap into these opportunities we must come up with state dollars to leverage the federal match, but we cannot do that at the expense of the most vulnerable Vermonters. Instead of siphoning away precious general fund dollars — dollars that pay for things like housing and childcare — last year the legislature came up with a responsible long-term fiscal solution: We raised fees for

# Police report

(Continued from Page 18)

Route 7 at Grove Street. The vehicle collided with a utility pole, causing power outages in the area. Brandon Police, the Fire Department, and EMS responded. The driver had fled the scene but was shortly located and issued a citation for Leaving the Scene of an Accident and is to appear before the Rutland Superior Court on 04/29/2024 at 10:00 a.m.

- Responded to a report of a juvenile problem at Otter Valley Union High School.

- Assisted in removing a man from Champlain Farms, where he was caught stealing by an employee.

- Assisted a local business owner regarding a potential bad check.

- Responded to Otter Valley Union High School for a report of a disturbance involving students. Officers determined that there had been a verbal altercation between two male students, but that the incident was not physical. The matter will be handled by the school administration.

- Received a complaint from the Neshobe School regarding students who had approached school staff about being threatened by another student outside of school, both on-line and by telephone. Investigation is ongoing.

- Received a complaint regarding a fraud that was perpetrated at the National Bank of Middlebury on Park Street. Investigation is ongoing.

- Received a late report of a minor crash that occurred on High Pond Road. Case generated for insurance purposes.

- Conducted a directed patrol on Franklin Street. Vehicle stop conducted; ticket issued.

- Vehicle stop on Union Street for speeding. Ticket issued for driving with a suspended license.

## January 19

- Directed traffic enforcement on Forest Dale Road.

- Assisted Shelburne Police Department by attempting to locate a stolen vehicle that was last seen in Brandon and had been stolen from

and was owned by Shelburne Farms in Shelburne. Officers located the vehicle and suspect on West Seminary Street and issued a citation on behalf of the Shelburne Police Department for Aggravated Operation Without Owner's Consent. The vehicle was towed from the scene.

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for defective equipment (heat shield dragging). Warning issued.

## January 20

- Directed traffic enforcement on Union Street and Maple Street.

- Answered a call from a resident about a loose dog on Carver Street wandering in the freezing weather. The matter was forwarded to the Town of Brandon Animal Control Officer. The dog was kept at the complainant's residence until the ACO could identify the owner.

- Vehicle stop on High Street for defective equipment. Warning issued.

- Conducted another vehicle stop on High Street for defective equipment. Warning issued.

## January 21

- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for speeding.

- Vehicle stop on Park Street for failure to maintain travel lane, using a cell phone, and failing to obey an officer.

- Vehicle stop on Park Street for speeding. Warning issued.

- Observed an individual operating with a criminally suspended driver's license on Center Street. Matter is under investigation.

- Vehicle stop on Champlain Street for failure to maintain travel lane. Warning issued.

- Assisted Brandon Area Rescue on Mount Pleasant Drive.

- Vehicle stop on Marble Street for failure to yield. Warning issued.

- Observed and removed a large box in the middle of the roadway on Champlain Street that was causing a traffic hazard.

- Received a complaint from a concerned parent regarding threats made to their child by another student at the Neshobe Elementary School over an on-line group chat. Investigation is ongoing.

# Town Manager report

(Continued from Page 14)

clerk's office.

Equalization study results have been provided to the Town by the State. Our common level of appraisal (CLA) is 74.69% and our coefficient of dispersion (COD) is 19.97%. I reviewed this with the professional assessor and the Town's assessor's clerk. Policy at the State level in light of historic anomalous conditions is that for purposes of the State ordering a reappraisal, the CLA is currently not a factor, and the

COD necessitates an order for reappraisal at 20%. The Town's assessor is fully scheduled through 2025 and is heavily so through 2026. While we are not presently on orders to conduct Town-wide reappraisal, we need to continue to be diligent about funding the account that will pay for it and responding promptly to initiate the process when directed by the State if that happens before our normally scheduled time-dependent reappraisal.

# Education finance

(Continued from Page 9)

flexibility to raise revenue this year through the non-homestead property tax.

'Interesting incentives'

Education spending is predicted to rise this year for a number of reasons: health care costs, teachers' contracts, school infrastructure needs, the disappearance of federal dollars, and inflationary pressures among them.

The 5% cap could prove another factor.

In an interview, Craig Bolio, the state's tax commissioner, said that Act 127's 5% cap created "interesting incentives" for school districts, but he stressed that increased education spending is not the same as unnecessary education spending.

"I don't want to insinuate that every district in Vermont is out there gaming the system," he said.

But Bolio highlighted two primary incentives of concern. The first, he said, is that if a district does not hit the 5% cap, it loses the ability to use the cap in the next four budget cycles.

For some, that creates an "incentive to be over that cap

now and stay over it," he said.

The second involves the 10% review process. Bolio suggested that a school district planning to increase per pupil spending by 6% might push that to just under the 10% review threshold, knowing that homestead property tax increases would remain capped at 5% regardless.

While Bolio said the Scott administration doesn't yet have specific recommendations on changing the cap, "the administration has been concerned about it," and may work with the Legislature in the future to alter Act 127's current incentive structure.

The missive from Kornheiser and Cummings on Friday detailed their concerns about the 5% cap but similarly stopped short of making specific recommendations.

"Act 127 was intended to create greater equity between districts — to narrow the range between the haves and have-nots," they wrote. "At this point, given what we hear about how the 5% threshold is being used, it seems to be widening that gulf rather than narrowing it."

The lawmakers went on to

write that they "will be looking for policy levers to address unintended consequences this year, and into the future."


In an interview, Jeff Francis, executive director of the Vermont Superintendents Association, acknowledged that "we started to see (the 5% cap) being used more widely than I think anyone anticipated."

But he contended that school spending decisions had been a result of "thoughtful discourse" on the part of school boards and district leaders.

"We ought to all make an effort," Francis said, "to understand how it is we arrived at this point."

Francis said he supported the letter's stated goal of collecting budget information from districts in order to inform decision-making. He also highlighted that the timelines at play — school budgets actively being warned for votes on Town Meeting Day — made the moment "really, really challenging."

The House Ways and Means Committee and Senate Finance Committee expect to hold a joint public hearing at 1 p.m. Jan. 25.



## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

**ARIES** March 21–April 20  
Something will occur this week that surprises you, Aries. You may even wonder if it is a trick being played on you. It is no trick, so buckle down for an adventure.

**TAURUS** April 21–May 21  
You have pushed your mind and body quite far over the last several days, Taurus. Now you have to slow down or pay the consequences. Do not add anything else to your list.

**GEMINI** May 22–June 21  
Gemini, you may believe you have discovered a good thing and it could be right. But don't wait too long to act since this good thing has an expiration date. The clock is ticking.

**CANCER** June 22–July 22  
Cancer, you might not be able to control what is happening this week, but you can

control how you react to different situations. Keep your distance if an altercation arises.

**LEO** July 23–Aug. 23  
Something you discover about a friend this week could leave you reeling, Leo. The signs have been there for a while and you really should have seen it coming.

**VIRGO** Aug. 24–Sept. 22  
Virgo, if you are on the move this week, there is a chance that you will experience some interesting people along the way. At least one person might be a good networking contact.

**LIBRA** Sept. 23–Oct. 23  
More than anything right now, this week you need to relax and unwind, Libra. Take things at a slow pace, and spend more time at home with family than at work.

**SCORPIO** Oct. 24–Nov. 22  
Try not to take any financial risks right now, Scorpio. If you are planning to invest, then you may want to get all of the facts before gambling too much in the stock market.

**SAGITTARIUS** Nov. 23–Dec. 21  
This week you will be back to your best, Sagittarius. Things will work out, so use your positive attitude to the benefit of

yourself and others.

**CAPRICORN** Dec. 22–Jan. 20  
Capricorn, even though you are conservative by nature, this week you are ready to take a chance of some sort. Enjoy the journey even if the efforts do not bring you enormous success.

**AQUARIUS** Jan. 21–Feb. 18  
Aquarius, a kind word from you may be all that is needed to bring a smile to someone's face. Do not underestimate the power of a kind and simple gesture.

**PISCES** Feb. 19–March 20  
You don't usually lack confidence, Pisces. But you may not want to push ahead with a project for fear of failure. You should be more adventurous and not worry too much.

**FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS**

Jan. 26 Lucinda Williams, singer-songwriter (70)

Jan. 27 Mikhail Baryshnikov, dancer (76)

Jan. 28 Colette, novelist (d)

Jan. 29 Anton Chekov, playwright (d)

Jan. 30 Olivia Coleman, actor (50)

Jan. 31 Jackie Robinson, baseball player (d)

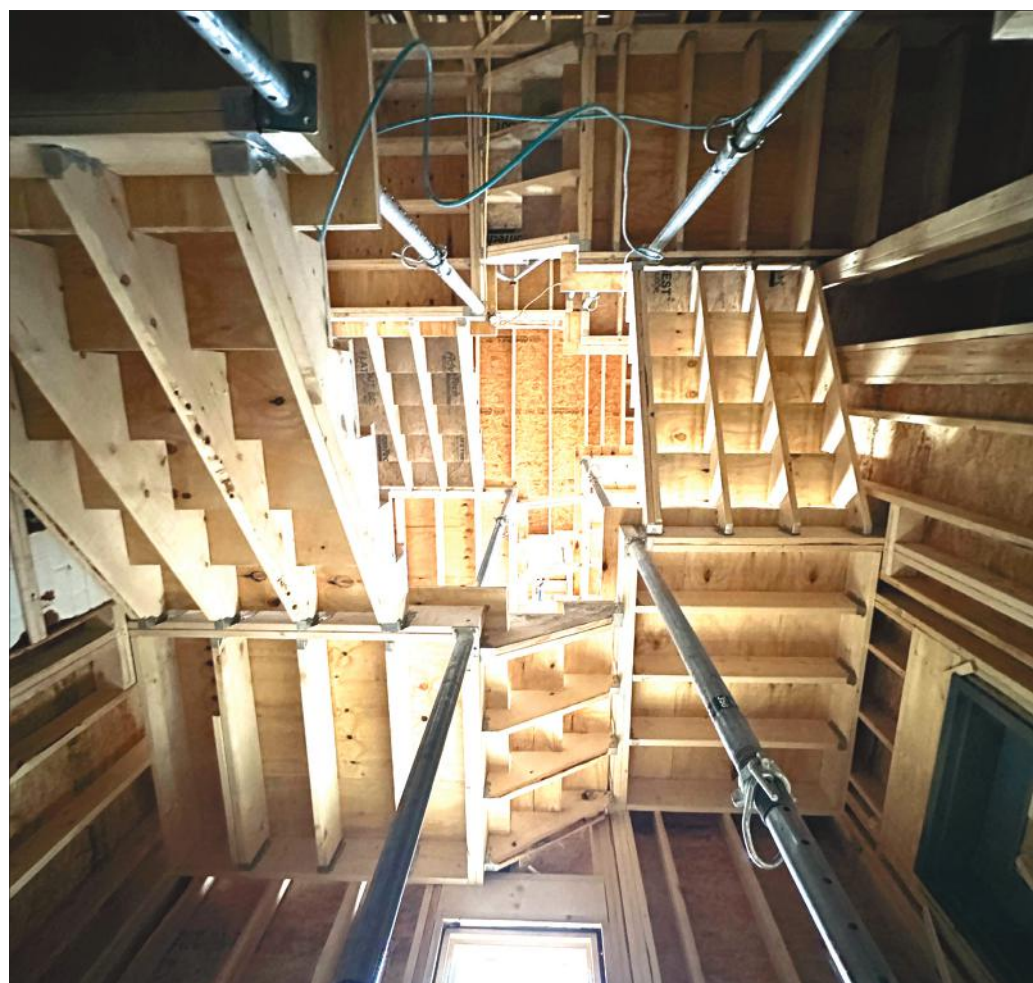
Feb. 1 Langston Hughes, poet (d)



Like all things vintage?

# Mim's Photos


are on page 16!



## A dizzying sight

THE NEW STAIRWELL under construction at the Brandon Free Public Library provided a visually confusing and compelling sight when viewed from the basement. Photo by Steven Jupiter

# Restaurant guide



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ROBERT BLACK STANDS with some of his photollages at his show "The Art of Life" at the Chaffee Arts Center in Rutland. In the show, Black shares his unique ability to connect the manmade with the natural and to observe the smallest detail that illuminates larger patterns. The show runs through March 1.

## Robert Black

(Continued from Page 11)  
practice, there are photos of swirling water patterns that absolutely recall something cosmic yet are absolutely rooted here on earth. The same holds true for Black's close-up shots of flowers, getting up close as if an intergalactic explorer reporting on a previously unseen life form.

"You can see what turns me on," he said. "I want to know what turns you on, too."

Much of his exuberant life, he says, has been a reaction to his so-

ber Lutheran upbringing in the Midwest and the show also includes mementos from his own journey as an artist: drawings, collages, and other items Black created from childhood on. A native of Wisconsin, Black had a 4th-grade art teacher—Miss Drumm—who taught him to "look outside the box."

For those who'd like to learn how to "look outside the box" as well, Black is offering an extensive array of classes, workshops, and talks at the Chaffee during the run of the

exhibit. A lifelong teacher, Black is eager to expand others' ability to connect with the world around them. The classes are designed "to explore the richness of the human experience" and will involve hands-on activities. More details can be found at [Chaffeeartcenter.org](http://Chaffeeartcenter.org).

"The Art of Life" runs through March 1, 2024 at the Chaffee Art Center at 16 South Main Street in Rutland. Visit [chaffeeartcenter.org](http://chaffeeartcenter.org) for more information.

# Vermont Huts Association looks to bring more people into the outdoors

BY ALISSA FRAME/COMMUNITYNEWSERVICE

For RJ Thompson, the seed of outdoor recreation started sprouting early on. He grew up camping with family and learning to ski — a passion that only grew as he got older, when as a student at the University of Vermont he helped form the ski and snowboard club in 2003.

The college club, he said, kindled a desire to bring people together from different backgrounds to experience the outdoors in an approachable manner. Years later, in 2016, Thompson found himself with the opportunity to make that happen on a broader scale.

That year, alongside Devin Littlefield, Thompson co-founded the Vermont Huts Association. The group manages huts — which, in the outdoor recreation realm, resemble rustic cabins or yurts with basic amenities like bunks, mattress pads and propane cooktops. Littlefield had worked on a network of huts in Maine.

The association's mission, Thompson said, is to "foster a deeper appreciation (for) the natu-

ral environment by creating an enriching experience for everyone."

To do this, the group has been working to build a statewide, hut-supported trail network in partnership with the Catamount Trail Association and Vermont Department of Forests, Parks and Recreation, among other groups. The idea is for folks to have a convenient, immersive place to stay while exploring Vermont's trails and backcountry.

Reflecting fondly on childhood memories at summer day camps, Thompson wanted to launch a program that would help give young people of all backgrounds the same sort of positive outdoor experiences. "I was thinking, we have this resource in the backcountry, and let's make sure everyone can use it," Thompson said.

So in 2020, Vermont Huts started a program called FOREST — or "Fostering Outdoor Recreation, Education, Sustainability and Teamwork" — that aims to bring together people who otherwise might not have the chance to explore the backcountry or feel comfortable doing so.

In its first two full years, the pro-

gram has offered more than half a dozen free retreats to students ages 11 to 18, bringing students to

huts at Grout Pond and Chittenden Brook in the Green Mountain National Forest. Participants have en-

Vermont Huts' contracted outdoor educators, led a retreat with the latter.



**STUDENTS ON A retreat at Grout Pond in the Green Mountain National Forest.**  
Photo courtesy Vermont Huts Association

## Brandon Brain Buster Answered

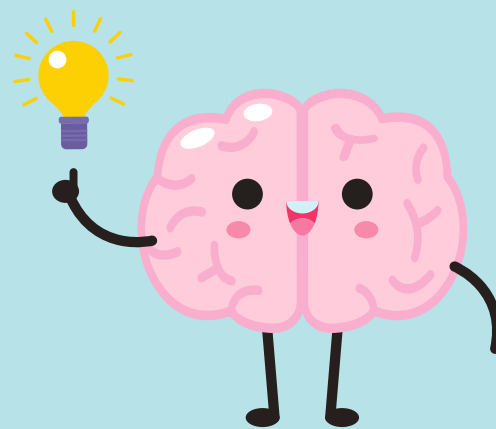
Answer: B

The answer here may initially seem counter-intuitive. Even though Guinevere has a better chance than Gulliver of landing a bullseye in any given attempt, the probability that it will take her three attempts to land a bullseye is less than the probability that Gulliver will get there in two. And so, a gambler who bets that it will take her three attempts has a lesser chance of winning than a gambler who bets it will take Gulliver two. And this is precisely because Guinevere is a much better player. With such accuracy (80% success rate), Guinevere shouldn't need three attempts to get a bullseye.

Note that this is different from asking at the beginning of any given attempt which player has a better chance of scoring a bullseye. On each attempt, Guinevere has the edge. But the probability that it will take Guinevere three attempts to get a bullseye will be less than the probability that it will take Gulliver only two.

We can prove this mathematically.

In order for Guinevere to win on the third attempt, she would need to miss the bullseye on her first two attempts. Since the probability is 80% that she hits the bullseye on any given attempt, the probability that she does NOT hit it on any given attempt is 20%. So, the prob-



ability that she misses the first two attempts and then lands a bullseye on the third attempt would be  $(2/10) \times (2/10) \times (8/10) = 32/1000$ .

In order for Gulliver to win on the second attempt, he would need to miss the bullseye on his first attempt. Since the probability is 10% that he hits the bullseye on any given attempt, the probability that he does NOT hit it is 90%. So, the probability that he misses the first attempt and then lands a bullseye on the second attempt would be  $(9/10) \times (1/10) = 9/100$ , which is the same as  $90/1000$ .

Since  $90/1000$  is greater than  $32/1000$ , Gulliver has a better chance of winning in two attempts than Guinevere has of winning in three, simply because Guinevere is such a good player that it should not even take her that many attempts to win.

Keep in mind that both probabilities are very small.  $90/1000 = 9\%$  and  $32/1000 = 3.2\%$ . So, Gulliver has a very small chance of winning in two attempts and Guinevere, because she's so much better than Gulliver, has an even smaller likelihood of needing three attempts to win.

joyed nature walks, cooking meals, bushcraft lessons and more — activities vary based on what people want to do or learn.

So far, the retreats have taken place through partnerships with school districts and other organizations like the Teen Center in Middlebury. Josh Fisher, one of

He described how it's important to foster an accommodating environment and tailor the experience to particular groups. "My big focus is ... how are they interacting with the outdoors as individuals and as a group?" Fisher said. "Because the goal is to get them to enjoy it."

(See Vermont Huts, Page 23)

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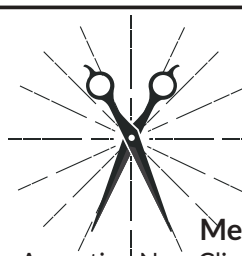
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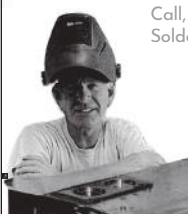


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## Hybrid requirement

(Continued from Page 8)

meetings under Open Meeting Law, the bill also would establish an Open Meeting Grant Program” with \$250,000 appropriated for fiscal year 2025.

“Material threats to health and safety”

As S.55 was discussed last week, the House Committee on Government Operations and Military Affairs debated a different bill, H.649, that also has implications for access to meetings, this one specifically about those held by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

The commission is tasked with studying how racism, discrimination and eugenics have affected Vermont’s laws and suggesting ways the state government could repair those harms. Its work is focused on impacts to Indigenous, French-Canadian and Black people; people of color; and people who have one or more disabilities.

The House committee weighed whether to grant the commission authority to limit the public’s ability to attend and participate in the commission’s meetings if there appeared to be “material threats to health and safety” of commissioners, their staff or invited witnesses.

Members of the commission have received death threats, according to Michele Olvera, the commission’s general legal counsel, who testified earlier this week.

“If you invite people to the table who have threatened to kill you, that just seems unwise. I don’t know what else to say about that,” Olvera said.

Her testimony followed that of press representatives, who were adamant about the importance of keeping meetings open.

“To assert some vague and undefined threat as a reason for holding a closed hearing is disingenuous and a dangerous precedent for very real abuse,” said Lisa Loomis, president of the Vermont Press Association and editor/co-owner of The Valley Reporter.

On Thursday, the House committee voted on a new draft of the bill, with nine Democrats in favor and three Republicans opposed. The new version would allow members of the media and “other persons whose presence the Commission determines is needed at the meeting” to attend meetings in a physical space even if the attendance is otherwise restricted by the commission.

In addition to new Open Meeting Law exemptions, the bill would add a mechanism to appoint a new commissioner. The commission has been waiting for legislative action to be able to fill the vacancy created when Patrick Standen stepped down in November.

The bill also would establish the commission’s ability to organize and support “affinity groups,” defined as mutual support groups for individuals who have experienced “institutional, structural or systemic discrimination.” It would also include members of communities that have a “duty of confidentiality” for group participants.

Finally, it would appropriate \$1.1 million from the state General Fund for fiscal year 2025 for the work of the commission.

The bill is scheduled to hit the House floor this week but may not see a vote until it is reviewed by the Appropriations Committee.

## Vermont Huts

(Continued from Page 21)

He added, “So hopefully we can keep building our populace of people who love to recreate in the outdoors.”

Early on, organization leaders saw their focus on just young people was too simple.

“We really quickly realized that there was a lot more than just underserved youths that were not getting access to the outdoors,” said Maggie Twitchell, program and communication coordinator for Vermont Huts. “There were people of color. There was the LGBTQ+ community. There were indigenous Americans.”

It became clear that some barriers to recreation went well beyond economic restrictions — in fact, Twitchell believes, some barriers surrounding safety and inclusivity are “probably even harder than an economic restriction.”

Vermont Huts is trying to better understand the needs and hesitations that particular groups may have regarding backcountry treks — so the FOREST program is fluidly evolving. The initial vision folks like Thompson had for retreats — such as teaching skills like rope tying or fire-making — is not always what participants want or need from the outdoors.

Now, Vermont Huts is reaching out to community organizations and “saying, ‘Look, we have accommodation out there, and we have funding, and we can help you achieve whatever your goals are to access the space that is out there,’” said Twitchell.

Vermont Huts would like to expand beyond just youth retreats to serve a wider, more diverse demographic. A new partnership with Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports is one way to make this happen.

Vermont Adaptive is an organization dedicated to empowering individuals of all abilities — including those with physical and cognitive disabilities — through sports and recreation opportunities. The group uses specialized equipment, alongside trained staff and volunteers, to fit the needs of participants doing everything from mountain biking to kayaking to skiing.

Jeff Alexander, director of strategic partnerships with Vermont Adaptive, said the group plans to develop FOREST outings accessible to those with disabilities. For example, retreat participants who have visual or motor function disabilities could use equipment modified to be more comfortable. Vermont Adaptive staff would be on site to support participants’ recreation and learning.

The two organizations are also working to develop a more extensive network of accessible trails in

the state, including those that lead to the huts. The two organizations are collaborating with the U.S. Forest Service to outfit huts with all-terrain wheelchairs. This way, if someone comes to the hut on an adaptive bike, for example, they will have an onsite wheelchair to help them move around the hut.

Alexander said Vermont Adaptive plans to organize retreats through Vermont Huts for its veterans program as well, offering participants a sense of camaraderie they may have been missing.

As Twitchell put it, “A lot of adult groups get overlooked ... You’re kind of expected to be an adult and figure it out yourself.”

The partnership with Vermont Adaptive could counter that trend.

“We just want to make sure that everybody has the opportunity to recreate, and partnering with Vermont Huts is amazing because they believe the same thing,” Alexander said.

In line with the program’s growth, Vermont Huts wants to expand the team of educators who facilitate FOREST retreats. “We (found) that our educators don’t represent the communities that we want to help. And that’s a barrier in itself,” Twitchell said.

“Not having educators who are people of color or (who) are from the LGBTQ+ community means

that we really aren’t serving those communities as well,” she added.

So Vermont Huts wants to partner with groups like Pride Center of Vermont, Outright Vermont and Huntington Open Women’s Land to offer members outdoor educator training, Twitchell said. The hope is to nurture new educators for the huts system and to bring certification opportunities to more people.

Twitchell emphasized how the organization is actively looking for participants and groups interested in outings through the FOREST program. And outside the FOREST program, interested folks can book a stay in any of their huts — many of which are available year-round.

“We’re really looking to do something special here in Vermont,

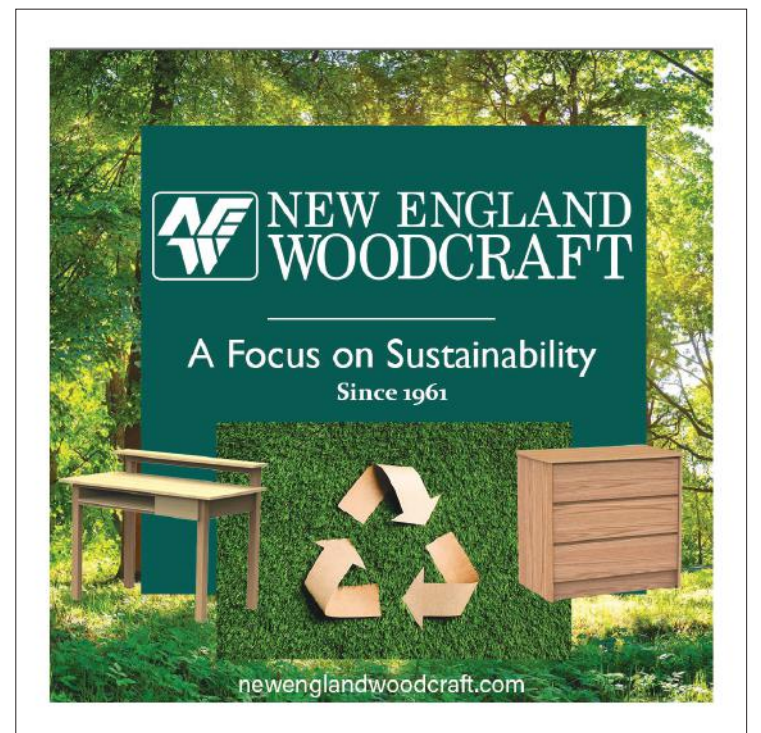
and it’s not just going to be our organization who does it. It’s going to be all the partners working together,” Thompson said. He praised the role of volunteers in recreation opportunities: “We’re building a lot of this onto the success that they’ve achieved years before us.”

Thompson is optimistic about what lies ahead.

“It can grow into what I ultimately think it wants to be,” he said of the FOREST program, “which is creating this safe space for anyone to have that experience and to hopefully just feel comfortable in the outdoors.”

*“We really quickly realized that there was a lot more than just underserved youths that were not getting access to the outdoors. There were people of color. There was the LGBTQ+ community. There were indigenous Americans.”*

—Maggie Twitchell,  
program and communication coordinator for  
Vermont Huts



# Brandon Town Hall Events, 2024



*and more to come!*

## Swiftly Party!

**Tuesday, Feb 20, 6:30–9 p.m.**

You know the music, you love the lights! Lets get together and have a party for our girl! IYKYK! \$2 at the door.

## Kennedy Park and End User

**Saturday, Jan 27, 7 p.m.**

Local rock bands will bring it to the hall! Kennedy Park has been playing up north and End User is the home town band of greats! \$10 at the door.

## Loud and Proud!

**Sunday afternoons, 1–3 p.m.**

Teens, check out rock and roll in your town hall! Bring your instruments and jam with Band Dad Jeff Ladd in charge.

\* Schedule varies due to other events in the Hall

# Music

## Friday Night at the Movies!

**Friday, Feb 2, 7 p.m.**

First Friday of each month, a local group will host a family friendly movie! We can't announce the name of the movie but we can give clues. The first one, on Feb 2, is titled after a rodent, stars a former SNL star, and is about things never changing till we get it right! Snacks, drinks free but donations graciously appreciated! This month benefits OV's 9th Grade Class.

## Creepy Carnival

**Friday, Feb 16, 6:30–9 p.m.**

Welcome to winter vacation! A whole week of fun, family friendly events at the Brandon Town Hall for everyone! Trunk or treat at 6:30-7:30. Music, games, dancing! Dress up in costume and come enjoy! \$2 at the door.

## Family Game Night!

**Saturday, Feb 17, 6:30–9 p.m.**

Get together with your friends and family and play some board games! We'll have the tables out, the music playing softly and a variety of games with leaders ready to play! Snacks available! \$2 at the door.

## Kids Festival

**Sat. Feb 10, 11–3 p.m.**

Games, crafts, toys, ice smash, plinko, books, cookies, snacks by Brec Cheerleaders! EmmaJeanne Hoops performs at 11:30! Try It Drum Kit by Marek Heitmann at 12:30! Cake Game at 2pm! (\$5 to enter the cake game, and you can win one of 20 Cakes!!) A fun day of adventure for all!

# Festivals & Movies

# Contests & Talent Shows

## Brandon Idol

**Friday, Jan 26, 7 p.m.**

Brandon's famous singing contest! Spend the winter with the region's best performers as they work their way toward the first prize of \$1,000! Great band, great singers, great times for all! \$5 at the door!

## Brandon Idol

**Round 2!**

**Friday, Feb 23, 7 p.m.**

Cheer on your favorites as they progress in the competition! \$5 at the door!

## 4H Talent Show!

**Saturday, Feb 24, 7 p.m.**

Young performers from around Rutland County sing, dance and entertain you! These kids are amazing — you won't want to miss this! Donation at the door!