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**REPORTER**

A community supported newspaper

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\$1



RCHS'S NEW EXEC Director, Jennifer Perrigo with Emma (who's available for adoption).

## Rutland County Humane Society hires new Exec Director

**BY STEVEN JUPITER**  
 PITTSFORD—Just weeks after announcing its purchase of a new facility in Brandon, the Rutland County Humane

Society (RCHS) announced the arrival of Jennifer Perrigo as its new Executive Director. Ms. Perrigo replaces Beth Saradar. (See RCHS, Page 21)

## Brandon SB talks police resignations and ethics

**BY STEVEN JUPITER**  
 BRANDON—The Brandon Selectboard convened for its first meeting of 2025 on Monday evening.  
**POLICE RESIGNATIONS**  
 By far the most pressing issue before it was the recent resignation of 4 Brandon police officers.

(See Brandon SB, Page 19)

## Pittsford TM David Atherton to leave position

**BY STEVEN JUPITER**  
 PITTSFORD—Pittsford's Town Manager David Atherton tendered his resignation to the Pittsford Selectboard last week, effective Friday, February 7. Mr. Atherton has been Pittsford's Town Manager since spring of 2023. He came to Pittsford after a long tenure as Brandon's Town Manager, during which he oversaw the massive Segment 6 construction project that revamped Brandon's downtown. (See Pittsford TM, Page 18)

## Brandon Fire District holds annual meeting, votes to purchase land for water tank

**BY STEVEN JUPITER**  
 BRANDON—The Brandon Fire District No. 1 held its annual meeting at the Brandon American Legion on Monday evening. The purpose of the meeting was to elect officers and pass a budget for Fiscal Year 2025-26,

which will begin on July 1, 2025 and ends on June 30, 2026. The Fire District encompasses both the Brandon Fire Department and the Brandon Water Department and is a separate legal entity from the Town of Brandon, which has no oversight

over the District. The District is overseen by a Prudential Board composed of 5 elected members. Though water bills in Brandon are sent out in conjunction with sewer bills, as a convenience, the water portion of the bills goes to (See Brandon Fire District, Page 23)

# BRANDON IDOL KICKS OFF 2025

**BY STEVEN JUPITER**  
 BRANDON—Now that the holidays are behind us, it can feel like a long, dark slog through the back half of winter. But Brandon Idol is upon us once again, bringing music and fun to our lives while we trudge our way to spring. Fifteen singers, ranging in age from teens to AARP-eligible, took to the stage on Friday, January 10 to impress the judges with their vocal virtuosity and vie for a spot in the Brandon Idol competition, which will entail themed monthly performances in February, March, and April, and a Grand Finale in May. The winner of the competition will receive \$1,000. Along the way, the audience will get to choose "Fan Favorite" at every performance as well.

The competition is hosted by Brandon Rec, and Rec Director Bill Moore stepped up as Master of Ceremonies for the evening, not only introducing the contestants but also conducting brief interviews with them after their songs to give the

audience an opportunity to find out a bit about them. The entrants competed in mostly alphabetical order, by first name. They performed to pre-recorded backing tracks. The monthly performances in the main competition will feature the live Brandon Idol band: Bryon Billo, Carina Ellis, Kenny Cifone, and Ross Edmunds. First up was 19-year-old Baker Larock with "I Wish You Cheated," originally performed by Alexander Stewart. A pop song with an alternative vibe whose lyrics focus on a relationship

gone south, the tune gave Larock a chance to demonstrate his falsetto

and to show off his emotional range as well. After the performance, he made sure to let the audience know that he and his girlfriend are doing fine. Bethany White, who has performed in Idol since 2020, came on stage in a gown befitting an opera singer. The dress was appropriate as she had chosen "Think of Me" from the Broadway musical "Phantom of the Opera," a piece that requires serious vocal chops, which Ms. White proved she had, especially when she breezed through some very complicated bits of melody in her upper register. Next was Otter Valley senior Calvin Ladd, who recently dazzled audiences at OV as

Spongebob in "Spongebob: the Musical" and as Damian in "Mean Girls" with the Walking Stick Theatre. Ladd chose "Me & Julio Down by the Schoolyard" by Paul Simon. The song has some tricky rhythms and rhymes, but Ladd powered through them and then capped it off with a pitch-perfect whistling of the main melody, just as Simon did in the original recording. Newbie Cara Woods paid homage to Vermont-grown talent with a lovely rendition of "Flowers" from the Broadway musical "Hedestown," which was written by Vermont native Anaïs Mitchell. The ballad gave Woods a chance to strut her musical stuff, gliding from high to low with ease. Though Woods is new to Brandon Idol, the Rutland resident is an experienced singer who was in the fall production of (See Brandon Idol, Page 8)



BRANDON IDOL CONTESTANT Bethany White.



# Historic Blue Moon building on Brandon's Center Street has survived two floods, five fires, and an explosion

## Fourth in a series on Brandon's historic buildings

BY JAMES PECK

For 136 years, one iconic two-story brick building by the upper waterfall in Brandon's downtown has survived a number of disasters—floods, fires, and even an explosion—that took down the buildings surrounding it.

Located at what is now 31 Center Street, it is now occupied by Blue Moon Clothing & Gifts, owned and operated by Ellen Walter. But many in town remember it as LaDuke's Restaurant. In 1976, along with 244 old buildings in Brandon, including much of downtown Center and Park Streets, it was placed on the National Historic Register (NHR) as part of the Brandon Village Historic District.

When it was built in 1888, it was viewed as unique to the Central Street row of stores and businesses, most of which were built in wood with peaked roofs, like residences. The local paper, *The Brandon Union*, praised its Queen Anne architecture: "it marks a new architectural era for Brandon, it being the only absolutely modern style of building here."

Only 17 feet wide and 26 feet deep, it was somehow shoe-horned in between a wooden furniture store to the north and the brick three-story engine room of the former Howe Scale shop. There hadn't been any buildings at all there in front of the upper waterfall until the brick engine room was built around 1857 by Howe to run the machinery to make their scales in their main building further south on the east side of

Central. The wooden two-story furniture store to the north itself was actually moved there in 1884 from its original spot just behind the Methodist Church on Franklin Street where it was built in 1876 by the Parish & Serviss Furniture outfit.

The man who had the new thin building erected was Frank E. Briggs, then a prominent Brandon mover and shaker in town along with his four brothers. Only 43 years old, Frank and his brother Charles had operated another very successful furniture shop on Central Street about where the Brandon Artist Guild building is today since 1873. Another brother, George Briggs was a prominent lawyer and partner of future Vermont governor Ebenezer Ormsbee in their office then located on the second floor of the Conant Block, today the office of attorney Jim Leary. A third brother, Sumner Briggs, ran the Briggs Carriage Shop, now The Bookstore, at the top of what became Briggs Lane.

Frank Briggs built the new thin brick building for his office, which was on the second floor. The architect was Francis Flint who also did the woodwork in the interior. The mason who built the foundation and did the brickwork was Roscoe Sanders, who later built the brick firehouse by Town Hall in 1888 and the Hotel Brandon in 1892, which became the Brandon Inn. Sanders always used the best Ira lime in his mortar, a fact that would save the building a few times.

The building shared the thick brick wall on the south with the

engine room building. Frank Briggs was a busy man; besides

when the boiler in the electric light company only 30 feet

spared the building thanks to the work of the Dunmore Hose



**THE RED ARROW** points to what is now the Blue Moon boutique on Center Street in Brandon. Built in 1888, it's the last remnant of this row of commercial buildings. It's withstood fires and floods and fistfights (when it was LaDuke's Restaurant in the 50s, 60s, and 70s). This photo dates to the early 1900s.

his hardware and real estate interests, he was cashier of the First National Bank, President of the Brandon Electric Company, and was town representative for a few years.

Briggs rented out the first floor first to the drug store of George Crossman, who was there until 1892 when the town's first telephone exchange was installed there.

### EXPLOSION

The building escaped its first disaster in August of 1892,

away blew out the south wall of the steam engine building and one man was killed. Frank Briggs himself narrowly escaped by minutes.

In 1892, Frank ran into financial and health difficulties, filed for insolvency, then died in 1893 from an assault in New York City. All his downtown holdings were sold, including his office building for \$1,200 to Edgar O. Cool.

Cool would own it for 32 years, first leasing to the Home Bakery, then to a number of hat shops or millineries.

### FLOODS

The Neshobe had flooded a number of times before the building was built, most notably in the Great Flood of 1877, but then there were no buildings in that crucial spot. In 1897, and again in 1914 and 1927, the river ran across Central Street, but the foundations held for Briggs's building and its two neighbors.

### 1918, 1922 FIRES

In 1918, a fire destroyed the southernmost buildings on the east side of Center Street including the bank corner and part of Park Street. It threatened, but did not harm, the 33 Center Street building.

In 1922, a fire started only two buildings south and again

Company.

In 1925, Clarence Bishop, the "Dollar Dress Man," bought the building from Cool and ran his popular drycleaning shop there for seven years. He never raised the price of a dress from one dollar.

In 1932, Jack Edgar, a Scottish immigrant, set up the first restaurant, Jack's Lunch, in the building, leasing it for fourteen years up until 1946. While he was there, two more disasters threatened the building.

### 1938 FLOOD

In September of 1938, floods devastated most of Vermont. In Brandon, the Neshobe overflowed below the falls and tore through Jack's Lunch, Memoe's Hardware, the First National Store, and White's Restaurant. Windows were shattered and the sidewalks and pavements were smashed and cracked, but all the buildings survived.

### 1943 FIRE

Almost exactly five years after the flood, the Great Brandon Fire destroyed two wooden buildings south of #31 and damaged the building just south of the brick one next to Jack's.

Jack's Lunch kept operating through the war years, then sold in 1946 to George Farr, who changed the name to the Wagon (*See Blue Moon building, Page 14*)



**LADUKE'S RESTAURANT OCCUPIED** what is now the Blue Moon boutique for decades. Though the restaurant was known for its amazing burgers and fries, it lives on in Brandon lore as the site of more than a few brawls. The last restaurant to occupy the space was the Watershed.

# Question to Brandon Library uncovers evidence of Frederick Douglass' visit to Brandon in 1870

**BY KEVIN THORNTON**  
 BRANDON—A recent query to the Brandon Free Public Library led to the rediscovery of a forgotten visit to Brandon of one most important Americans

of the 19th century. Patrick Hanlon, a researcher for the Frederick Douglass Papers at Indiana University, had an unverified source indicating that Douglass spoke in Brandon on

May 12, 1870. His question to the library was, could it be true?

It turns out that it could. A quick search of the local newspapers published in 1870

revealed that Douglass had indeed lectured in Brandon on May 12 of that year, in the Town Hall, on the subject of “Our Composite Nation; or the Fifteenth Amendment.” The talk was sponsored by the

vevy to the people of Brandon. By 1870 Douglass had been famous for many years, in the universally acknowledged leader of Black America, he was extremely well-known as an editor, orator, and public fig-



**FREDERICK DOUGLASS**



**ABOVE: THE MARSH** house on Pearl Street, where Frederick Douglass is believed to have spent the night after his speech in Brandon in 1870. The Marshes had been very active abolitionists.

**BELOW: THE BRANDON** Town Hall in the 1890s. The brick firehouse to the right of the hall was not there when Douglass visited Brandon, but the Town Hall would've looked like this.

Brandon Y.M.C.A.

The final post-Civil War/Reconstruction-era amendment to the U.S. Constitution, the 15th Amendment, had been ratified on February 3, 1870, a mere three months before Douglass's Brandon speech. The amendment prevented states from denying the right to vote “on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.” Douglass naturally believed it to be an immensely important step toward equal citizenship. This is what he wanted to con-

ure. His visit to Brandon would have been a big event.

After the lecture he spent the night in town, too, at the home of Rodney & Eliza Marsh on Pearl Street, which still stands. How do we know? Because Eliza got his signature. Eliza, who was 54 years old in 1870, had been involved in the anti-slavery and Black-rights movements since the 1840s. She kept what she called a “Book of Sentiments,” in which she collected the autographs of people (See *Frederick Douglass*, Page 20)

## Spotlight On Business SCRIBNER FINANCIAL, INC.



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## Editorial

# Brandon must decide what safety is worth

BY STEVEN JUPITER

At Monday's Selectboard meeting in Brandon, the first meeting of the new year, residents were informed that four Brandon PD officers had resigned since December, leaving only Brandon PD Chief David Kachajian and two other full-time officers, all after the first year of full staffing in a long time.

Needless to say, the news was not met with cheer.

One of the officers had signaled his likely departure a few months ago, but the resignations of the other three seem to have taken the town by surprise. All four officers are leaving Brandon to pursue what they view as better opportunities in other departments in the area: one is going to Middlebury and three to Rutland City. And the officer heading to Midd is taking Guinness the K-9 officer with him for good measure. Anyone who wants to see the dog Brandon fought so hard for will only have to check the front page of the Addison Independent, where his exploits in his new home will surely be noted. At least Middlebury is paying us for our efforts in training him (see page 1 for details in the article on the Brandon SB).

Losing one officer every now and then is to be expected, even planned for. But to lose four all at once is a sign that something isn't working. And what isn't working doesn't seem particularly hard to discern: Brandon PD is having a hard time competing with larger departments that can offer higher pay and better working conditions.

During this season's budget process, the town was informed multiple times by people in the know—Brandon FD Chief Tom Kilpeck and Brandon Rescue Chief Andy

Jackson, for example—that we were in danger of losing officers because they didn't feel they were getting the support they needed from the town.

And, lo, the prophesy came to pass.

In its defense, the Board was not in a great position this budget season, having been pummeled last year over a double-digit budget increase. The majority of voters couldn't tolerate any more tax increases and let the Board know by knocking the proposed FY25 budget down twice. People were rightfully angry at being asked to pay more taxes yet again, but there was also a faction of town voters who were particularly vocal about their displeasure and really put the Board and town management through the wringer. At times it was pretty brutal and clearly left some scars. In fact, watching the budget workshops this year was often like watching PTSD victims trying to work through their issues without a therapist.

The Board clearly didn't want a repeat of last year's budget drama. If those 4 officers had not resigned, we'd all be singing the Board's praises for being so sensible. But it didn't work out that way and now they're facing backlash for being too cautious.

But this is where we the people come in.

We need to make clear to the Board what we're willing to pay for the kind of police coverage that will make us feel safe.

Recently, a spate of car break-ins got everyone's dander up. We're dealing with an increase in drug-related crimes as well. Folks constantly complain about speeding on  
(See *Price of safety*, Page 6)



### Nature's pest control

THIS VERMILION FLYCATCHER was seen along the Salt River in Arizona. Photo by Sue Wetmore

## Community Forums

# Rutland Area NAACP to hold its annual fundraising brunch, Jan. 18th

The Rutland Area NAACP will be hosting its annual Freedom Fund event on Saturday, January 18, 2025 at the Grace Congregational Church in Rutland. Each year, every branch of the National Association for the Advancement  
(See *Rutland Area NAACP*, Page 20)

# Estate Planning – A Presentation open to the Community in Shoreham

Everyone has an estate, consisting of everything you own: your car, home, other real estate, bank accounts, investments, life insurance, furniture, personal possessions. Estate planning is making a plan in advance, naming the people or organizations you want to receive the things you own after you die, and taking steps now to make carrying out your plan as easy as possible later.  
(See *Estate Planning*, Page 20)

# Ice Bowl Disc Golf Tournament in Pittsford – Register by Jan. 16th

The Pittsford Recreation Department and Team Lumberjack are holding their 2nd Annual Sugar Hollow Ice Bowl Disc Golf Tournament. Beginning at 9:00 a.m. on Saturday, January 18th, all will gather at the Sugar Hollow Disc Golf Course at the Pittsford Recreation in an effort to raise money for the Pittsford Food Shelf, which  
(See *Ice Bowl Disc Golf*, Page 20)

# Town of Brandon auctioning off 2 used police cars, proceeds go to town

In the market for a car? The Town of Brandon, Vermont, is currently auctioning off two used police cruisers. These online auctions are open to the public at [municibid.com](http://municibid.com) and end on Wednesday, January 22nd. Vermont residents are  
(See *Car auction*, Page 20)

## The REPORTER

The Reporter is a 501c3 nonprofit, community-supported newspaper managed by a volunteer Board of Directors. Current board members are Steven Jupiter, president; Dr. George Fjeld, treasurer; Barbara Ebling, secretary; Mitchell Pearl; Shelly Williams.

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# Letters to the Editor

## Important Voting Information from the Brandon Town Clerk

Town Meeting will be held on Tuesday March 4th, following an informational and floor vote meeting Monday evening on March 3rd. **Ballots will NOT BE MAILED this election** as the Selectboard voted to rescind its prior decision regarding the mailing of ballots.

If you would like to vote early in elections this year, please submit the form from our website here: <https://www.townofbrandon.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/VTAbsenteeRequestGeneric-003.pdf>, or

register for the year on your voter page at <https://mvp.vermont.gov/> or call the clerk's office at 802-247-3635 x203 or x204.

We don't have a long window between the arrival of ballots and town meeting because we have to wait for petitions through January 27th, so please keep that in mind if you want early ballots. For those who have left for the winter this is especially important.

Thank you for voting!

*Sue Gage  
Brandon Town Clerk*

## Letters to the editor

**Letters Policy:** The Reporter will only print letters to the editor that are signed with the author's full name, address and a phone number so the author may be reached for verification or questions. Only name and town will be printed.

Letters will only be accepted from residents of the eight towns we cover (Brandon, Pittsford, Proctor, West Rutland, Goshen, Sudbury, Leicester and Whiting) or letters that pertain to issues or people in our coverage area. We will also consider letters from former residents if the subject matter is pertinent.

The editor reserves the right to approve or reject any letter to the editor. Any letter considered slanderous or libelous will not be printed. Letters written locally endorsing candidates for office will be accepted without charge.

Send your Letters to the Editor by Fridays before 5 p.m.  
[news@brandonreporter.com](mailto:news@brandonreporter.com)

## New legislative representatives are in Montpelier!

This is an exciting week for Vermonters as the new legislative session opens in Montpelier! 28 new Republican VT representatives were elected by Vermonters in November, a message that the supermajority Democrats were not listening to the people. Many working Vermonters and seniors knew the spending in recent legislative sessions was not sustainable and resulted in historic property tax and health insurance increases for 2025. Housing, child care, labor shortage, crime and education crises abound and our new legislature has to grapple with the decisions of the past few years that threaten Vermonters ability to afford their state and the economic future for many small businesses. Historic lawsuits are in the works for global solutions warming act goals that were codified into law that are difficult to meet without harming Vermonters, and the new fossil fuel company and US Chamber of Commerce lawsuit will test the legislators' law working to force the most reliable and affordable heat and transportation options open to a very rural state out of existence. Vermonters struggle with high costs of living and must also pay for lawsuits that legislators set up to happen by their narrow view of climate challenges and possible solutions.

As Vermont citizens head into this session, it is extremely important to view the VT legislature website and read the language of the laws. Many of us read the write ups by our Democrat legislators about laws that had a positive twist, but when we read the actual law language and saw how their votes went, it became apparent that many Democrats were not voting for the citizens. Each law became a little more unbelievable and the votes by our legislators even more so.

The VT legislative home page is here: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/>

This page allows you to find legislators who represent you, committees of the Senate and VT House, and which legislators serve on those committees, each bill that is voted on, and how each legislator votes.

As you read and hear about laws in the news, please take the time to look them up and read them. You just might be amazed at what is left out of the reports by the Democrats. In Brandon, our Democrat representative Stephanie Jerome was unseated by newly elected Republican Todd Nielsen. Stephanie Jerome's newspaper writeup included that she felt the Republicans caused her to not be elected by somehow

## I'm running for Brandon Selectboard: Jeff Haylon

I'm writing today to announce that I'm seeking a one-year term on Brandon's Selectboard. In my time in Brandon, I've been lucky to meet and befriend many of the people here, but I also wanted to introduce myself properly before I ask for anyone's vote. I was born and raised in Connecticut (I know, I know), went to college in Georgia, and worked in Texas as campaign staff and later as a legislative analyst for a state representative. When COVID-19 hit, I started working with my father in our cabinetry business, as well as woodworking as an occasionally profitable hobby. I was then lucky enough to be able to buy my home and workshop here in Brandon, which I have spent the past four years restoring and renovating.

Despite no longer working in government, I've always felt the call to public service and community-building. I proudly serve as a trustee of the Brandon Free Public Library, where some

of my hand-built furniture now resides, as well as a member of the Brandon Energy Committee. I've also sat on the board of Barn Opera, have run the weekly trivia nights at Red Clover for nearly two years, and am nearly always just a phone call away from a friend who needs a couch moved or a shelf mounted. I'm a hard worker, a quick learner, and a good listener.

When I moved to Brandon, I quickly got the nickname "Baby Jeff" (for the record, I'm 28), largely because it was unusual for someone my age to put down roots here. In all honesty, I didn't know Brandon would become my home. I had no ties here and thought it might just be a place where I could enjoy a relatively peaceful life. I've loved it more than I could have imagined—now, I can't envision living anywhere else.

I'm running for Selectboard because I'm keenly aware of the economic struggles that home-

owners and young adults in Brandon face. I think younger people need to have a seat at the table, in part because it's clear that there are two conflicting worlds in Brandon, with different socioeconomic status, experience, and perspectives, and it's rare that I see those worlds interacting unless we're arguing over the town budget. I don't think I can solve that problem single-handedly, but I do think I can give it a shot.

I've lived in enough places to know that our little slice of the country is the best one. With your support, I plan to work hard to keep Brandon beautiful, affordable, and thriving. If you have any questions or would like to talk about what we can do for Brandon, please reach out to me at [jeffhaylon@gmail.com](mailto:jeffhaylon@gmail.com). I'd love to hear from you!

*Jeff Haylon  
Brandon*

## We must find ways to conserve water, here are some tips

I have always thought very little about the element of water though I enjoy swimming, ice skating, and boating. Recently my focus on water has shifted from what water can do for me to what can I do for water. Let's face it, water keeps the planet afloat. It is essential for the existence of all life forms.

I decided then that I would focus on helping my planet survive and thrive. Recyclable, regenerative, renewable, rechargeable are all words that have become familiar to me now and how we can help the planet thrive. I then became interested in water. Water is a natural resource that is being used faster and faster everyday without any way to replenish it.

Until, if, or when scientists find other sources to create and grow life forms, I feel I must use water more efficiently.

Reading up on water usage I discovered that the time each individual takes to shower has a huge impact on our overall water

usage. Time itself is also major when it comes to showering.

Home Water Works, a project of the Alliance for Water Efficiency, shows the average US shower takes 8.2 minutes, uses 17.2 gallons and has a flow rate of 2.1 gallons per minute. Furthermore, as stated on the Atlantic's website, the average American showers six times a week. This means that 5,366 gallons of water are used every year per person in the United States from taking eight-minute showers.

We will only use 3,407 gallons per person per year in the United States if we go from 8 minute use to 5 minutes use per shower. Two more water changes to save water and use less energy would be to take two showers less per week and lower our hot water 2 degrees. One can also try showering for 3 minutes instead of 5 minutes. All great ways to save energy, improve the environment, and spend less.

*Sandy Mayo  
Brandon*

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# Obituaries

## Daniel Paul Reid, 64, Brandon

Daniel Paul Reid, age 64, passed peacefully on Monday, January 6, 2025, at Rutland Regional Medical Center. It was with dignity that he fought an intense battle with pancreatic cancer, never complaining a day!

Dan was born in Glens Falls, N.Y. on August 30, 1960. He was the son of Donald and Shirley (Taylor) Reid. He grew up in Granville (N.Y.), where he received his early education and graduated from Granville High School, Class of 1978. He furthered his education at Cobleskill College, majoring in Fisheries and Wildlife.

He had worked for many years at New England Wood Craft and has been employed at Green Mountain Window Company as a supervisor for the past 25 years. Dan was indeed a master craftsman.

In his younger years he had earned Eagle Scout status with enough badges to fill a museum; he enjoyed music, attending rock concerts, and cruising in his Classic Rambler. In his earlier years, along with his brother, Mike, he had played



**DANIEL PAUL REID**

baseball on the Telescope Casual Furniture team which their father coached. Dan loved camping, fishing, hiking, playing horseshoes, and spending time with his family.

Dan was a man of many, many talents. He was sharp as a tack right until the end. He also had an astonishing memory. Dan truly could have been a contestant on Jeopardy.

Inseparable since their first date, Dan is survived by wife Sabby (Waters) Reid of Brandon (formally of Granville, N.Y.), whom he married in

Granville on May 7, 1983; three sons, Kyle (Jessica) Reid, Sean (Tammy) Reid, and Mitchell (Cynceree) Reid, all of Brandon; a brother, Michael Reid of Salem, N.Y.; and a sister, Lori (Bob) Kearsing of Granville, N.Y.

Seven grandchildren, 1 great-granddaughter, and several nieces, nephews, & cousins also survive him.

Words in a letter from his GMW Family sum up how we all feel about Dan:

“The hole left by his absence is enormous.”

A gathering “In Celebration of His Life” will take place on January 18, 2025, from 11 AM until 1 PM at Brandon American Legion 550 Franklin St.

Friends may pay their respects to the family on Friday, January 17, 2025 from 3 until 6 PM at Miller and Ketcham Funeral Home 26 Franklin Street Brandon, Vermont.

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

## Price of safety

*(Continued from Page 4)*

this, that, and the other street around town. The solution to illegal dumping on Carver Street? Increased police presence!

And it's not that we're wrong to be worried about these things, or to think that an increase in police presence would help. It's just that we have to decide how much we're willing to pay for this and then actually pay it.

Town Manager Seth Hopkins and Brandon PD Chief David Kachajian

said in the fall that full 24/7 police coverage would cost around \$1.2 million per year and require 9 or 10 full-time officers. They tried to do it with 6 officers last summer and immediately blew through their overtime budget for the entire year. Security doesn't come cheap.

So, if we want that peace of mind, we've now got to figure out how to afford it. Are we willing to bite the bullet and swallow the increased cost on top of the rest of the budget? Will we demand cuts in other

services to pay for the police? Or will we learn to live with a smaller police force?

Whatever our decision, we need it to be clear. The Selectboard are our representatives, not our mind readers. And this is no time to be recreating last year's chaos. We need to work with the Board to figure out how to obtain the security we desire. This will require calm, deliberate conversation.

We all want to sleep well at night.

## New group aims to create 'one-stop shop' for housing in southwestern Vermont

**BY GRETA SOLSAA/  
VTDIGGER**

In the southwestern corner of the state, three housing organizations have joined forces to form Cornerstone Housing Partners with the goal of covering “all things home for especially lower income Vermonters,” said Mary Cohen, the group's executive director.

Cornerstone Housing Partners was formed last year when NeighborWorks of Western Vermont and the Housing Trust of Rutland County united under one moniker, said Cohen. The Bennington County-based Shires Housing is the most recent organization to join the fold earlier this month.

The three organizations are keeping their individual legal organizational titles for now to sustain access to federal funding, but Cohen said the groups are “for all intents and purposes merged organizations” operating under the umbrella of Cornerstone Housing Partners.

Shires Housing and the Housing Trust of Rutland County both were regional organizations with kindred missions, focused on real estate and in particular multi-family housing development, managing around 400 housing units, Cohen said.

NeighborWorks of Western Vermont functioned as a financial support organization for homeowners across Southwestern Vermont with a connection to the resources of the larger national affiliate of Neighborworks of America.

The partnership between the three entities allows them to pool resources to help house Vermonters and support them with accessing resources as a renter or homeowner once they have obtained housing, she said.

“There's just a lot of synergies between our organizations,” Cohen said.

Melanie Paskevich, chief program officer of Cornerstone Housing Partners and previous interim director of NeighborWorks of Western Vermont, said that NeighborWorks programming offers low-income renters and homeowners energy efficiency improvements, home repair, loans, financial homeowner education and other services.

When NeighborWorks of Western Vermont formed in 1986, it was focused on work-

ing in four towns in Rutland county, but eventually expanded to form a presence in all of Rutland, Bennington and Addison counties. Paskevich said combining efforts with Shires Housing will offer more opportunity to expand their “collaborative work and to make more impact” in Bennington County.

Noting Vermont's rate of homelessness ranks fourth in the nation, Paskevich emphasized the importance of building more affordable housing and offering financial resources for low-income Vermonters. She said NeighborWorks programs that offer landlords grants to set up units to rehouse people exiting homelessness are a complement to the Housing Trust and Shires Housing projects.

Cohen said the Housing Trust has an affordable housing development called Lincoln Place that has 19 units, 10 of which are designated for permanent affordable housing for those who previously experienced homelessness. Shires Housing has worked with Bennington County Coalition for the Homeless to set up nine apartments at Norton House to provide the unsheltered transitional housing, she added.

While different models, both housing developments are geared toward helping people exiting homelessness, a mission that will be continued under Cornerstone, Cohen said.

Cohen's immediate goals for Cornerstone are to rehab the affordable apartments called the Arlington Village Center and create a homeownership center in Bennington County, along with continuing to develop the Housing Trust's three affordable housing projects in the Rutland area.

Another pending Cornerstone development project will rehabilitate and preserve the Cora B. Whitney building in the town of Bennington and the Conant Square building in Brandon. Both are designated as housing for senior, disabled residents, said Cohen.

The biggest challenges to the merger between the three organizations have been integrating systems and merging cultures to form a new leadership board, said Cohen. Cornerstone's new board structure, set in the by-laws, ensures equal representation. *(See Housing help, Page 21)*



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If you're planning on **improving the efficiency of your home or apartment** this year, take a look at Efficiency Vermont's residential offers, including:



## Air Sealing and Insulation

- Up to \$9,500 off weatherization projects with an Efficiency Excellence Network contractor (depending on household income)
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Financing options  
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- Smart thermostats: \$100 rebate for select ENERGY STAR models
- Water heaters: up to \$5000 for select heat pump water heaters
- Window air conditioners: \$100 rebate for select ENERGY STAR models
- Wood pellet furnaces & boilers: \$6,000 rebate
- Wood and pellet stoves: \$400 discount at select retailers



## Electric Vehicles

- Up to a \$7,500 federal tax credit



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- \$25-\$40 for dehumidifiers
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- \$400 for heat pump dryer/washer combination units



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- Up to \$10,000 for electric panel upgrades (for income-eligible households)
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# Brandon Idol

(Continued from Page 1)

“Lucky Stiff” at the Brandon Town Hall.

Donald Clinton treated the audience to an intriguing original composition called “Rene,” which had a groovy late-60s vibe reminiscent of The Doors or Procol Harum. And his orange-tinted aviator sunglasses completed the nod to that era. Originally from the Midwest and California, Mr. Clinton came recently to Vermont for “water, trees, and good people.” This is his first time in the competition.

Hilary Collier, who has competed in Idol before and also been featured as a guest singer, held the stage with a solid rendition of “Royals” by Lorde. An experienced singer, Collier performs often at the Red Clove Ale Company’s open mic in Brandon, usually with a ukulele. This time she had just her voice and proved she didn’t need anything else.

After a brief intermission, Emily Doty sang “Mama’s Broken Heart” by Miranda Lambert. The country song is a rollicking uptempo lament about a woman who can’t keep herself together after a breakup. Well, Doty kept herself tight and together for the performance, which she managed even after a long day at work as a nurse.

Jess Crossman, originally of Goshen and now of Leicester, has been performing in Brandon Idol since its first season in 2019. She

took things back to basics with the classic “Somewhere Over the Rainbow” from “The Wizard of Oz,” using an arrangement by Ariana Grande. It’s hard to go wrong with such a beloved song and Crossman did it justice, wrapping it all up with a big final note.

Miley Lape, another alum of OV’s Walking Stick, brought things back to the present day with Billie Eilish’s “Wildflower,” a breathy, ethereal, and slightly angsty ballad. Lape used her head voice to great effect throughout the piece and, unsurprisingly, it turns out she sings the National Anthem at local events. No wonder she seemed so comfortable in her high notes!

Peggie Sue Rozell chose to go country and wowed the crowd with “Those Words We Said” by Trisha Yearwood, a mid-tempo breakup ballad. Rozell imbued it with the necessary feeling, as if she’d been down that road herself once or twice. Rozell is a regular in the Idol competition and if the cheers she got from her fans in the audience are any indication, she’ll be a force to be reckoned with this year, too.

OV senior Sophie Moore, who starred as Regina George in Walking Stick’s “Mean Girls,” proved that disco is definitely not dead when she belted out the evergreen empowerment anthem “I Will Survive” by Gloria Gaynor. If at first she was afraid, even petrified, Moore got her sea legs (in white

go-go boots) and brought the song home in great style.

Sydney Singh, another alum of Walking Stick and currently a theater student at Castleton, set her sights high when she chose “All I Ask” by Adele, one of the most acrobatic singers out there today. But Ms. Singh absolutely held her own, carrying the difficult melody with ease. We’re all looking forward to hearing what she chooses next.

Brandon’s own Tim Shields injected a dose of sincere spirituality into the evening with his heartfelt rendition of the beloved hymn “How Great Thou Art,” to a backing track by local pianist Kristen Carr. And because of a misunderstanding regarding which version he intended to sing, Mr. Shields had to sing the final verse a capella, which he did with aplomb. And Shields, a local builder and contractor, may have felt at home on the Town Hall stage because he built it several years ago!

Rutland resident Trace Worobe made his Brandon Idol debut with the 70s classic “Come Sail Away” by Styx, which he performed with enough gusto to get the audience to clap and sing along, not an easy feat. Mr. Worobe has sung with the Brandon Festival Singers but revealed his rock-n-roll side at Brandon Idol.

Last but not least, William Cottell of Salisbury wrapped up the program with “Three Wooden



**BRANDON IDOL EMCEE Bill Moore presents Dennis Marden with his painted portrait in honor of all of Mr. Marden’s efforts on behalf of the Town Hall over the decades. Mr. Marden recently stepped down as President of the Friends of Town Hall. The portrait will hang in the building’s lobby**

Crosses” by Randy Travis, a country song that tells the story of a fatal bus accident. Mr. Cottell was new to the Idol stage but sang with comfort and gravitas, though he joked afterwards that his family doesn’t always appreciate his singing. Surely the Idol audience will want to hear more.

After the performances, Bill Moore introduced two of the judges, Andy Doaner, who operates Mae’s Place and the Hilltop Tavern with his wife, Erynn, and Dennis Marden, who until recently was the President of the Friends of Brandon Town Hall, the organization responsible for the revitalization of the

1861 building that anchors Brandon’s cultural life. In gratitude for all of Mr. Marden’s years of service to the Town Hall, Mr. Moore presented Marden with a painted portrait of him that will be displayed in the Town Hall lobby in his honor.

A third judge will be appointed before the first competition round in February.

And everyone who performed on Friday was invited to join the competition. So if you have a favorite and want to hear them again, or if you missed the audition around and want a chance to hear the singers, they’ll all be competing for the grand prize!



**ABOVE: M.C. MOORE congratulates “fan favorite” Miley Lape. Top right: Peggie Sue Rozell. Bottom right: Baker Larock. Next page, row by row from top (l to r): Hilary Collier, Emily Doty, William Cottell/Miley Lape, Jess Crossman, Sydney Singh/Sophie Moore, Cara Woods, Donald Clinton/Tim Shields, Calvin Ladd, Trace Worobe.**

Photos by Kevin White





# OUR CREATIVE KIDS

STUDENT: Ezra Satz

GRADE: 8

SCHOOL: OVUMS

TITLE: Untitled

MEDIUM: Paint, markers

TEACHER: Tiffany St. Michaud



**COMMENT FROM MS. ST. MICHAUD:**

During a free choice unit, Ezra used paint markers to illustrate a tree frog on black paper.

# Our Creative Kids Poetry Corner

## Where I'm From

by Jessamy

5th grade class at  
Otter Creek Academy

I am from Vermont,  
from my phone and gas.

I am from the leaves in the wind.

I'm from Zip, Oliver, and Edward  
and my detailed drawings.

I'm from a comfy spot, my blanket  
and my pillow.

I'm from colored pencils and paper.

I'm from yummy pizza rolls  
and my mom's mac and cheese.

I am from big back.



### MAPLE the COW™ by Matt Aucoin



## January inspections are due!

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cleaning • Woolwax undercoat to protect  
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# Calendar of events

## January

### Mondays

#### Brandon Rec offers Aikido classes

Aikido with Brandon Rec -- Aikido classes for Youth (4:30) and Adults (5:30) at Brandon's Town Hall main floor. Beginners and Spectators always welcome! For more information, visit [www.AikidoVermont.org](http://www.AikidoVermont.org)

### Tuesdays

#### Maclure Library Story Time Playgroup

Looking for a fun, educational playgroup for your 2–5 year old? Look no further! From 10 a.m. – 12 p.m. join Miss Allie, a certified teacher, for a weekly FREE literacy-based playgroup. Light snacks will be provided,



along with stories, crafts, songs, games, and more. To register, please email [allie.griffiths@rcpcc.org](mailto:allie.griffiths@rcpcc.org) with your child's name, age, and contact information for your family.

#### Friends Zone

Need a safe space to socialize? Come join us at the Friends Zone. Open

Tuesdays 12–3 pm at the Brandon United Methodist Church, 1 Franklin Street, Brandon. Meet with old friends and make new ones. Play cards, cribbage, or Yahtzee. Put a puzzle together or bring your arts, crafts, and hobbies to work on. Snacks and beverages provided. All are welcome to attend.

For more information contact pastor Vicki Disorda ([vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com](mailto:vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com)) or (802) 345-4125).

**Pokémon Club at the Brandon Free Public Library**  
3–5 pm. Ages 7+.

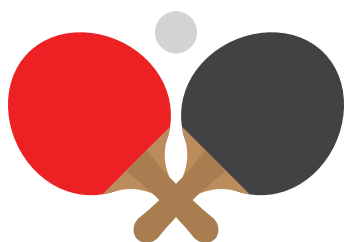
**Magic the Gathering at the Brandon Free Public Library**  
5–7pm

**Pins & Needles Craft Club at the Brandon Free Public Library**  
Drop in from 5:30–7:00 pm, and bring your projects to work on.

### Wednesdays

#### Ping Pong

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).

**Free Drop-In Tech Support at the Brandon Free Public Library**  
4:30–6 pm

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

From 10:30–11:30 am 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 our email list. \$15/class.

**Free drop-in homework help with Dan for grades K-12!**

Wednesdays 3:30–5:00 pm at the Brandon Free Public Library.

### Thursdays

**Coffee and Cards at the Brandon Free Public Library**  
2–4 pm. Come play Bridge, Hearts, or other games! Coffee and tea are available.

#### Ukulele Group

Free at the Chaffee Art Center from 12–1 p.m., for adults & 12+. This is not a class but a group enjoy-

ing 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 Art 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.

#### Brandon Senior Center Game Day

Come join us every Friday at 2:00 p.m. Cards, darts, puzzles, board games, coloring.

## Welcoming Disagreement and Introducing the Skill of Real Dialogue

Brandon Free Public Library

Saturday, Feb. 1st, 1–3 pm

This workshop will introduce three key skills: Speaking for Yourself, Listening Mindfully, and Remaining Curious. These practices will help you increase problem-solving abilities and reduce polarization at home, work, and in your community.

For more information contact [info@realdialogue.com](mailto:info@realdialogue.com) or visit [www.realdialogue.com](http://www.realdialogue.com)

## Ballroom Dance

Have fun learning ballroom dance with one of the country's most sought-after instructors, coaches and ballroom judges Patti Panebianco! 4-week sessions in January, February and March.

Never danced before and want to learn? Are you already dancing and want to learn more? Did you used to dance but want to rekindle the joy it brings? Join us on Tuesdays and get your mojo on! No partner needed! First session each month is OPEN HOUSE and free to new students!

**Tuesdays Jan 7, 14, 21, 28.** 5–6 pm Rumba; 6–6:50 pm Waltz; 7–7:30 pm Coast Swing.

## Going around

**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 12 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.

**Dance Classes with Patti Panebianco**  
**Wallingford Town Hall**



**Tuesdays Feb 4, 11, 18, 25.** 5-5:50 pm. Upon request: Kids/Youth — Swing & Salsa; 6-6:50 pm Foxtrot, 7-7:50 pm Rumba.

**Tuesdays March 4, 11, 18, 25.** 5-5:50 pm. Upon request: Kids/Youth — Swing & Salsa; 6-6:50 pm Foxtrot, 7-7:50 pm Rumba.

Cost is \$15 per person per class. Please note there is a 4-person minimum per class.

For more information please contact Patti Panebianco 516-909-1686 or email

pattipdance@gmail.com.

5-5:50 pm.  
 Foxtrot &  
 5:50 pm West

**Classes on**  
**Wallingford town**

**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

**Storytime at the Brandon Free Public Library**

Join us every Saturday at 10:30 a.m. for picture book storytime. All ages welcome.

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

**Saturday 18th**

**Choral Chameleon Concert — Mahaney Arts Center**

Back by popular demand! Choral Chameleon is a dynamic ensemble known for their innovative programming and fearless exploration of vocal artistry. If you missed their choral sound bath and concert performances in 2023, now's your chance to hear what the buzz is all about. Their concert

program CONTROL will explore the timeless and complex relationship between parents and children, and the eternal push and pull between generations—bound by love yet separated by perspective. Featuring original choral works and arrangements by a truly diverse range of composers including Bartók, Michael McGlynn, John Corigliano, Manuel de Falla, Duncan Sheik, and Janet Jackson.

This concert will also be streamed, with 48-hour access beginning at concert time.

Tickets: \$25/20/10/5; Streaming tickets \$15/5.

**Annual Photo Contest — Chaffee Art Center**

Annual Photo Contest: FACES in Harmony. Contest Guidelines: Open to amateur photographers, all ages welcome. NEW this year... a Professional Category. Deadline: January 18th.

Photos must be 8"x10" and mounted/framed. Unless marked NOT FOR SALE on application, all amateur photos submitted will be listed for sale at \$40 with 50% of the sale paid to the photographer. Professionals receive 60% of sale price. Photos in the theme "FACES in Harmony" preferred. Can be of humans, pets, animals, etc. to reflect the theme. Submission drop-off: January 17th from Noon to 4 pm and January 18th from 11 am to 2 pm. Exhibit opens & public voting begins: January 24th. Artwork pick-up: February 28th, 11 am to 4 pm.

Awards: 1st and 2nd Overall. Plus, a People's Choice award in each category, where the public gets to vote on their favorite. Categories: Youth 12 & under, Teen 13-18, Adult 18+, and Professional. Submission drop off/mailed to: Chaffee Art Center, 16 South Main St., Rutland, VT 05701. For information, visit our website www.chaffeeartcenter.org; Inquiries or to get a form emailed: info@chaffeeartcenter.org

**Mike Block & Yacouba Sissoko — Next Stage Arts**

Next Stage Arts presents a special duo collaboration between cellist Mike Block and master kora player Yacouba Sissoko. Mike Block is a Grammy-winning multi-style cello player, composer, singer, and educator, with a passion for cross-cultural collaborations.

**Upcoming Rutland County Audubon Society Events**

**Saturday, January 18**  
 — Join us for "Regulars and Rarities" as we go in search of winter birds (residents and visitors from the far north) along the back roads and lake shores of Rutland and Addison Counties. We will be meeting at 8 am to carpool from Otter Valley Union High School. Bring lunch, snacks, water, and warm clothes. Please contact birding@rutlandcounty-audubon.org for more information or if you would like to join us near Lake Champlain rather than carpool.

**Wednesday, January 22, 6:30-8 pm** — Birds of Cuba  
 Grace Congregational, 8 Court St, Rutland, VT 05701 (Use the parking lot on West St. and go in the left side door, all the way to the end of the hall)

Long-time Audubon member Mike Blust and his wife, Vangie, will share photos and stories about Cuban Birds and Culture



from their trip in April 2024.

**Wednesday, January 22**  
 — We will also be kicking off a fundraiser for our Scholarship Fund raffling a 10 ft Lifetime Cruze 100 kayak with paddle. Tickets are \$2 for 1 and 3 for \$5. Drawing will be held on May 10.

**Thursday, January 23**  
 — Join us at 8 am at the kiosk on Marble St, West Rutland, for our monthly monitoring walk around the Marsh. Go half way or the whole 4.2 miles. All levels of birders are welcome.

**Saturday, February 15**  
 — Join us at 8 am at the kiosk on Marble St, West Rutland for our monthly monitoring walk. This is also the weekend of the Great Backyard Bird Count using the phone app "ebird." For more information on the walk or Great Backyard Bird Count, please contact birding@rutland-countyaudubon.org.



kora and the oral traditions associated with it from his grandfather at the age of 9. For centuries, Djelis have been the musical storytellers, a position that is inherited through a family lineage. Highly respected within their communities, they are the keepers of the factual history and the fictional fables of past rulers, nobles, social groups and families. The kora, a 21-stringed plucked instrument with a gourd resonator, is the traditional instrument accompanying their songs. From 7:30-9:30 pm at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill, Putney. \$10-25.

Hailed as "one of the bravest, most intriguing musicians on the American fusion scene" by Gramophone, he was acclaimed by the New York Times for his "vital rich-hued solo playing," and "a true artist . . . a sight to behold" by Salt Lake City Deseret News. In addition to his solo performances and touring bands, since 2005 Mike has been a member of the Silk Road Ensemble, founded by Yo-Yo Ma, with which he has been featured as a cello and vocal soloist, contributed arrangements and compositions, and earned a 2017 Grammy Award for Best Global Music Album. Master kora player Yacouba Sissoko devotes his musical gift to expand the awareness of West African history and culture, spread the word of peace, and empower his listeners to take charge and realize their imagined futures. His performances have a magical effect on audiences as he skillfully transforms the traditional songs and stories of his forefathers into modern day messages of peace, love, and harmony. Born to a well-known Djeli family in Kita, Mali, Yacouba started learning the

**Meatloaf Dinner at the Brandon United Methodist Church**  
**Saturday, January 25th, from 4:30-6:30 pm**

All are Welcome to Attend.

Suggested Donation: \$10/Adult.

Union Street (formerly 1 Franklin St).



# Blue Moon building

(Continued from Page 2)

Wheel. Farr, in turn sold to Frank LaDuke, a 58-year-old dairy farmer and his son Matt, 34, a decorated WWII veteran.

## 1950 FIRE

On April 19, 1950, a huge fire destroyed the three buildings to the south of LaDuke's, but LaDuke's building was again saved, even though the adjoining three story brick building (the old Howe Scale engine room) right next door was burnt to the ground.

Frank and Matt had removed much of the furnishings from LaDuke's as a precaution.

Now there was a vacant lot to the south overlooking the falls, 30 feet wide along Center

Street. That lot was never built on, but the other buildings were, mostly later that year, by the new owner Clifford Matott, this time in brick. His name is still on the brick building at 25 Center Street, now Carr's Florist and Gift Shop.

Frank LaDuke passed in 1961 and his son Matt a year later, leaving Matt's wife Catherine to run LaDuke's herself. In the 50s and 60s, it was known as a workingman's bar where men could go looking for a fight. In the 70s, under Catherine's management, and that of her children, Patty and Matt, Jr., the place mellowed, becoming more of a pub for men and women, where you could get the best burgers and



**31 CENTER STREET** remains intact while the former Brandon House of Pizza sits in the street in the aftermath of Tropical Storm Irene in 2011. The high-quality mortar used by mason Roscoe Sander likely preserved the brick building.

fries in the state.

## 1979 FIRE

As though there hadn't been enough fires on the east side of Center Street, in September of 1979, the Market Falls Emporium next door at 33 Center Street sustained a heavy fire on its second floor.

LaDuke's was again evacuated. This time the restaurant sustained smoke and water damage, but quickly made repairs. The Emporium, then home of the Samurai Sub Shop, was rebuilt, but lost its second floor.

Patty LaDuke sold the 31 Center building in 1989, end-

ing 40 memorable years of LaDuke's in town. After LaDuke's, the building continued as a bar/restaurant/pub, first as KD's Grill & Pub, then the Watershed Tavern.

## TROPICAL STORM IRENE

The most recent threat to the building came on August 28, 2011, when a monster storm hit Vermont, again raising the Neshobe River below the falls into a raging torrent. This time, water poured over Center Street and the Brandon House of Pizza (BHOP) building next door, which was lifted off its foundation and ended up twenty feet into the street. It was demolished a week later.

Again, the brick building at #31, now called the Watershed, survived, likely thanks to Roscoe Sander's strong Ira lime foundation.

The BHOP lot was now empty, and the town smartly installed a \$2.4 million overflow culvert under the street there (2/3 funded by FEMA) that has since avoided a number of floods, one as bad as Irene in 2017.

Today, Blue Moon Clothing and Gifts occupies the oldest surviving building on the east side of Center Street, built in 1888 by Frank Briggs. It proudly stands by itself, with beautiful Kennedy Park to its right and the meeting table for the men's daily coffee klatch above the culvert on its left. Let's hope its luck holds out going forward, as it truly represents the epitome of Brandon Strong.



**THE BUILDING AS** it appears today, home to the Blue Moon boutique. Current owner Ellen Walter recently put the building on the market but soon took it off, noting that it was too special a structure to part with.

# Restaurant guide

**Robert's**  
*Café Provence*

**From Provence to You**  
*De la Provence à Vous*

Wednesday – Saturday: 11:30 a.m. – 9 p.m.  
Sunday: 10 a.m. – 9 p.m.

Want a reservation? Please book through the website <https://cafeprovencevt.com> or call (802) 247-9997

11 Center Street, Brandon, VT

**Franklin's**  
FOOD, FRIENDS & FUN

Full Menu 7 days a week  
Eat In or Take Out  
Available for Parties

Prime Rib Every Friday & Saturday from 4–9 p.m.

**25 North Street, Proctor** 📞 802-459-3320

Ad design included in pricing  
Call 802 236-4662, or email [george@brandonreporter.com](mailto:george@brandonreporter.com) for more information

## Sharpen your mind with our puzzles.

See page 17



BEN AND ANN Clarke examine cookie cutter designs.

Photo courtesy of Ann Clarke Ltd

## HOW A RUTLAND COOKIE CUTTER MANUFACTURER'S BUSINESS SNOWBALLED

BY GRETA SOLSAA/  
VTDIGGER

RUTLAND—Ann Clark enjoyed baking cookies but grew tired of the same old cookie cutter shapes in her Rutland kitchen. Wanting to create her own designs, she commissioned a cookie cutter manufacturer to make a “fat, little piggy,” and the manufacturer was blown away by her drawings.

That’s where she got the idea to start creating her own line of cookie cutters.

“I used to do craft shows with

things that I had painted and made, and it just sort of morphed into designing some cookie cutters, because I love to bake,” Clark said. “It just took off.”

Since she started creating cookie cutters in her home with the help of her late husband in 1989, the business Ann Clark Ltd. has grown to be the largest cookie cutter manufacturer in the United States.

Ben Clark, CEO of Ann Clark Ltd. and Ann’s son, said that he moved back to Vermont to help out with the business in the late

1990s and eventually took over operations of the company when Ann retired. Sitting down for an interview as the end of year boom of sales slowed down, Ben Clark said that one great part of his work is that his family’s creations can bring people together during the holiday for cooking and celebrations.

“It’s taking my mom’s art and putting it in people’s kitchens, which is fantastic.”

As the business shifted towards the wholesale and custom  
*(See Cookie cutters, Page 23)*

## New representatives

*(Continued from Page 5)*  
dicts, heating oil and fuel penalties to push Vermonters to high priced electric heat while lying that it was lower priced than heating oil which failed in the 70’s and will fail again, while punishing small business fuel and propane dealers financially and administratively until they go out of business, and the list goes on.

Vermonters must look up and read and take an active part in their legislative representatives work. The votes of the superma-

majority opened a lot of eyes in Vermont. We can no longer assume a nice face or smile is someone helping us; we must do the work to review the votes to ensure we really know what is happening to our home state and our investments in homes and businesses. Vermonters complacency got us where we are and we must work hard to get back to reasonable legislation and reasonable expenses from our legislators.

Sharon Stearns  
Brandon

## REAL ESTATE



Charming village home with a nice wrap-around porch & detached garage with loft. This home has been well maintained and it shows! 3 bedrooms upstairs, eat-in kitchen, large living room, office, cozy den. Just a short walk to beautiful downtown Brandon with its many parks and shops. \$320,000



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

Judy Anderson - Mornings from 6 to 10 am!



# Mim's Photos



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

E-mail  
[kate@brandonreporter.com](mailto:kate@brandonreporter.com)  
if you can identify someone  
in these photos.

Or call us at 247-8080



## Recognized



Cliff Cyr recognized this photo of his grandfather, Cliff Matot. Bud Coolidge, Tom Whittaker, Kurt Kimball, and Terry Ferson also recognized Mr. Matot, who was a longtime barber in Brandon. He worked on Main Street, across from the Town Offices.

Both Mr. Ferson and Mr. Kimball frequented Mr. Matot's barber shop, and Mr. Kimball told us that it was Mr. Matot who gave him his first haircut roughly 60 years ago.



Linda (Quimby) Thompson, Bud Coolidge, Sue Wetmore, and Tom Whittaker recognized Jennie Needham in this photo. Ms. Needham was a third-grade teacher in Brandon, and Linda Thompson and Bud Coolidge were her students!



# Crossword

## CLUES ACROSS

1. This regulates cortisol production (abbr.)
5. People of northern Vietnam
8. Employee stock ownership plan
12. Regions
14. The center of a city
15. Hindu serpentine deity
16. Roared
18. Sun up in New York
19. "Sir" in Malaysian
20. Shrimp dish
21. Muckraker Tarbell
22. Apex
23. Harmonic effects
26. One of Babe Ruth's nicknames
30. Groups in organic chemistry
31. More pleasant-tasting
32. Spring forward
33. Noted writer
34. Building occupied by monks
39. "The world's most famous arena"
42. Colorless liquid hydrocarbon
44. Long or fast speech
46. Things you can eat
47. Substance in which magnetic moments are not aligned
49. Actor Idris
50. I (German)
51. Taxes
56. Indonesian island
57. Nuisance (slang)
58. Shawl
59. Digits
60. Moved on foot quickly
61. "For goodness \_\_\_"
62. Facial body part
63. Russian river
64. Urinates

## CLUES DOWN

1. Partner to "oohs"
2. Scaly water dweller
3. Pueblo people of New Mexico
4. Music producer Teo
5. Greek mythological goddess
6. Got together to discuss
7. Acquires
8. Involve
9. Some are tomato-based
10. Old Irish alphabets
11. A sheet of glass in a window or door
13. Blood poisoning
17. A moon of Saturn
24. Neither
25. Sums
26. They follow "A"
27. Satisfaction
28. People of southeastern Burma
29. Small amount
35. Guy (slang)
36. Sound unit
37. Midway between northeast and east
38. Affirmative
40. Almost at the top
41. Extremely slow
42. Pearl Jam's debut album
43. Influential mid-century playwright
44. Martens
45. Approval
47. Dallas-adjacent Texas city
48. African nation
49. Dark brown or black
52. A place to get caught
53. Large-headed, elongated fish
54. Type of sword
55. Scottish tax or levy

1	2	3	4		5	6	7		8	9	10	11	
12				13		14			15				
16					17	18			19				
20						21			22				
				23		24			25				
26	27	28	29				30						
31							32						
33								34	35	36	37	38	
				39	40	41		42	43				
			44	45				46					
	47						48						
49					50			51		52	53	54	55
56					57			58					
59					60				61				
62					63					64			

# Sudoku

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

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

## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

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

## New Year, New Routine — Let Your Pet Help You Reach Your Goals!

As you kick off the new year with resolutions, don't forget that your furry friend can be your best partner for success! Here are some tips to incorporate your pet into your new routine: **Get Active Together:** Whether it's daily walks with your dog or play sessions with your cat, staying active with your pet is a great way to achieve your fitness goals while keeping them healthy too! **Practice Mindfulness:** Take a moment to relax with your pet. Whether it's quiet cuddles or simply watching them nap, their presence can help you slow down and de-stress. **Stick to a Schedule:** Pets thrive on routine, and so do we! Use their meal times, walks, and playtime as anchors for your daily schedule to help you stay consistent with your new habits. **Learn Something New:** Teach your pet a new trick or work on training. It's a fun and rewarding way to bond while developing patience and discipline and strengthening your relationship with your furry friend. Whatever your goals may be, there are many ways to include your pets.

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



### MEET MOANA \*FOSTER-TO-ADOPT - 1-YEAR-OLD. FEMALE. GERMAN

**SHEPHERD MIX. BLACK/TAN.** Do you have Shepherd experience and are looking for a Moana is a strong, spirited pup with a big heart, and an athletic build to match. She's the perfect mix of playful energy and snuggly sweetness, making her an amazing companion for anyone ready to embrace her zest for life. Moana is affectionate and loves meeting new friends. Whether it's a game of catch, a long walk, or a cozy cuddle on the couch, she's always by your side, ready for whatever the day brings. She's house-trained, knows some basic commands, and thrives on being close to her favorite humans. Please do your research on the breed as they do have specific needs, and need an active family who will provide both physical and mental exercise daily. Moana is currently in a foster-to-adopt home, but she's eager to meet her forever family. If you're ready to embark on an adventure with this incredible girl, call the shelter to schedule a time to meet her!

### MEET GRAHAM - 1-YEAR-OLD. NEUTERED MALE. GREAT DANE / PITBULL MIX. TAN/WHITE.

Meet Graham, the handsome charmer! While he may be a bit shy at first, once he warms up, Graham blossoms into a playful and affectionate companion. This treat-motivated boy has a special trick up his sleeve—he can "sit pretty" for his favorite snacks! He loves running around outdoors, soaking up the fresh air, and then winding down with a relaxing snooze in the afternoon. Graham didn't get along with the cat in his previous home, but he did well with an older child and might thrive with another dog, given the right match. Dog adoptions are currently by appointment only. If you're interested in meeting Graham, please call our adoption center at 802-483-6700 to schedule a time.



**RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY**

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**OUR ADOPTION CENTER IS OPEN TUESDAY-SATURDAY FROM 11AM-4PM.**



## New Large Print books donated by Brenda Whittaker

### Backwater Justice by Fern Michaels, donated in memory of Marion C. Sawyer

The small Oregon town of Mountain Valley seems like the perfect place to safely raise a family, away from the dangers of the big city. Vanessa's parents think so, until the day their fourteen-year-old daughter doesn't come home for dinner. Myra Rutledge has honed her instincts over scores of missions, and the news stories about missing young women set her internal alarms ringing, especially when it involved her old friend, Milton Spangler. She shares her concerns with other women of the Sisterhood, and they agree to look into the goings-on in Mountain Valley. But a small town like this can have deep secrets, especially when one family holds so much power.

## New NonFiction

### The Birds that Audubon Missed: Discovery and Desire in the American Wilderness by Kenn Kaufman

Naturalist Kenn Kaufman examines the scientific discoveries of John James Audubon and his artistic and ornithologist peers to show how what they saw (and what they missed) reflects how we perceive and understand the natural world.

## New Fiction

### Bookshops & Bonedust by Travis Baldree

Viv's career with the notorious mercenary company Rackam's Ravens isn't going as planned. Wounded during the hunt for a powerful necromancer, she's packed off against her will to recuperate in the sleepy beach town of Murk—so far from the action that she worries she'll never be able to return to it. What's a thwarted soldier of fortune to do? Spending her hours at a beleaguered bookshop in the company of its foul-mouthed proprietor is the last thing Viv would have predicted, but it may be both exactly what she needs and the seed of changes she couldn't possibly imagine. Still, adventure isn't all that far away. A suspicious traveler in gray, a gnome with a chip on her shoulder, a summer fling, and an improbable number of skeletons prove Murk to be more eventful than Viv could have ever expected.

### Floreana by Midge Raymond

After ten years away to build a family, Mallory returns to Floreana Island in the Galápagos, and to Gavin, the mentor with whom she had a long-ago affair. Their project is to build nests to revive the vulnerable penguin population. But Mallory doesn't dare tell Gavin why she's really come back. Then she discovers old journals hidden in a lava cave—confessions of another woman who needed to disappear.

In 1929, Dore Strauch left the life she knew to create a new one with the man she

## DID YOU KNOW?

We have two special events coming up—creating mini tin bookshelves on 1/21 from 5:30-7pm and Birding Q&A with Sue Wetmore on 1/23 from 6-7 pm.

loved. On remote Floreana they're beholden to no one but each other. Until the arrival of strangers, settlers in their paradise. Suddenly, Dore realizes that it's no longer the refuge she imagined. And that amid the island's fragile beauty, people can do the most terrible things.

### Gabriel's Moon by William Boyd

Travel writer Gabriel Dax is a young man haunted by the memories of a fire that took his mother's life. Every night, when sleep finally comes, he dreams about his childhood home in flames. His days are spent on the move, capturing the changing landscapes of Europe in the grip of the Cold War. When he is offered the chance to interview Patrice Lumumba, newly elected president of the People's Republic of the Congo, he finds himself drawn into a web of duplicities and betrayals. Falling under the spell of Faith Green, an enigmatic and ruthlessly efficient MI6 handler, he becomes "her spy," unable to resist her demands. But amid the peril, paranoia, and passion consuming Gabriel's new covert life, there will also be revelations closer to home that may change his own story and the fates of those around him.

## Pittsford TM

(Continued from Page 1)

In a text exchange with The Reporter, Mr. Atherton stated that his departure from Pittsford was not due to any negativity.

"Nothing bad happened," he

wrote. "A couple opportunities have come my way that I didn't want to pass up."

Pittsford Selectboard Chair Alicia Malay, who has just begun her first term as Pittsford's State Rep in Montpelier, did not

respond to this paper's requests for comment before press time.

Pittsford Selectboard Vice-Chair David Mills, reached via text, said that he had "no comment at this time."

# Brandon Police Report

## January 6

- Assisted Vergennes Police in locating a Brandon resident on McConnell Road to issue her a citation for False Information to a Police Officer. The subject was located and served the citation.

- Received information regarding a stolen vehicle that was recovered in Vergennes that belonged to a Brandon resident. The original theft was determined to have occurred in Pittsford and the investigation was transferred to the Pittsford Police Department.

- Responded to a domestic disturbance on Church Street. A woman was trying to move out of her residence, but her boyfriend was not letting her take her property unless she paid him \$300. Officers established that the woman had residency there and the property belonged to her, so officers helped her enter the residence where she was able to safely gather her belongings.

- Took fingerprints for school employment.

## January 7

- Took possession of a found cell phone that was turned in to the Brandon Police Department.

## January 8

- Received a 911 call from the Rutland Northeast Supervisory Union on Court Street. Dispatch was able to call the office back and was advised by an employee that there was no emergency and that 911 had been dialed accidentally. No police response was necessary.

- Took fingerprints for school employment.

- Responded to the OVUHS to assist school staff and DCF with a child custody issue involving allegations of child neglect. The matter was addressed without issue.

- Took fingerprints for foster care.

- Took fingerprints for employment.

- Responded to a minor vehicle crash at the intersection of Arnold District Road and Adams Road. Minor damage was sustained to a fence and sign.

## January 9

- Investigated an incident re-

garding a child that was bitten by a family dog on Grove Street.

- Assisted an individual with information on how to obtain an order against stalking.

- Received a report of a person with mental health issues. Rutland Mental Health was notified.

- Performed a welfare check on Middle Road. The subject of the welfare check was located and found to be safe.

## January 10

- Received a report of an incident involving threats and harassment that took place at the Green Mountain Convenience Store on McConnell Road.

- Responded to a mental health call on Nickerson Road.

- Responded to a citizen dispute on McConnell Road.

## January 11

- Responded to a local business for a report of an elderly woman outside in the cold in a nightgown who appeared confused. The Brandon Area Rescue Squad provided a ride for the woman back to her residence.

- Dispatched to an alarm activation at OVUHS. The alarm was found to be false and no police response was necessary.

- Provided assistance in an early investigation of a domestic incident involving a child at a residence in Sudbury. The investigation was forwarded to the Vermont State Police for follow up and DCF was notified of the incident.

- Conducted a patrol on US Route 7.

- Responded to a building alarm on Grove Street.

- Assisted the Middlebury Police Department, Bristol Police Department, St. Albans Police Department, and Vermont State Police – New Haven with individuals who were involved in multiple shooting incidents.

## January 12

- Received notification that the New York City Police Department had recovered a stolen handgun out of Brandon. The individual was charged by NYPD with Criminal Possession of a Firearm.

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# Brandon SB

*(Continued from Page 1)*

One of those resignations had been anticipated by the town, but the other 3 officers had not signaled their intent to resign until they submitted their letters of resignation.

The resignations leave the Brandon Police Department (BPD) with only two full-time officers in addition to BPD Chief David Kachajian.

One of the departing officers, Aiden Alnwick, submitted his resignation on December 20, effective January 1. He is the designated handler for Guinness, the German Shepherd that had been trained to assist BPD with narcotics searches. Officer Alnwick has taken Guinness with him to his new position with the Middlebury Police Department.

Brandon Town Manager Seth Hopkins stated in a subsequent email to The Reporter that Middlebury will be paying Brandon \$12,000 in compensation for Guinness, given the time and expense the town incurred in his training and the success the dog has had in narcotics cases here.

Officer Kevin Rimmer submitted his resignation on January 3, effective January 17.

Officer Joe Mannino submitted his resignation on January 8, effective January 23.

Officer Nicholas Stendaro submitted his resignation on January 10, effective January 24.

Officers Rimmer, Mannino, and Stendaro will all be moving to the Rutland City Police Department.

These resignations came in the wake of the Selectboard's approval of a proposed FY26 town budget that increased BPD's budget by more than 9% but would still require BPD officers to cover night shifts "on call," which means that officers return home but can be called back to duty in Brandon, making their home lives and sleeping schedules unpredictable.

The departing officers will be making more money in their new positions and those heading to Rutland will not be asked to provide "on-call" service. Additionally, according to Mr. Hopkins, Officer Rimmer will be able to pursue the drug-related detective work that he favors in Rutland, as opposed to the more general patrol duties that Brandon's smaller size required.

Mr. Hopkins also indicated that BPD Chief Kachajian will begin the search for new officers, casting "a big net" by

advertising widely. However, the issues that seem to have prompted the departures will remain: Brandon is struggling to compete with departments that can afford to pay their officers more and can sustain larger rosters that eliminate the need for on-call service.

During the budget workshops for FY26, Mr. Hopkins presented the Selectboard with three scenarios for BPD that provided different levels of service based on increases or decreases in funding. The Board opted to increase the BPD budget by \$81,000 from \$856,400 to \$937,000, which was still not sufficient to provide 24/7 on-duty coverage with the Chief and 5 full-time officers (Officer Alnwick's eventual resignation from the 6-officer roster had already been anticipated at this point).

According to Mr. Hopkins and Chief Kachajian, BPD would need at least 10 full-time officers to provide 24/7 on-duty coverage, which would require that BPD's annual budget be raised to well over \$1 million per year. After last year's struggles to pass the town budget—it failed twice—the Board was reluctant to ask voters to approve another double-digit percentage increase.

Though Board members Brian Coolidge and Tim Guiles advocated for diminished funding and coverage, the rest pushed for increased funding for the same or similar coverage, with no one choosing the "million-dollar" option. Ultimately, the Board approved the increased BPD budget in a 4-1 vote, with Mr. Coolidge voting nay.

During these budget workshops, the Board was warned that insufficient funding might result in departures from the department. In some meetings, BPD officers watched the proceedings from the back of the room. At least twice, Brandon Fire Chief Tom Kilpeck and Brandon Rescue Squad Chief Andy Jackson urged the Board to show BPD officers "respect" through the budget.

Yet, Brandon voters must now decide whether to accept a substantial increase in taxes

for full police coverage or to accept diminished coverage to keep taxes lower.

Several members of the Selectboard had expressed concern throughout the budget process that Brandon voters were unclear about their priorities with regard to law enforcement. A non-binding advisory question on last year's Town Meeting ballot asked voters whether they would like to hire additional officers to provide 24/7 on-duty coverage and the result was roughly 55% in favor to 45% opposed, though the overall budget failed twice because of increases that were deemed too large by a vocal majority of residents.

Mr. Hopkins stated that he and Chief Kachajian had met with the Vermont State Police (VSP) to discuss options for assistance while BPD attempts to restaff. However, VSP made clear that its ability to aid BPD would be limited because of its own staffing shortages.

The Board discussed ways it could try to recruit and retain

officers, for whose training the town lays out significant funds, but there was no clear path forward. It was suggested that BPD recruit locally, to ensure ties between officers and the Brandon community. It was suggested that new officers be made to sign contracts pledging a certain number of years of service in exchange for training at the Police Academy, which Mr. Hopkins said was unlikely under the collective bargaining arrangement with the Police Union.

## NEW STATE ETHICS RULES

The Board discussed the need to appoint an "ethics liaison" and a "designated complaint recipient" ("DCR") under the state's new ethics law, Act 171, which took effect on January 1. The Board has until January 31 to make these designations. The purpose of the law is to homogenize ethics policy throughout Vermont so that each municipality doesn't have its own unique code of ethics.

The liaison would be responsible for communicating between the town and the State Ethics Commission, while the DCR would be responsible for receiving ethics complaints about town officers, employees, boards, committees, etc.

Board member Tim Guiles initially proposed that the Town Manager (currently Seth

Hopkins) be designated the liaison while the Board Chair (currently Doug Bailey) be designated the DCR. However, Board member Heather Nelson suggested that the Board wait until its next meeting to make the decision so that they could consider the implications of designating a Board member to potentially receive complaints about the Board.

Attendees also voiced concerns that the appointment of a Board member to be DCR would be a conflict of interest. One attendee even stated that she already had a complaint to report about one of the proposed designees.

Ms. Nelson suggested that the Board ask Town Clerk Sue Gage if she'd be willing to be DCR, though Mr. Guiles pointed out that it was possible that someone could also have ethics concerns about the Town Clerk as well.

Another attendee suggested that the entire Board be designated DCR so that anyone with an ethics complaint could choose to report it to any of its members, avoiding the need to deal with any particular Board member.

Ultimately, the Board voted unanimously to appoint the Town Manager as liaison and the entire Board as DCR.

## TOWN BUDGET PRESENTATION

*(See Brandon SB, Page 21)*

*According to Mr. Hopkins and Chief Kachajian, BPD would need at least 10 full-time officers to provide 24/7 on-duty coverage, which would require that BPD's annual budget be raised to well over \$1 million per year.*

# FINALLY A REAL VERMONT WINTER SALE!



**2013 TOYOTA TUNDRA**  
DB Cab 4X4, Loaded, Leather, 177k miles  
**\$13,995**



**2017 TOYOTA SEQUOIA**  
SR5, 4X4, loaded, 3rd row seat, 159k miles  
**\$18,995**



**2007 NISSAN FRONTIER**  
DB Cab 4X4, Auto, V6, Loaded, Only 69k miles!  
**\$12,995**



**2019 KIA SORENTO**  
LX AWD, 3rd row seat, Loaded, 95k miles  
**\$16,995**



**2016 TOYOTA COROLLA**  
LE, Auto, Loaded, Only 36k miles!  
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# Frederick Douglass

(Continued from Page 3)  
she admired and had had it since 1844.

In addition to asking for her subjects' signatures, she also asked them to write down a "sentiment" about the cause. Here is Douglass's:

Liberty for man, for woman, for each, for all and forever.

Fredk. Douglass

May 13th, 1870

The date—the day after the lecture—indicates that Douglass almost surely stayed the night at the Marsh house. This would have been nothing new for the Marshes—they had hosted other anti-slavery

speakers before the Civil War, and they were surely thrilled to have Douglass as a guest as well. Since his "sentiment" is dated May 13, we can surmise that he signed Eliza's book at the breakfast table, shortly before he left town.

Thanks to Mr. Hanlon's question (and some timely research from Michael Dwyer) we now can say with certainty that Frederick Douglass is associated with not one, but two buildings in town, including our Town Hall. Next time you're in there, give some thought to how lucky we are to have it.



**Mim's Photos** are on page 16!  
Like all things vintage?



**Neshobe Golf Course**  
EST. 1957

**Plan ahead for next year!**  
It's that time of year again! Neshobe Golf Club is excited to reintroduce our special offer: Buy a 2025 Membership now and play the remainder of 2024 for FREE!  
This incredible deal allows you to enjoy the rest of this year's golfing season at no additional cost while locking in your membership for 2025 at our current 2024 pricing.  
New members only—this offer is designed just for you! Plus, every Neshobe membership comes with full Rocky Ridge Golf Club membership privileges at no extra charge.  
Don't miss out on this fantastic opportunity to experience two great clubs for the price of one.  
For all membership inquiries please visit the Membership Page on our website!  
We look forward to welcoming you to the Neshobe family!

**WE ARE HIRING!**  
**Cook**  
We are currently seeking a skilled and dedicated Cook to join our culinary team at Neshobe Golf Club. The ideal candidate will have a passion for creating delicious and visually appealing dishes while ensuring a high standard of food quality and safety.

**Bartender**  
We're currently searching for a skilled and enthusiastic bartender to join our team. If you have a passion for creating great drinks and providing excellent customer service, we want to hear from you.

**The golf course is OPEN!**  
Tee times available from 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.  
<https://neshobe.com> • (802) 247-3611

# Car auction

(Continued from Page 4)  
able to bid in these government auctions online, 24/7, on Municibid. These auctions will help Vermonters get a fantastic deal on the vehicle they need!

Why are these auctions important? All of the proceeds from these auctions will go right back into improving the Town of Brandon's local community. 100% of the proceeds from these auctions goes back to the Town of Brandon. These funds can be used for road maintenance, setting up local events for residents, community programs, public-safety initiatives, and more!

Up for auction is a 2013 Dodge Charger Police

Cruiser that has 18,644 miles on it and features rear wheel drive, a Code 3 all blue LED light bar with take down, alley lights, and a Code 3 light bar/siren control console.

Also up for auction is a 2014 Ford Taurus Police Cruiser that has 97,656 miles on it and features all-wheel drive, a full prisoner partition, Whelen all blue LED light bar with take down and alley lights, a Whelen light bar/siren control console, computer mount, and center long gun rack with console release.

The auctions can be viewed at <https://municibid.com/Browse?Seller=BrandonVermont>

# Ice Bowl Disc Golf

(Continued from Page 4)  
services people with food insecurity in Pittsford, Proctor, Florence, and Chittenden.

"No Wimps, No Whiners" is the motto for this tournament—plastic will fly no matter what Mother Nature features that day. The Ice Bowl® is a series of disc golf events that are held between December and March of each year with an overall mission of raising funds to fight hunger. Since 1996, there have been over 256,000 disc golfers at over 5,000 Ice Bowls® who

have raised \$6.4+ million dollars for local charities.

Last year, without much fanfare, Team Lumberjack held their first Ice Bowl tournament and surpassed the goal of \$5,000, and raised an impressive \$6,878—ALL for the Pittsford Food Shelf. This not only gave the Pittsford Food Shelf an astonishing boost, but set a new record for a first-year Ice Bowl!

With the aim to build on that success, this year the fundraising goal is set at \$7,500. While

much of the support will be drawn from players and sponsors, other funding that contributes to the goal will come from players' friends and families, from the sale of licensed Ice Bowl merchandise, the sale of mulligans, and the closest-to-pin (CTP) contest sales.

Registration for the event closes at 12:00 a.m. on January 16th. More information can be found on [https://www.discgolf-scene.com/tournaments/2nd\\_Annual\\_Sugar\\_Hollow\\_Ice\\_Bowl\\_2025](https://www.discgolf-scene.com/tournaments/2nd_Annual_Sugar_Hollow_Ice_Bowl_2025)

# Estate Planning

(Continued from Page 4)  
Deppman Law will give a presentation on Estate Planning at 3:30 PM on Wednesday, January 22, 2025 in the Fellowship Hall of the Shoreham Congregational Church. The snow date for this event will be Wednesday, January 29, 2025.

While some websites can suggest steps in cre-

ating an estate, it is good to have the information from some professionals firsthand, and to learn if your own plans should be reviewed. So come and learn from these professionals. This presentation is free and open to the public—all are welcome and urged to attend. It is a good opportunity to ask questions about these legal matters.

# Rutland Area NAACP

(Continued from Page 4)  
of Colored People (NAACP) holds a fundraising dinner or other event. The Freedom Fund Dinner was founded in 1956, during a time of renewed national hope and determination for Black Americans, even in the face of continuing racial violence and tragedy. Today, the tradition continues, because the fight continues.

In tribute to the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., the Rutland Area Branch of the NAACP will be hosting a Freedom Fund Brunch over the Martin Luther King, Jr. holiday weekend. The event includes reflection on branch accomplishments, recognizing incredible racial and social justice leaders in the

community, and honoring the legacy of love in action championed by the great Dr. King and the NAACP.

Branch president Mia Schultz says, "I am excited about this year's larger theme, which is LOVE. Love is the foundation of justice and progress. It fuels our work, strengthens our community, and honors the legacy of Dr. King. Together, through love in action, we move closer to equity and hope."

This year's keynote speaker is Vermont Racial Equity Director Xusana Davis. Honorees include Lifetime Achievement award: The Reverend Arnold Isidore Thomas, B.A., M.Div., D.Min.; Community Service award: Maggie Ganguly, Ex-

ecutive Director of the Rutland County Restorative Justice Center; Youth in Action award: Emily Maikoo, senior at Mount Anthony Union High School; Executive Leadership award: John McKenna, branch Treasurer.

Sponsorship support and ticket sale proceeds from the 2025 Rutland Area Branch NAACP Freedom Fund Brunch will directly benefit the Vermont State University Castleton Campus NAACP Chapter—Vermont's only collegiate NAACP chapter. This community event is open to the public. More information and tickets are available at <https://naacprutland.org/freedomfund/>

# Housing help

(Continued from Page 6)  
tation of the regions the group works with, said Paskevich.

“We need to make sure that our board represents the communities we serve,” said Paskevich. “We need that input from the communities that we’re serving.”

Ed Woods, the Bennington Select Board’s vice-chair, said people in Bennington and the county often feel overlooked by the rest of the state. He is grateful the organizational structure has a third of the

board representing Bennington county, giving the region “a voice at the table.”

Echoing this sentiment, Bennington Select Board Chair Jeannie Jenkins added that Shires Housing is one of the last affordable housing organizations in Vermont that had yet to join a larger entity.

“The value of the merger with Rutland Housing Trust and NeighborWorks is that we will have a home ownership program,” said Jenkins. “We will be able to leverage more

grants and loans because the organization size is larger.”

In bringing Bennington County into the fold through the new partnership with Shires Housing, Cornerstone is looking to become the “one-stop shop” for addressing housing access concerns, Paskevich said.

“It’s bringing all those different housing needs and funding sources together under one roof to really be a comprehensive housing organization,” said Paskevich.

# RCHS

(Continued from Page 1)  
ian, who worked at RCHS for 20 years and served as RCHS Executive Director from 2019 until last fall.

Ms. Perrigo comes to RCHS after a long career in animal welfare in the Lake George region of upstate New York, having worked in the field in various capacities, most recently for 7 years as Center Manager at the North Shore Animal League Cat Adoption Center in Glens Falls, NY, her hometown. She has also worked as a veterinary assistant in Queensbury, NY and at the Animal Protective Foundation in Scotia, NY.

“When the position opened up at RCHS, it seemed like a perfect opportunity for me to make my mark in the field and help the organization grow,” said Perrigo at her office in Pittsford, where RCHS is still headquartered. “The new facility is very exciting. I helped grow the Adoption Center in Glens Falls and loved watching that happen.”

With the planned move to Brandon, there’s a lot on Perrigo’s plate at RCHS right from the start, though the operation of the Pittsford facility is still an immediate priority as RCHS will not occupy the Brandon site for some time.

“I’m hoping we’ll move within the next three years,” said Perrigo, echoing the prediction made by RCHS Board President Mei Mei Brown in an article on the new facility in last week’s issue of this paper.

“Older buildings like this pose problems for air filtration, sanitation, drainage, and isolation of sick animals,” she said, referring to the Pittsford facility, which was built around

1960. “Once disease gets in, it can be disastrous. Even though we won’t necessarily be handling more animals in Brandon, we’ll be able to shelter them better while they’re with us.”

Perrigo emphasizes that RCHS is a way station for homeless animals while they await their forever homes. Her goal is to make their experience in the shelter as stress-free as possible.

“We’re here to provide temporary shelter,” she said. “We do what we can, but this is not an ideal environment for animals. They need permanent homes.”

RCHS handles roughly 1,100 adoptions every year. They deal mostly with cats and dogs but also shelter small animals such as rabbits and ferrets, as well as birds. Some of their animals are strays, some are surrendered house pets, but RCHS attempts to find homes for them all.

“I don’t like to create barriers for adoptions,” Perrigo noted. “I don’t want people to have to pledge their firstborn in order to adopt a pet. I’ve found that the vast majority of people who make the effort to go to a shelter are looking to provide a good home.”

Perrigo does caution folks to “do their homework” before committing to a pet. Figure out the annual costs and determine what kind of pet would best fit your lifestyle.

“You shouldn’t adopt a Border Collie unless you can keep it occupied,” she said by way of example. “They’re working dogs and they need a job to do. A lot of dog breeds were bred for specific tasks, and you have to take that into account. The instincts are inherent.”

And for those who do want a particular breed, Perrigo recommends finding either a breed-specific rescue program or a reputable breeder.

“So many of the dogs at pet stores are ill,” she continued. Her home state of New York outlawed pet stores because the problem had gotten so bad, she said.

At RCHS, animals receive appropriate veterinary care, though it’s becoming increasingly difficult and expensive to engage the services of veterinarians, many of whom are booked out far in advance.

“Our policy is to spay or neuter animals before they’re adopted, but we’ve had animals here for weeks before we can get the procedures done,” she said. “So, we’ve started ‘foster to adopt,’ which allows people to take home the animals they’d like to adopt and finalize the process once we’re able to arrange for the procedures.”

The cost of these preventive surgeries is included in RCHS’s adoption fees.

Like most people who work in animal welfare, Perrigo has always had animals of her own. Her two dogs recently passed away, she said, but she still has her cats and a horse that she called her “therapy.”

“This is the first time in 20 years that I’m dogless,” she said with obvious sadness. But the mission to find forever homes to homeless animals gives her joy, and her work at RCHS will give her many opportunities to help match animals with the people who want to love them.

“I’m always happy when a homeless animal finds a responsible home.”

# Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 19)

The Board chose Thursday, January 30 at 7 p.m. for its presentation to the community regarding the proposed town budget for FY26. The Board will welcome Brandon residents to the main floor of the Brandon Town Hall to explain the details of the budget it will put before voters at Town Meeting in March.

## OTTER CREEK WATERSHED INSECT CONTROL BOARD

The Board appointed Kerry White to be one of Brandon’s two representatives to the Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District (OCWICD), which oversees spraying for mosquitos in Brandon, Pittsford, Proctor, Goshen, Leicester, and Salisbury. Ms. White replaces Sharon Stearns, who resigned from the OCWICD in the fall.

The Board also heard from Wayne Rausenberger, Brandon’s other representative to OCWICD. Mr. Rausenberger explained that one of OCWICD’s constituent towns—Salisbury—had voted at its Town Meeting in 2024 to provide its annual payment of \$25K to OCWICD but had later submitted a check for only \$7,572 for larvicide because, it claimed, OCWICD had not provided full spraying services, which include adulticide, during the 2024 spraying season.

The spring and summer of 2024 were unusually wet, and spraying didn’t commence until late in the season. Mr. Rausenberger sought the Board’s guidance as to how OCWICD should proceed. He outlined three options:

Accept Salisbury’s check for \$7,572 as payment but deny adulticide to Salisbury from January to June.

Demand that Salisbury honor their original commitment and deny adulticide until the balance is paid. Additionally, Salisbury’s reps to OCWICD could be suspended.

Initiate legal action against Salisbury for full payment.

After some discussion, the Board seemed to cohere behind the idea that Salisbury ought to be compelled to pay its full commitment but that legal action would be very costly and combative. Most Board members seemed to support Option #2: withhold services until the full amount is paid. The Board was concerned that allowing constituent towns to renege on their commitments to OCWICD could jeopardize the entire program.

## WARRANT

The Board approved a warrant in the amount of \$189,386.48 to cover its obligations and expenses.

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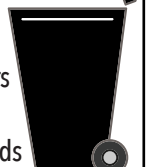
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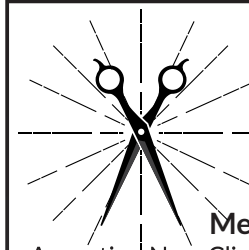
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# Cookie cutters

*(Continued from Page 15)*  
 market in the late 1990s, its first big custom order was with Pillsbury, Ben Clark said. Ann Clark Ltd. has also worked with colleges for custom mascot designs and stores such as Williams Sonoma and Bed, Bath & Beyond, he said. In the mid-aughts, the Clarks started selling online directly to consumers which allowed the business to expand internationally, now serving customers in 19 countries.  
 Sales swelled during the Covid-19 pandemic, as people looked to activities based in the home, like baking, and the Clark family took the leap to expand

their product line to other baking goods like food coloring, dessert mixes and baking supplies.  
 “With Covid, what’s happened is more and more people are entertaining at home, so dinner parties are much more popular,” said Ben Clark. “People like great food. They want to serve great food. They want to eat great food. They want food that looks great. They want it to be fun to make. They want it to taste great, and we’re trying to keep feeding into that market.”  
 In 2021, Ann Clark Ltd. built a facility for food coloring creation, and just this year, the family built another food safe room

for dry goods, like mixes for making cookies, cakes, waffles and other treats as they expand into the “dessert world.”  
 “We’re now looking at other consumables,” said Ben Clark. “We look at it as gourmet at home.”  
 Ann Clark Ltd. has stayed competitive in the international market by creating smaller batches of products more frequently in order to prevent waste and pivot more quickly to consumer desires, according to Ben Clark.  
 While Ann Clark Ltd. manufactures about 4 million cookie cutters a year, Ben Clark said the

company only makes 700 cookie cutter designs at a time at its facilities in Rutland. He attributed the business’ ability to broaden its product offerings to other dessert products to employing lean manufacturing and an economically sustainable business model.  
 “It’s also allowed us to enter these new markets,” said Ben Clark. “We’re able to try products. We have a lot of products that are successful. We also have a lot of products that are failures, but we didn’t make that many of them, so we can experiment and be really flexible.”  
 The Clarks say they focus on

quality over quantity and are proud that their products are all made in Vermont with the help of 35 employees.  
 “Everything we sell, we want to be able to make ourselves,” said Ben Clark. “We like guaranteed quality. We like the flexibility, because you have to be able to deliver  
 As the company grows, the Clarks said they are grateful that their work is focused on bringing fun and joy to people’s lives, because, as Ann Clark said, “everybody likes cookies.”

## SPREAD THE WORD!

Have an upcoming event that you'd like to have added to our calendar?

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## Brandon Fire District

*(Continued from Page 1)*  
 the Fire District and the sewer portion goes to the town, which oversees Brandon’s wastewater system.  
 The first order of business on Monday evening was the election of Bill Moore as Moderator. The role had been performed by Karen Rhodes for the previous year. Mr. Moore then led the meeting through the remainder of the evening’s agenda.  
 Kristy Pinkham was unanimously re-elected as Clerk and Treasurer.  
 Natalie Steen was unanimously re-elected to a 3-year term on the Prudential Board.  
 Jon Wyman was unanimously re-elect to a 2-year term on the Prudential Board.  
 A vote between Linwood Bovey and Amber Lee for another open 2-year seat on the Prudential Board was decided by a raised-hand vote in Ms. Lee’s favor (12 votes to 9). This seat had been held by David Snow, who did not seek re-election. Ms. Lee had been an Auditor for the District.  
 Linwood Bovey, David Snow, and Tracy Wyman were all elected Auditors.  
 An article was passed to keep the same pay schedule for these elected positions as had been in place for the previous year:  
 \$800 per year for each Prudential Board member

\$100 per year for the Treasurer  
 \$25 per year for each Auditor  
 \$10 per meeting for the Moderator  
 \$10 per meeting for the Clerk  
 The District’s FY26 budget was unanimously approved at \$1,049,372, of which \$340,250 is to be raised by taxes and \$709,122 by non-tax revenues. Compared to the current year’s budget, this represents an increase of 1.8% in the overall budget and an increase of 0.7% (less than 1%) in the amount to be raised by taxes.  
 The voters also unanimously approved an article authorizing the expenditure of no more than \$75,000 for the purchase of 6 acres of land on Birch Hill Road in Brandon in preparation for the installation of a new water tank to replace the underground tank on Route 73 near the Brandon-Goshen line.  
 The maximum of \$75,000 will include the purchase of the land and all the attendant costs of the transaction (e.g., surveys, maps, and permits). The funds for the purchase will come from the Water Department’s reserve fund.  
 According to Prudential Board member Dennis Reisenweaver, the process to obtain funding for the project, which is anticipated to cost millions, will take several years. The Board will be pursuing grants in addition to a bond, which will eventually be

put before voters for approval. If the bond is approved, the cost will be borne by customers of the water district.


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## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

tion is balanced by a little reservation as well.

**LEO July 23-Aug. 23**  
 Could it be that you are in the market for some romance, Leo? If so, make a plan for rekindling the flame with a current partner or finding someone new who also is looking for love.

**VIRGO Aug. 24-Sept. 22**  
 Challenges may arise in your relationship this week, Virgo. A serious approach to the partnership is required by both sides. Work toward resolving the situation as a couple.

**LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 23**  
 Libra, although your creative juices are flowing, some type of roadblock pops up and restricts your path. Explore ways to work around this obstacle.

**SCORPIO Oct. 24-Nov. 22**  
 Scorpio, take a deep look at yourself this week, examining all facets of your personality. Instead of being judgemental of others, you may need to make some changes yourself.

**SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23-Dec. 21**  
 Sagittarius, emotions are running high for you and you may not be able to focus on what needs your attention most. If you

can't get a hold of things, try delegating some of your tasks.

**CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 20**  
 Be careful when listening to what another has to say, Capricorn. Read their body language instead of just their words. The two may not match up with one another.

**AQUARIUS Jan. 21-Feb. 18**  
 Opportunities you may never have expected are presenting themselves, Aquarius. Find time to process these unexpected developments and mull the best approach.

**PISCES Feb. 19-March 20**  
 Pisces, resist hurried efforts to get to a destination without enjoying the journey. There is a lot to see along the way, so it's best if you savor all of it while you can.

♋ ♌ ♍ ♎ ♏ ♐ ♑ ♒ ♓

### FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

Jan. 17 Eartha Kitt, singer (d)  
 Jan. 18 Jason Segel, actor (44)  
 Jan. 19 Patricia Highsmith, novelist (d)  
 Jan. 20 Federico Fellini, filmmaker (d)  
 Jan. 21 Placido Domingo, tenor (83)  
 Jan. 22 George Ballanchine, choreographer (d)  
 Jan. 23 Chita Rivera, actor and singer (d)



### Dancers in the snow

SNOW CLINGS TO the dry leaves of these short trees along Champlain Street between Brandon and Sudbury during a recent snowstorm.

Photo by Steven Jupiter



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