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REPORTER

A community supported newspaper

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Wednesday, April 30, 2025

\$1



NAMES LOST
Genealogist Michael F. Dwyer explores the history of the Sird, Gordon, and Cline families.

PG. 2



A DAY FOR BOOKLOVERS
Readers young and old flocked to Brandon's own independent bookshop on Saturday to celebrate Indie Bookstore Day.

PG. 3



GREEN UP DAY
Dig out your gloves, pull on your boots, and pick up some garbage bags: May 3 is Green Up Day.

PG. 5



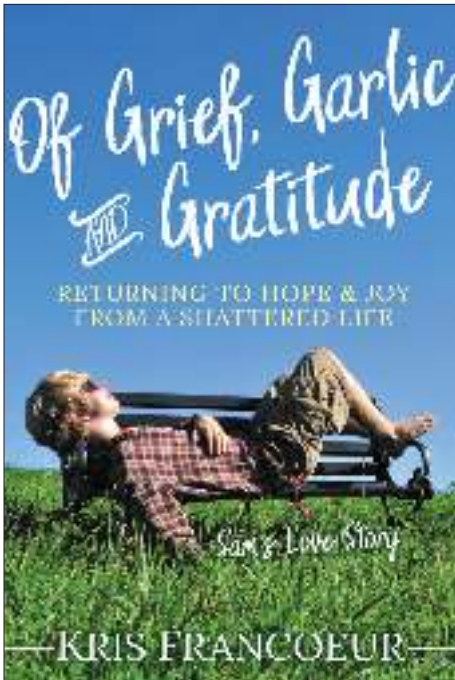
CRY BABY
Musical duo Carl Anton and Emily Nelson, of Cry Baby, indulged the crowd at Red Clover in some 90s nostalgia on Saturday.

PG. 6



THE STRONG MAN
Brandon Town Hall's silent film series returns for the 2025 season on May 10 with Frank Capra's "The Strong Man," starring Harry Langdon.

PG. 9



Leicester's Kris Francoeur overcame tragedy to build a career as a writer

BY STEVEN JUPITER
LEICESTER—Though we're now woefully familiar with the dangers of recreational fentanyl, there was a time when it was just another opioid painkiller, before it was discovered by heroin addicts looking for an even more intense high. Many times more potent than morphine, it
(See Kris Francoeur, Page 15)

A NEW HOLIDAY IS BORN IN BRANDON: HALFOWEEN

BY STEVEN JUPITER
BRANDON—As another long Vermont winter finally takes its leave, we emerge from our hibernation, squinting into the sun and looking for something fun to do. And Colleen Wright thinks she has just the ticket: a new holiday called "Halfoween," to be celebrated
(See 'Halfoween', Page 7)



A Sprig of Spring
BLOSSOMS ALONG CENTER Street in Brandon signal the true arrival of spring after a long, snowy winter.

Photo by Steven Jupiter

Brandon SB discusses police cars, housing, and SolarFest

BY STEVEN JUPITER
BRANDON—The Brandon Selectboard convened for its regular meeting on Monday evening.
TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT
Town Manager Seth Hopkins delivered his report to the Board, the full text of which is reprinted in this issue of the paper.
In addition to his written report, Mr. Hopkins noted that there will be a meeting of the Brandon Planning Commission and the

Rutland Regional Planning Commission in the Selectboard meeting room at the Town Hall at 6 p.m. on Tuesday, May 13 to discuss the revision of Act 250.
Mr. Hopkins also thanked Selectboard member Ralph Ethier for his help in connecting town management with
(See Brandon SB, Page 7)



Names lost in Vermont, Part 48:

Sird, Gordon, and Cline

BY MICHAEL F. DWYER

A visit to Brandon's old Catholic Cemetery on Maple Street last December seemed to underscore how much history had been lost in its empty spaces and broken stones. The cemetery opened in 1852, when the first Catholic Church—Our Lady of Good Help—was completed on what was then known as Canada Street. Earliest burials, mostly French-Canadians and some Irish immigrants, date from that year and continued through the 1860s and 1870s until the construction of the new Catholic church on Carver Street was completed in 1888. When a cemetery is no longer active, it can easily fall into disrepair. Marvel Swan first copied gravestone inscriptions in the 1950s, noting the cemetery was "in very poor condition. Completely covered in a blanket of poison ivy." By the time Margaret Jenks copied the inscriptions again in 1994, she noted the cemetery was now mown but many stones needed repair.

A return visit to the cemetery last week allowed me to take more pictures and retrieve some history of three families buried there. Compared to the present St. Mary's Cemetery,

with its frequent use of monuments that inscribe the dates of multiple family members, nearly all the single stones in the old cemetery mark the resting place of individuals. A pair of stones in fairly good condition belong to Salomon Sird and his wife Angeline. Born as Bernardin Salomon Cyrard in Assomption, Québec on June 15, 1807, son of Louis Cyrard and Marie-Anne Dugai, the family lived principally in Lavaltrie, Québec, about 40 miles northeast of Montréal, along the St. Lawrence River. Louis's grandfather, Jean Ciriard came from Tressaint, Brittany, to Canada before 1753.

Salomon and Angeline had thirteen children born between 1831 and 1855. Absent from Vermont's 1860 census, most of this family settled in Brandon by the early 1860s. Behind their graves is a barely readable stone of their daughter-in-law, Saphronia Dudley, wife of Dennis Sird who died in May 1862. Angeline's gravestone gives her maiden name as Rase, but her descendants have mistakenly conjectured that her maiden name was LaMorder or Normandin. [See Lost Names #38] The marriage record of Solomon Sirdard and Angeline Desrosiers

in L'Assomption, Québec, on May 18, 1830 conclusively settles the question of her maiden name. Rase was heard in the second syllable of the name Desrosiers. As noted in Lost

Names #38, their son Lewis Sird married Ellen LaMorder in Cornwall, Vermont in 1866. Together they had eleven children. Widow Ellen Sird later married Lewis's brother Jo-

seph Sird. A Civil War veteran, Lewis established himself as a blacksmith in Sudbury and later in Leicester. He applied for a patent for a sled brake he

(See Names lost, Page 8)



LEWIS SIRD AND family, circa 1894, posted on Ancestry.com.

32	Hayward	"	29	yr	Blacksmith	34	Canada		
	Eliza	"	25	yr	"		Canada		
	Edith	"	2	yr			"		
	Edmond	"	10	yr			"		
	Popoleon	"	29	yr	gentleman		"		
	Saphronia	"	55	yr	wife		"		
	Solomon	"	45	yr	Desrosiers		"		

GORDON FAMILY, 1860 Brandon census.



WINTER VIEW OF the old Catholic Cemetery on Maple Street.

Died at his home, Wednesday evening; after a long illness, Lewis Sird, in the 65th year of his age. The funeral services were held Saturday at one o'clock at the Congregational church. Mr. Sird was a veteran of the Civil war, serving his country well. The remaining soldiers of this town, under the command of Capt. S. Kelley, escorted the remains in a body from the church to the cemetery, using the ceremonious rites of the G. A. R. at the interment. Rev. Mr. Hathaway officiated and a quartette comprised of Dr. O. M. Bump, Mr. and Mrs. W. Bump and Mrs. Morris Thomas rendered the music. The bearers were two of his brothers, Solomon and Will Sird and two brothers-in-law, David and Nelson LaMorder. Capt. E. N. Miller of Brandon was funeral director. Interment at Evergreen ceme-

OBIT FOR LEWIS Sird from The Orwell Citizen of November 12, 1903.

Indie Bookstore Day in Brandon was a success despite the dreary day

BY BARBARA EBLING
Saturday in Brandon dawned gray and rainy; weather not compatible with hand-painted

outdoor banners or helium balloons. It was perfect weather for staying indoors, doing some spring cleaning, planning the

garden, or curling up with a good book. But this was no ordinary rainy Saturday; it was the last Saturday in April. And on this day, every year since 2013, rain or shine, independently owned bookstores nationwide have celebrated Independent Bookstore Day (IBD). And every year since 2020, The Bookstore in Brandon has participated. Would the rain keep people away? Would the lack of multicolored balloons and a giant banner on the front railing announcing INDEPENDENT BOOKSTORE DAY mean that people would forget? Not a chance.

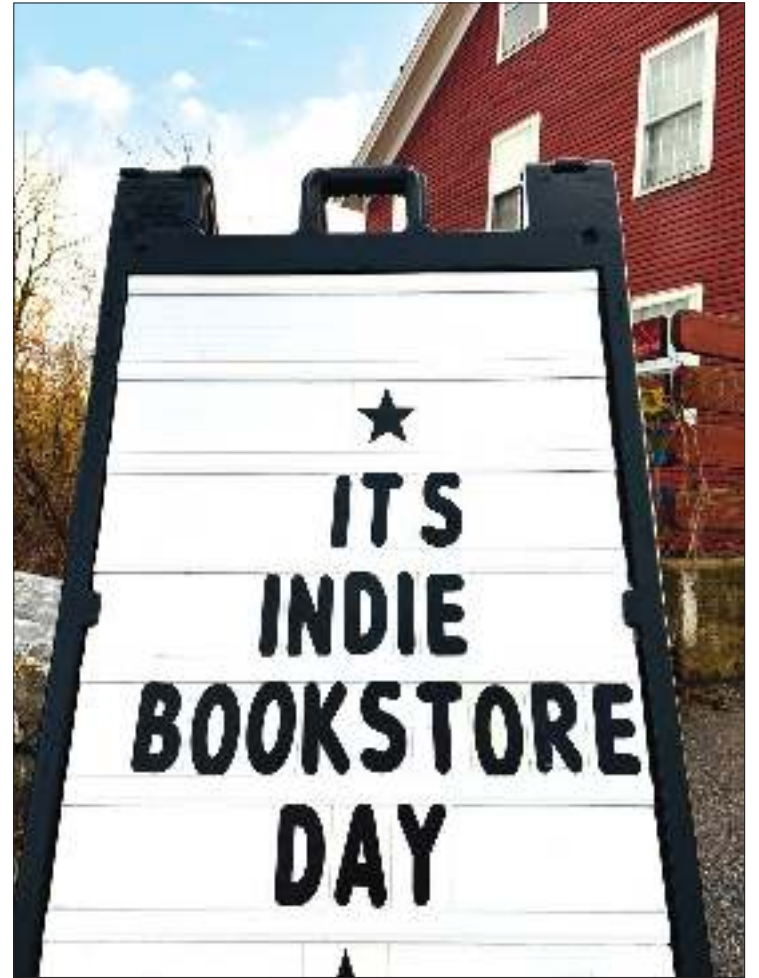
Bookstore colleagues Eli Fox and Barbara Ebling shifted the decorating efforts indoors, blew up balloons, hung streamers, straightened the shelves, set out cupcakes and brownies, and waited for the first customers to arrive. And they did. Longtime friend Tina Coombs arrived first (her daughter, Jenny, pictured here, visited later in the day). Following a pattern common to



DEDE SNYDER (L) and Mary Bugnacki (r) enjoy a day of book browsing.
Photos by Barbara Ebling



L TO R: Melissa Moorhouse, Eva Fillion & Riker Wikoff w/Lucy & Felix, Cecil Reniche-Smith, Eli Fox, Barbara Ebling, Amanda Berry, Jaime Schneider.



the ebb and flow of Indie Bookstore Day, there was conversation, followed by book shopping. Several supporters of The Bookstore noted that they put IBD on their calendar every year so they don't miss it. Lynn Markowski, who came with daughter Brittany, and grandson Olsen (1 year, 4 days old) commented that last year was the only time they've missed it, because Olsen had been born four days earlier.

More than a dozen people throughout the day came with Vermont Bookstore Tour Passports in hand ("Visit all the lo-

cations - Stamp your passport - Earn a prize") and were making the rounds of as many bookstores as possible in one day, collecting stamps (or a hand-drawn cartoon of "Bessie La Vache" - making a comeback from Barbara's high school doodlings). According to vtbookstoretour.com (where you can download and print your own bookstore passport), "The Vermont Bookstore Tour was hatched by The Vermont Bookshop in Middlebury as a way to spread indie bookstore love. It's been championed by book-

(See Indie Bookstore Day, Page 14)

Spotlight On Business WOOD'S MARKET GARDEN



Our vegetables and fruit and all of our farm fields are certified organic by Vermont Organic Farmers Association (VOF). We practice crop rotation, use no synthetic herbicides or pesticides and select varieties that taste the best and are the best suited to our region and growing conditions.



Every year we strive to improve our farming systems, so that we are the best possible stewards of the land, can produce the best crops possible.

Opening May 3rd!



ZOE EPSTEIN, A junior at Champlain Valley Union High School, speaks to lawmakers on Friday, April 25, at the Statehouse.

Photo by Shaun Robinson/VTDigger

Students pan school consolidation and urge lawmakers to hear their voices on education reform

BY ETHAN WEINSTEIN
VTDIGGER

As lawmakers toil away trying to reform Vermont's school funding and governance systems, they've declared better student outcomes a principal goal.

Well, on Friday, the students themselves showed up to testify on H.454, as well as on efforts from the administration of President Donald Trump to cut diversity, equity and inclusion programs in public schools. And while the youth had lots of positives to say about their schools, they weren't so effusive about where lawmakers are headed.

"When I first read the governor's proposal," Zoe Epstein, a Champlain Valley Union High School junior said, "I was shocked by the absence of student input."

Lawmakers often hear the same voices again and again, but the students who showed up before the House and Senate education committees Friday represented Vermont in all its complexity. The committees received testimony from public

and private school students. Rural students and students from the state's largest district. Students who have experienced racism, homelessness and those for whom English is a second language.

Almost all the students who spoke praised the individualized experiences small classes and schools provide.

"Consolidation may ease the burden on taxpayers," Willow Sharma, a Brattleboro Union High School student said, but "small schools mean so much for our Vermont communities."

Students at the Long Trail School, an independent school in Dorset, warned lawmakers of the diminished opportunities that restricting school choice would have on kids like themselves.

Attending the private school would have been "entirely out of my family's financial ability without school choice," Morgan Cable, a Long Trail student, said.

From southern Vermont to the (See *School consolidation*, Page 6)



Why, it's almost as warm as summer!

THE RUBY-THROATED HUMMINGBIRDS have arrived here in Brandon! It is the earliest date that I've recorded and likewise for others here in Vermont.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

Community Forums

Vermont Historical Society announces COVID-19 Oral History podcast: Life Became Very Blurry

Five years after the first COVID lockdowns, the Vermont Historical Society will release a new podcast as part of its Collecting COVID-19: A Vermont Story project that documented

the experiences of Vermonters who lived through the pandemic in their own words. The podcast, titled Life Became Very Blurry, was released on VHS's podcast feed (<https://vermonthistory.podbean.com/>) and on our YouTube channel (<https://www.youtube.com/@VermontHistoricalSociety>) on April 3 and is produced by the Vermont

(See *COVID-19 podcast*, Page 7)

The REPORTER

A community supported newspaper

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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"Ethan Allen in Castleton" takes shape

Organizations and individuals have shown interest in participating in the "Ethan Allen in Castleton" free public event on May 9. Castleton Historical Society has decided to open two of their buildings from 4 p.m. until the history parade starts at 6 p.m. on Friday, May 9, 2025. The first floor of the Buel block (556 Main Street, next to the village post office) and the first floor of Higley homestead (407 Main Street, at the southeast corner of the village green) will be open,

admission-free, staffed by board members, as a lead-in to the adjacent 250th anniversary special event. The Buel block is Castleton's oldest commercial building. In recent years, Castleton Historical Society has invested in sprucing up its interiors. The homestead that sheltered generations of Castleton's Higley family will display Green Mountain Boys commemoration artifacts from 1953 and century-old panoramic photographs which document the Ethan Allen public

event of May 9, 1925. Likewise, a century ago the old homestead publicly displayed Revolutionary War-era artifacts.

From 6 p.m. until 8 p.m., various souvenirs will be available for purchase at the historic Castleton village green. There will be custom-designed—by Joe Vyvial—coin-shaped commemorative tokens for \$5 each, baseball caps with a Green Mountain Boys flag emblazoned on the front for \$20 each, commemorative (See *Ethan Allen*, Page 8)

Letters to the Editor

Putting out a few political questions that I have

Lately I find myself with more questions that are somewhat political in nature. So I am putting a couple of those questions out there, mainly out of curiosity.

First, I really would like to know if anyone remembered knowing anybody prior to 2015 that was all shook up and upset about immigrants coming to the USA and stealing our coveted jobs. Maybe you remember someone griping and saying something like “My dream of becoming a professional apple

picker has been destroyed by some Jamaican dude that came to America and stole my dream job right out from under me.”

Maybe you heard someone say something like “My dreams of becoming a pro cow milker and manure shoveler have been destroyed by some Mexican guy.”

I would guess that most of us do not remember any conversations like that. You know why? Because they didn’t happen. Nobody cared that immigrants were here doing menial

jobs that are beneath entitled Americans. No one cared, that is, until Trump came down the golden escalator in 2015 and in so many words declared his disdain for foreign people. Especially brown foreign people. So begins the hatred. Trump’s supporters have found an outlet for all their pent-up rage: “Let’s hate on the brown man. Rotten job stealer!”

Is there anyone that maybe lost the opportunity to become a bottle sorter at your local redemption center or what have

you? If so, please write to this newspaper and explain how your life has been turned upside down by the loss of a fantastic career earning minimum wage while laboring like a slave.

Rest assured, Trump is doing his very best to rid America of this scourge known as the immigrant. Therefore you can one day reach that goal of becoming a chicken killer at a mega farm somewhere in the Midwest.

So just hang in there a bit longer as Trump diligently re-

moves those people from the jobs you have all been dreaming of.

It’s my understanding that there are eight jobs now available at the largest dairy farm in Vermont, as Trump’s gang of goons has kidnapped and detained eight undocumented laborers. So there you go. Your guy in Washington is taking care of business.

Steve Bryant
Forest Dale

The core of democracy is election integrity

At the heart of any democracy lies the sacred principle of election integrity. The right to

vote is one of the most fundamental rights of American citizens, and safeguarding it ensures that our government remains accountable, representative, and strong.

Eligibility Criteria for Federal Elections:

To participate in federal elections, a voter must meet certain basic requirements:

- Be a U.S. citizen: Non-citizens, including lawful permanent residents, are not permitted to vote.
- Be at least 18 years old: As established by the 26th Amendment.
- Meet state residency and registration rules: States may impose additional conditions, including deadlines and duration of residency.
- Not be disqualified due to criminal convictions or mental incapacity: Policies on this vary across states.

These rules provide a clear framework that upholds the integrity of the electoral process. However, ensuring that only eligible citizens are registered remains an ongoing challenge.

The SAVE Act: Strengthening Voter Verification.

The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility Act (SAVE Act)—H.R. 22 of the 119th Congress (2025–2026)—seeks to reinforce the foundation of electoral trust. Its primary purpose is to amend the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 by requiring individuals to provide documentary proof of U.S. citizenship when registering to vote in federal elections.

Importantly, the bill also recognizes real-world complexities. If an applicant cannot provide documentary proof, they may still register by:

- Signing an attestation under penalty of perjury affirming their U.S. citizenship and eligibility.
- Submitting other acceptable evidence of citizenship.

State or local officials are then tasked with evaluating this evidence to determine voter eligibility.

Moreover, the Act requires states to ensure reasonable accommodations for individuals with disabilities, working in consultation with the Election Assistance Commission to maintain accessibility.

Accountability Measures

The SAVE Act emphasizes accountability. It mandates strict compliance, enforces verification of citizenship, and establishes penalties for election officials who fail to uphold these standards. These measures aim to deter fraud while protecting the rights of lawful voters.

Potential Local Challenges

While the intention of the SAVE Act is noble, implementation could pose practical burdens, particularly in small towns like Brandon. Mandating in-person document verification and additional vetting could add unnecessary workload for local

officials, especially in communities where voter fraud is rare and election operations already run with limited resources.

Conclusion

Preserving the integrity of our elections is essential to the health of our democracy. The SAVE Act aims to address real concerns about voter eligibility while allowing flexibility for those who may lack traditional documentation. As with any reform, it is crucial to balance security with accessibility—ensuring that no eligible American is turned away from the ballot box while upholding the public’s faith in the electoral process.

Election Integrity Is the Core of Democracy

Election integrity is essential to maintaining trust in our democracy. Federal law already sets clear voting eligibility: voters must be U.S. citizens, at least 18 years old, meet state residency rules, and not be disqualified by criminal convictions or mental incapacity.

The Safeguard American Voter Eligibility (SAVE) Act (H.R. 22 - 119th Congress) strengthens these protections by requiring documentary proof of citizenship to register for federal elections. If applicants lack documents, they can still register by signing an attestation under penalty of perjury and submitting other evidence, ensuring accessibility while maintaining security. The Act also requires states to accommodate voters with disabilities.

While the SAVE Act improves voter verification and accountability, it could create unnecessary burdens for small towns like Brandon, where election fraud is rare. We must balance securing elections with keeping voting accessible and manageable for all communities.

Aida Nielsen
Brandon

Community Forums continued

Volunteer for Brandon’s Green Up Day on May 3!

Green Up Day is coming! Green Up Day is always the first Saturday in May and falls on May 3 this year! Every year a group of Brandon volunteers of all ages, sizes, and dispositions “celebrates” Green Up Day by picking up along the roadsides in our community and cleaning away the accumulated debris from the past year. Those efforts greatly improve the appearance of our town and neighborhoods and contribute to the overall beauty of the state.

For those not familiar with this annual event, Green Up Day is organized by a state coordinator and local volunteers. Green Up Day is not funded by the State of Vermont but, rather, through private donations and contributions by individual towns. This truly is a local effort, supported by local people. Volunteers walk the routes (usually about an hour or two) and collect roadside debris into plastic bags that are pro-

(See Green Up Day, Page 11)

Quiche Luncheon in Shoreham on May 17

Come to a Spring Quiche Luncheon on Saturday, May 17, 2025 at the Shoreham Congregational Church. For only \$10 you can enjoy a slice of our famous meat, vegetable, or cheese quiche along with salad, beverage, and dessert! It is a great opportunity to relax with friends and welcome the warm spring weather. Please bring a non-perishable item for the Food Shelf to help those in need.

This year we will be raffling off a beautiful hand-knitted blanket. Be the first to buy your

tickets at the quiche luncheon. Tickets are only \$5 each or 3 for

\$10. The drawing will be during AppleFest in September.



School consolidation

(Continued from Page 4)
Champlain Valley, high school students urged lawmakers to preserve or expand diversity, equity and in-

clusiveness. DEI gives her “hope” not just for herself but “every student who’s ever felt like they didn’t belong.”

Though most students focused on the laudable outcomes they see in their small schools, Max Demaine, a student at Lake Region Union High School, addressed the economic aspects of lawmakers’ and Gov. Phil Scott’s policy proposals.

He pointed out that his Northeast Kingdom district, which serves a high proportion of economically disadvantaged students, spends far less than many schools in the state. Yet lawmakers were considering consolidating rural schools like his and allowing wealthy districts to keep spending more per student.

“Why not make other schools have the same model as us?” he asked.

A diverse group of students testified before the House and Senate education committees Friday, singing the praises of their small schools and urging the state to preserve DEI programming.

clusion programming, especially as the state grapples with confusing federal demands to end “illegal DEI.”

“As a person of color growing up in Vermont, I spent a lot of time in spaces that weren’t made for people like me,” Arena Coryer, a Colchester High School student, said, but



CARL ANTON AND Emily Nelson are Cry Baby, whose vocal harmonies bring to life nostalgic 90s grunge to acoustic ballads.

HARMONIC DUO ‘CRY BABY’ TREATS CROWD AT RED CLOVER

BY SUSAN JOHNSON
BRANDON—After a cool, rainy day, the sun finally came out and Cry Baby’s musicality warmed up the tap room at Red Clover in Brandon this past Saturday. Emily Nelson and Carl Anton, both impressive soloists in their own rights, used their synergistic connection to take many of us back to our younger days with style.

Carl Anton, from Pawlet, is a performer, guitar teacher, and owner of On Tone Music. His infectious grin and fun, easy style is paired with his skill on multiple stringed instruments, many times within the same song thanks to Carl’s awesome looping skills.

Brandon local Emily Nelson is no stranger to Red Clover, as she hosts an open mic there almost every Thursday night. While she usually performs a few songs on Thursdays, she mostly makes it possible for other talented people and a few of us . . . um . . . beginners to get up there and have fun. Saturday was all hers and Carl’s,

and the crowd was duly impressed.

Emily’s brother, Ethan, shared that Emily has been singing since she could speak, as well as playing violin, ukulele, and guitar since childhood. Her various bands and gigs have expanded around the area lately, he said proudly of his “big” sister. “She’s added bass guitar and leaned into her top preference, which is dynamic harmony singing,” he added.

Carl and Emily’s collaboration has been a natural one, fueled by their shared penchant for vocal harmonies and self-described alternative natures in songs and styles. Explaining the band’s name origins, Carl said that when a baby cried in places like restaurants or airplanes, his dad would put a positive spin on the loud expression of need, saying “Aww, it’s singing!” Likewise, Cry Baby is communicating, expressing pride joyously and melodically.

The range of grunge, bal-

lads, and pop on Saturday’s set list spanned a few decades but mostly hovered in the 1990s with some of my old favorites like Cake, 311, and Incubus, along with popular Green Day, Chris Issak, and Blues Traveler tunes. Ethan stepped in with a baseline on Radiohead’s “Creep,” with all three striking a much merrier presence than the original’s Thom Yorke.

Throwing in some Cure, Tom Petty, and Lucinda Williams generated even more nostalgic warm and fuzzy feelings flowing along with Red Clover’s excellent offerings. A shout-out to Mari’s La Catrina 802, whose delicious Mexican creations we’re always happy to taste in the tap room (and watch out for those Buñuelos!)

Cry Baby’s celebration of individuality felt unifying, and their harmonies would soothe even the crankiest of babies or patrons. Their return to Brandon will be well received, for sure.

Cafe Provence
MOTHER’S DAY BRUNCH

Sunday, May 11th

Seatings at 11:30 am,
1:30 pm, and 3:30 pm
\$58/person
(plus tax & gratuity)

Call 802-247-9997 for
reservations

Children’s Brunch
menu available.

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Greek Crêpe • Red Beet Salad
Duck Duo on Curry Coconut
Lentil Stew
Grilled Salmon on Forbidden Rice
Seafood Stew
Beef Bourguignon
Vegetable Lasagna (vegan)
Fruit Tart • French Macaron
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Jim & Liz McRae

Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 1)
the VT Dept of Labor's job posting website, which the town will begin using to fill its job openings.

Finally, Mr. Hopkins notified the community that the Trustees of Public Funds will hold its next public meeting at 8:30 a.m. on Thursday, May 1 in the Selectboard meeting room at the Town Hall. This is a change from its announced location at Naylor & Breen.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Deputy Town Manager Bill Moore delivered his Community Development report to the Board, the full text of which is reprinted in this issue. In addition to his written report, Mr. Moore noted that there will be a ceremony to dedicate playing fields at Pittsford Rec to Randy Adams at 9:30 on Saturday, May 3. Mr. Adams is a former Rec Director in Pittsford.

RENOVATION OF 30 CONANT SQUARE

Mary Cohen, CEO of the

Housing Trust of Rutland County (HTRC), explained to the Board HTRC's plans to renovate the subsidized housing it operates at 30 Conant Square.

The building was originally constructed in the 1820s and was used as a tavern. Ms. Cohen also stated that the building was a stop on the Underground Railroad and still has tunnels connecting it to other historic structures in the area. It was converted to subsidized apartments in the 1980s and was purchased by HTRC in 2006.

The building encompasses 19 units (studio, 1 bedroom, and 2 bedroom) at subsidized rents. HTRC has determined that the building needs both interior and exterior rehabilitation and will begin the process shortly. The work will entail new heating, new electrical systems, a rehabbed elevator, new windows and doors, new kitchens and baths, and a new roof, among other improvements.

Ms. Cohen also assured the Board that the work will be undertaken with sensitivity to the historic character of the original house.

In response to a question from an attendee, Ms. Cohen stated that current residents will continue to pay their rent even while relocated to hotels during the renovation but will not incur any additional expenses. She added that residents will not lose their right to return to the building after the renovation and that HTRC planned to hold a similar presentation for all tenants to advise them of the project and their rights as tenants.

SOLARFEST AUGUST FESTIVAL

Mike Bailey of Brandon's SolarFest let the Board know that the clean-energy organization based on Steinberg Road will be holding a Festival on August 8, 9, and 10 that will include musical acts, classes, and 50 vendors. It will be SolarFest's first event of this size in the

(See Brandon SB, Page 20)

COVID-19 podcast

(Continued from Page 4)
Folklife Center. New episodes will be released weekly.

VHS began documenting the outbreak starting in March 2020 and with a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services [Grant Number MA-251676-OMS-22], launching Collecting COVID-19: A Vermont Story, to collect, document, and preserve the impact that COVID-19 had on the state and its citizens. This grant supported the hiring of field interviewers who conducted more than 100 interviews from a wide range of Vermonters.

Those interviews will be included in the podcast, which will run for eight episodes. Each episode explores a differ-

ent theme from the pandemic, such as homes, schools, having COVID, healthcare, and more.

Though the podcast shares the same name as VHS's recent book edited by Pulitzer Prize finalist and Vermont author Garrett M. Graff, they are separate windows into the same archive. The book was released on Tuesday, March 25 as a trade paperback and eBook.

VHS Executive Director Steve Perkins says "VHS's role is to tell our state's story. Since history is ongoing, it often means collecting and preserving stories in real time. VHS has become adept in that role and this book is an example of immediate history-making that will stand the test of time."

Halfoween

(Continued from Page 1)
ebrated six months before our beloved Halloween in October. This year, the holiday's first in Brandon, it will be held on Friday and Saturday, May 2nd and 3rd.

"People go crazy for Halloween," said Wright in a recent conversation about the Halfoween weekend she's hosting through Colleen Wright Events. "It's the second biggest revenue-generating holiday after Christmas. I thought it would be a great way for people to have fun after a long winter and bring some business to Brandon at the same time."

The Halfoween weekend will offer a combination of free and

paid events, including a Witches' Walk down Park Street on Friday at 6 p.m. People are encouraged to dress up in costume for this spooky promenade, which will culminate with music and bounce houses behind the Brandon Inn. On both Friday and Saturday at 6:30 p.m., there will be a Haunted House at the Town Hall (\$10 admission, Neshobe students \$5 with coupon).

On Friday and Saturday, there will also be horror movies at BARN Opera on Pearl Street (5 p.m. to 10 p.m. on Friday and 12 p.m. to 6 p.m. on Saturday, \$10 per person). A carefully curated selection of horror

flicks will be shown for those who enjoy the genre.

On Saturday, there will be a "Mystical Market" in Central Park, featuring handmade gifts and crafts with a supernatural theme. Dunkin' Donuts will give out treats to kids in costume between 3 and 4. And a Masquerade Ball will take place at the Brandon Inn at 8 p.m. (\$25 per person).

Anyone interested in buying tickets in advance or seeing the full list of Halfoween events can visit colleenwrightevents.com.

After years working for the Brandon Rec Department, Wright knows a thing or two about putting together fun events. However, there has been some resistance to this particular "holiday," with some Brandon residents taking to social media to express their skepticism. None of it fazes Wright.

"We need fun in our lives," she said. "We made it through COVID. We've made it through another Vermont winter. We need to have fun together again."

So come to downtown Brandon this weekend and join in the "Halfoween" merriment!



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Ethan Allen

(Continued from Page 4)

rative slate coasters available as singles or sets of four, even some slate and wood cheeseboards, and Vermont-themed Christmas ornaments. Organizations such as Crown Point Road Association and Descendants of the Green Mountain Boys may have items for sale. There will also be envelopes for sale which have a colorful “Ethan Allen in Castleton” cachet and a 70-year-old (1955) 3¢ commemorative Ticonderoga postal stamp affixed. On this 250th anniversary, these special envelopes will be sold for 250¢ each. The Castleton post office will offer a postal hand-cancel service at the village green from 6 p.m. till 8 p.m. Envelopes will be stamped “Castleton Station” with the date.

A highlight of the May 9 event on Castleton’s village green will be the live staged dramatization depicting the Green Mountain Boys making final plans for seizing Fort Ticonderoga. The script was written by award-winning playwright James Thatch of Bennington, and the production is directed by Kevin Commins of Weybridge. Ten of the fifteen speaking roles are specific Green Mountain Boys. Also included in the cast are Castleton tavern keepers Zadock and Anne Remington. Volunteers have come forward to provide a temporary stage, to assume acting parts, to sew shirts and lend garments for costumes, and to contribute their historical and theatrical expertise.

Every 50 years (1925, 1975, 2025) Castleton re-claims its Revolutionary history. The community is coming together to celebrate and honor it again on May 9.



GRAVESTONE OF SALOMON and Angeline Sird.

Names lost

(Continued from Page 2)

fabricated. The Orwell Citizen published a detailed obituary for Lewis on November 12, 1903. His two youngest sons, Carl and Ira Sird, opened an automobile repair garage in Rutland in 1929.

Looking at the cluster of stone for the Gordon family reveals a very interesting phenomenon. The earliest gravestone, written in French, reads “Louis Napoleon, son of Alexander and Josephine Goden, died September 9, 1856, age eight months and 25 days.” To the left is the stone of Louis’s infant brother Zeb Gordon, who died in August 1863. The remaining stones in the family plot record the name as Gordon, proving that within a few years, they lost their French spelling. We find evidence of this family in Brandon’s 1860 census, where it was headed by blacksmith Alexander Gordon. Looking within the family group, it would appear that Napoleon Gordon, age 89, “gentleman,” and Sophia, age 56, were Alexander’s parents. One immediately is struck by the disparity of their ages. Two errors needed to be untangled to locate this family and their true name in Canada. The first lies in an unusual name reversal. Most men born in Canada with Napoleon as their first name modified it to Paul, com-

ing from the second syllable of Napoleon, but Napoleon Gordon was actually Paul Gaudin, who wed Sophie Giroux in Vaudreil, Québec, on March 1, 1824. Why would Paul choose to be known as Napoleon?

September 13, 1792. Thus, in the census he should have been recorded as age 69, not 89! Henceforth, anglicized as Gordon, his descendants spread northward to Jericho and Burlington, with some of the family venturing to Montana.

One more glimpse into a French-Canadian family with the gravestone of Josette Clyne, wife of Mitchell Clyne, who died July 28, 1867, with a purported age of 84 years, five months, and six days. Her age at death was off by 20 years. She was Josephte Bonin, born in St. Hyacinthe on February 1, 1805. She married Michel Claing at St. Cuthbert, Québec, on September 19, 1825. They skirted the Vermont border in the early years of their marriage before settling in Brandon by 1850. Claing/Clyne/Cline does not sound French. True! Michel Claing/Mitchell Clyne, was the son of Protestant immigrant to Québec Jacob Klein, who wed Josette LaRocque in Montréal’s Anglican Church in 1788. His origins have not been ascertained, but my guess would be he was a German soldier who fought for the British during the American Revolution and chose to remain in Canada.

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Likely, national pride coming from Napoleon III, Emperor of the French in the 1850s and 1860s. Moreover, Paul Gaudin was baptized in Montréal on

Brandon Town Hall's 2025 silent film series kicks off with classic comedy starring Harry Langdon—and the first movie directed by a very young Frank Capra

Classic comedy 'The Strong Man' with live music on Saturday, May 10

BRANDON—Classics from the silent film era will return to the big screen at the Brandon Town Hall and Community Center, which will host another season of vintage cinema with live music.

First up is Harry Langdon in 'The Strong Man' (1926), a comedy that marked Frank Capra's directorial debut. The film screens on Saturday, May 10 at 7 p.m. at the Brandon Town Hall and Community Center, Route 7, in Brandon, Vt.

Admission is free; donations are welcome to help defray expenses.

Live music for each silent film program will be provided by Jeff Rapsis, a New Hampshire-based performer and composer who specializes in scoring and presenting silent films.

'The Strong Man' tells the story of a World War I soldier (Langdon) who, following his discharge, finds work as assistant to a circus strong man. As the act travels the country, Langdon continually searches

for a girl he corresponded with while stationed overseas in the military.

The search leads to a town controlled by Prohibition-era gangsters, which forces Harry to test the limits of his own inner strength even as he looks for his dream girl. Can Harry triumph over the bad guys? And is love more powerful than

brute strength?

The feature-length film showcases the unique child-like personality of Langdon, who is largely forgotten today. For a brief time in the 1920s, however, he rivaled Charlie Chaplin as Hollywood's top movie clown.

Langdon's popularity, which grew quickly in the last years

of the silent era, fizzled as the movie business abruptly switched to talkies starting in 1929.

'The Strong Man' was selected in 2007 for preservation in the U.S. National Film Registry by the Library of Congress as being "culturally, historically, or aesthetically significant."

In recent years, 'The Strong Man' has been recognized as a major achievement of the silent film era—a satisfying and timeless balance of emotion and comedy.

"A little tragedy and a lot of laughs can be seen in 1926's 'The Strong Man,'" wrote critic Richard von Busack in 2007. "Director Frank Capra's energy and sturdy plot sense counterpoint Langdon's wonderful strangeness."

'The Strong Man' will be accompanied by live music by Jeff Rapsis, a New Hampshire-based silent film accompanist who performs at venues across the region and beyond.

"These films were created to be shown on the big screen as a communal experience," Rap-

sis said. "With an audience and live music, they still come to life in the way their makers intended them to."

"The silent film screenings at Brandon Town Hall are a great chance for people to experience films that first caused people to first fall in love with the movies," he said.

Rapsis achieves a traditional movie score sound for silent film screenings by using a digital synthesizer that reproduces the texture of the full orchestra.

It's the 14th year of the Brandon Town Hall silent film series, which gives residents and visitors a chance to see great movies from the pioneering days of cinema as they were meant to be shown—on the big screen, with an audience, and accompanied by live music.

Screenings are held once a month, generally on Saturday nights starting in May and running through November. Admission is free; donations are encouraged to defray expenses.

Over the years, silent film donations have helped support (See 'The Strong Man', Page 21)



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*Subject to availability and eligibility

STUDENT: Scott Austin
GRADE: 7
SCHOOL: Otter Valley Union Middle School
TITLE: Untitled
MEDIUM: Watercolors
TEACHER: Tiffiny St. Michaud



STATEMENT FROM MS. ST. MICHAUD:
During a unit titled “Monochromatic Choice Landscapes,” students were asked to practice their knowledge of value. As a class, we discussed how artists can create the illusion of depth when playing with the value

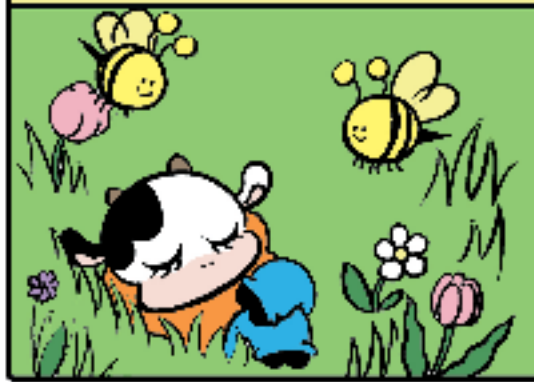
scale of their piece (i.e., atmospheric perspective in a landscape). Students were challenged to only use only one color in their piece, but expected to create 5 values with said color (allowing the use of black and/white to create the scale). Austin chose to create a lake scene

using watercolors. He chose the color orange, and successfully created 5 values (adding water to dilute far away items and black to darken items viewed up close).

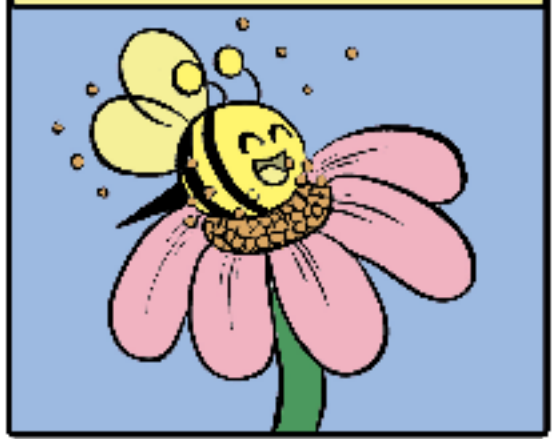


MAPLE the COW by Matt Aucoin

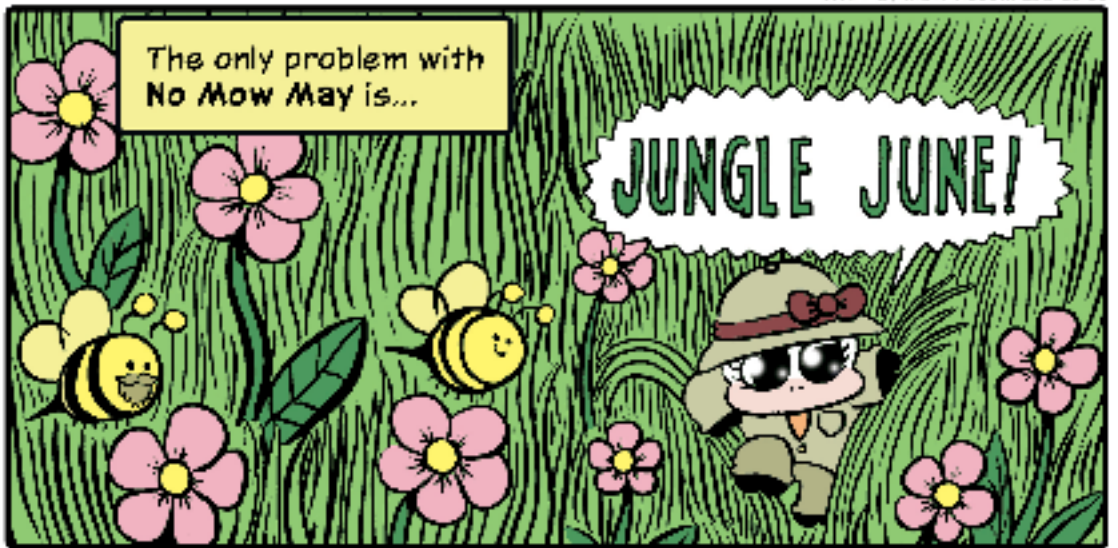
Ahh, that glorious feeling at the start of No Mow May. You can get out of mowing the lawn for a whole month!



You can feel good about it because you're feeding the bees!



Story by Matt Aucoin LLC 2025



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Green Up Day

(Continued from Page 5)

vided. There is no charge for the disposal of the debris, and arrangements for pickup and delivery to the town dump are made when needed.

If you would like to help clean up our community, I will be available at the gazebo in Central Park (across from the Brandon Inn) on Saturday morning, May 3, from 8 a.m.-10 a.m. to provide Green Up Day garbage bags and route assignments. Volunteers with pickup trucks are helpful, as we typically need help getting the trash delivered from the roadsides to the "Green Up" dumpster. If you'd like to help with "truck duty" please plan to meet at 10 a.m. at the gazebo in Central Park for route assignments. Please call me in advance of Green Up Day if you are aware of an illegal dump site or an especially hard-hit area that could use some special attention and resources.

Green Up Day bags and/or route assignments are available for those who would like to get an early start or who otherwise will not be available on Green Up Day. Please call me.

I recommend that volunteers wear sturdy work gloves as some items along our roadsides can be harmful and unhealthy (i.e., broken bottles, dirty diapers, etc.). We also recommend that you keep an eye on our younger Green Up Day volunteers to ensure that they don't pick up any items that may pose a hazard to them or others. Let's have a fun, safe and productive Green Up Day! I hope to see you on Saturday, May 3!

Jim Leary
Brandon Green Up
Day Coordinator
jimleary54@gmail.com
247-9595

Feds threaten states' transportation funding over noncompliance with immigration enforcement

BY SHAUN ROBINSON

President Donald Trump's administration on Thursday told states and other recipients of federal transportation funding that they could lose those dollars if they do not comply with the White House's interpretation of federal laws — including on immigration.

The guidance, outlined in a letter from U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Sean Duffy, told recipients that their obligations, by taking federal funding, included "cooperating with and not impeding U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement," as well as other agencies, "in the enforcement of Federal immigration law."

Failing to do so would "compromise the safety and security of the transportation systems supported by DOT financial assistance," the

missive states, as well as "prioritize illegal aliens over the safety and welfare of the American people."

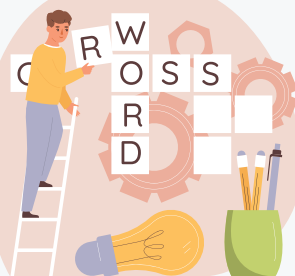
The four-page letter also takes aim at diversity, equity and inclusion efforts, calling them "discriminatory" and saying that states and others "must ensure that the personnel practices (including hiring, promotions, and terminations) within their organizations are merit-based and do not discriminate."

Duffy said, without providing specifics, that there had been instances in which recipients of federal funding did not cooperate with "ICE investigations," and that some recipients had "issued driver's licenses to individuals present in the United States in violation of Federal immigration law," which he suggested would be grounds for losing federal dollars.

Since 2014, Vermont has allowed people who live in the state — but who do not have lawful status or U.S. citizenship — to get "driver's privilege" cards. It's one of 19 states, along with Washington, D.C., that offer "driving privileges to unauthorized immigrants," according to data compiled by the National Conference of State Legislatures.

Vermont's largest public transportation agency, Green Mountain Transit, funds about two-thirds of its operations with federal money and received the letter from Duffy on Thursday, said Clayton Clark, the agency's general manager. Clark said the agency is, as a result, working on new training for what its drivers and other employees should do if federal immigration (See *Feds threaten state*, Page 23)

Sharpen your mind with our puzzles.



See page 17

Calendar of events

April

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

Maclure Library Yoga -
Gentle to moderate Kripalu yoga. Class includes physical movement, breathing techniques & meditation. Please bring a mat & any props you practice with. At 6 pm, \$10 fee. Sign up by emailing Paula Liguori at pali36@aol.com!

Tuesdays

Maclure Library Story Time Playgroup
Jessica Abbott from the Rutland County Parent Child Center hosts a weekly family program at the Library from 10 am–12 pm, geared towards kids ages 5 and under with singing, dancing, stories and crafts!

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 (vquee-noftheearth@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.

Free Drop-In Tech Support at the Brandon Free Public Library
5–6 pm

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.

Crafternoons
Join us from 12–2 pm at Maclure Library every Wednesday & bring your craft projects & supplies for an afternoon of art. Share tips, get ideas & inspiration for new projects with fellow crafters!

Free Drop-In Tech Support at the Brandon Free Public Library
5–6 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.

Thursdays
Ukulele Group
Free at the Chaffee Art Center from 12–1 p.m., for adults & 12+.

This is not a class but a group enjoying playing the ukulele together. Must pre-register. There are a limited amount of in-house instruments to reserve. Attendees will be led through specific sheet music by musician Steven Wilson. All levels are welcome.

Open Mic at Red Clover in Brandon
Join us starting at 6 p.m. for a rousing good time!

Storytime at the Brandon Free Public Library
Starts at 10:30 a.m. Join us for stories and bubbles!

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.

Brandon Senior Center Game Day
Come join us every Friday at 2:00 p.m. Cards, darts, puzzles, board games, coloring.

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.

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

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

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

Chess
Join us at The Greenhouse Dispensary on Conant Square in Brandon for a few casual games of chess on Sunday mornings from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. All experience levels are welcome. Free and open to adults 21 and older only.

Get Ready for Brandon Repair Fair May 4, 12

The 2025 Brandon Repair Fair will take place Sunday May 4 from 12 p.m. to 4 p.m. on the front lawn of the Brandon Free Public Library. Got something that needs repair? Don't throw it out—we're here to help! From bikes to appliances, chairs to electronics, our volunteer team of fixers will be ready with tools and know-how to get your stuff back in working order. Let's keep Vermont green! This 3rd installment of the

2025 Crown Point Road Association Outings

Friday, May 9
Crown Point Road Association will participate at "Ethan Allen in Castleton," a special 250th anniversary event on Castleton's Village Green along Main Street.

The history parade steps-off at 6 p.m. Following that at 7 p.m there will be a staged dramatization depicting the Green Mountain Boys' council of war that was held before seizing Ticonderoga. We will carry our CPRA banner in the parade, staff an info & sales table, and join others to honor Rev. War patriots buried right there. For info, call Tom at (802) 388-2967.

Saturday, June 14
Lake Champlain was so named by the French in 1609. The Crown Point Road was so named by the British in 1759. Both were used by the indigenous people for millennia.

We will explore this history at Lake Champlain Maritime Museum's Abenaki Heritage Weekend. Meet at LCMM at 10 a.m. (4472 Basin Harbor Road, Vergennes).

Bring lunch; admission free. For more info visit www.lcmm.org or call Barry at (802) 492-3573.

Screening

The Rutland UVN Gardens to an instructional event screening a powerful

Wednesday 30th

Intro to Cricut Maker 3 (Ages 16+) — Chaffee Art Center
Intro to Cricut Maker 3 Wednesday, April 30, 6-8 p.m. Have fun learning how to use the Cricut Maker 3! For this class, attendees will custom design and create two original and handmade cards . . . just in time for Mother’s Day or any occasion! Instructor: Michele Robie. \$25 per person, includes all supplies. Minimum enrollment: 4; Maximum: 5. Adult Class (Ages 16+). Must pre-register.

For the Next Repair Fair!
to 4 p.m.

Brandon Repair Fair is, as always, a collaborative effort between ReBHS and the Brandon Energy Committee.



We’ll have beverage specials and free food; enter to win some Brave Little State swag and ask your own questions about Vermont for the podcast. Free admission.

Circus Springboard: Thank You For Waiting — Paramount Theatre
Thank You for Waiting is a modern circus tale of seven strangers stuck together in a perpetual waiting room. Faced with endless monotony, they decide to stop waiting their turn and instead turn their world (and chairs) upside down! Through unique aerial feats, inventive acrobatic expression, and comedy, Thank You for Waiting takes the audience on a journey from the mundane waiting room of yesterday to a larger-than-life, circus world of magical realism.
The New England Center for Circus Arts (NECCA) presents the annual Circus Springboard show, featuring soon-to-be graduates of NECCA’s 3-year professional training program—America’s next generation of circus artists. Circus Springboard tours New England theaters aiming to connect rural audiences to inspiring aerialists and acrobats through the powerful storytelling of theatrical circus. From 7-8:30 p.m. at the Paramount Theatre, 30 Center Street, Rutland. \$10.

May

Thursday 1st
Brave Little Rose Mix & Mingle — Mad Rose, Rutland
Join Vermont Public’s listener-powered journalism show, Brave Little State, for a spring mixer at the Mad Rose in Rutland! Come meet the BLS team, fellow listeners and be part of a live voting round to shape an upcoming episode of the show.

Upcoming events in Brandon

May 2 & 3
Halfoween in Brandon, Vt.! Brandon celebrates Halfoween along with its sister city Salem, Mass!
May 2
Beginning with a Witches Walk down Park Street at 6 p.m. We encourage everyone to dress up and join in! Vehicles welcome! Party following the parade behind the Inn with live music and bounce houses by Whirlies World! Horror movies at Barn Opera from 5 p.m. on, and a haunted house at 6:30 at the Brandon Town Haunted Hall! Haunted Hall is \$10.
May 3
Mystical Market at Central Park in Brandon - Vendors of handcrafts, tarot readings, psychics, metaphysical items, crystals and more! 10 a.m.-3 p.m. Haunted Town Hall at 6:30, \$10. Masquerade Ball at 8 p.m., Brandon Inn, \$25 per person.

Friday 2nd

Jaded Ravins w/ Red River North and Sarah King — The Underground - Listening Room
Jaded Ravins members Kelly Ravin and Halle Jade began performing together in 2017 after Halle joined Kelly in the recording of his 5th highly acclaimed album “Engine.” Ravin, former lead singer and guitarist of Waylon Speed, now performs his soulful Americana and country rock originals with Halle Jade. Halle’s tasty harmonies and Kelly’s powerful voice along with their engaging entertainment style make them a dynamic and expressive duo. Kelly and Halle, who have been called a modern day Johnny and June, perform in large and small venues from New England to Nashville. Red River North’s sound draws on the distinctive “red dirt country” style native to the “Texahoma” region, where much of the music they play and their lead singer originate.
They bring southern vocals, acoustic instrumentation, and storytelling songs that capture the essence of small-town life and rugged Americana. Known for her powerhouse voice and “fiery, vulnerable songs,” Sarah King creates thought-provoking, versatile Americana music. Her genuine stories about real-life emotions and situations also draw on classic folk-blues themes, balancing songs about the devil and booze with hard-won moments of reflection and acceptance.

Her acclaimed 2021 EP The Hour, produced by Simone Felice and David Baron, earned

her recognition as the New England Music Awards songwriter of the Year and performances at the 2022 Folk Alliance International and Philadelphia Folk festivals, as well as

supporting slots for acts including Blues Traveler, The Steel Woods, Anders Osborne, & Nathan Graham.
Advance: \$14 (+fees) // Day of show: \$17 (+fees). Doors: 7 p.m. // Show: 7:30 p.m. BYOB (21+) All Ages.

Free Square Dance with live music — Rutland Free Library
Free Square Dance with live music at the Rutland Free Library, co-sponsored by the Vermont Conference of the United Church of Christ and the Rutland Free Library at 8:15 p.m.

Saturday 3rd

Mother’s Day Craft/Vendor Fair & Flea Market — Castleton American Legion
Come on out and find that “something special” for Mom. Craft & vendor spaces available in/outside. Flea Market items outside only! \$25 a space. Pelletier’s Maple Food Truck will be available for

lunch/snacks. Located at Castleton American Legion Post 50, 378 Rte 4A.

Pamyua — Next Stage Arts
Formed in 1995 by brothers Phillip and Stephen Blanchett, Pamyua emerged from a unique fusion of Inuit drum and dance melodies with R&B vocal styles and arrangements, creating “Inuit Soul Music.” This innovative concept sparked their journey, and the duo quickly began performing across Alaska while collaborating with like-minded artists. By the end of 1995, Ossie Kairaiuak joined the group permanently, followed by Karina Moeller in the spring of 1996. Today, this dynamic quartet works with world-class musicians from both Alaska and Denmark, traveling globally to share their one-of-a-kind blend of cultural

harmony. Pamyua’s performances celebrate Inuit culture through a powerful combination of music and dance, using the stage as a platform to share indigenous knowledge and history. 7:30-9:30 p.m. Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill, Putney, 05346. \$10-25.

Annual Spring Tea & Sweet Treats with Artisan Market & Makerie — Chaffee Art Center
The Chaffee Art Center invites you to our Annual Spring Tea & Sweet Treats with Artisan Market & Makerie on Saturday, May 3rd from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. Plan to stop by the Chaffee for our free Makerie Activities (while supplies last): Cardmaking with Evie Towsley, DIY Mini Spring Wreaths, and Mandala Flowerpot Painting. This fun event will also have FREE Chair Massages by BeeJay (10-Minute) from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m.

Demos to include Art of Collage with Mary Fran Lloyd. Plus door prizes AND MORE! There will be lots of gift ideas for others or yourself! \$5 donation per person.
Explore the current exhibit with work for sale by the VT Pastel Society and Chaffee Artist Members, and our Gallery Shoppe filled with unique, affordable, handmade items. A few artists will have kiosk areas with their art for sale. Browse the rest of the mansion and take in the 1890’s architecture while experiencing the beauty of the Queen Anne Victorian Mansion. Chaffee Art Center at 16 South Main Street in Rutland.

Sunday 4th

Spring Fling! — Pittsford Village Farm
It’s time to celebrate spring! Join us from 2-4 p.m. at this free, family event at Pittsford Village Farm. We will have games, seed planting, treats and loads of fun. Games include bird bingo, hula hoop contest, seed matching, horseshoes and more—with prizes. Special guest Tom Joyce the Magician will be there!

Thursday 8th

Woof! Workshop with GoldStar Dog — Brandon Free Public Library
This popular, long-running dog communication and safety lecture is a multi-media extravaganza. Participants will also enjoy exclusive free access to a carefully curated online resource of supplementary learning materials. From 6-7:30 p.m.

Saturday 10th

Bird Walk with Sue Wetmore — Pittsford Village Farm
Local birding expert Sue Wetmore will lead a guided bird walk, starting at 8 a.m. from Pittsford Village Farm and walking along the adjoining trails. With Sue, you will spot and identify many more birds than on your own. On the last walk, Sue identified 23 species of birds! Bring binoculars if you have them. This is free and open to everyone.

Screening of the documentary “Kiss the Ground”
Paramount Theater in Rutland, May 14 at 7 pm.

Rutland Chapter of M Extension Master Gardener Program invites you to a screening and education! Join us for a free screening of Kiss the Ground, a powerful documentary narrated by Woody Harrelson. Discover how regenerative agriculture offers real solutions to the climate, water, and food crises—that starts with the soil beneath our feet. The screening will take place on Wednesday, May 14, 2025, at 7 p.m. at the Paramount Theatre in Rutland. Admission is free, and contributions will be gratefully accepted. Come learn how hope for our planet is growing from the ground up!

Indie Bookstore Day

(Continued from Page 3)
stores around the state to introduce people to all our unique bookstore personalities. Every indie bookstore has its own vibe, which is just one reason they are so fun to visit and explore!” Bookstore pilgrims reported also stopping at Bear Pond Books in Montpelier, Bridgeside Books in Waterbury, Flying Pig Bookstore in Shelburne, Vermont Bookshop in Middlebury, and were headed south to Phoenix Books in Rutland, and even as far south as Northshire Bookstore in Manchester.

It can be hard to explain to “non-believers” the value of independent bookstores vs chain

or online outlets. The distinction comes down to more than dollars and cents (although many indie bookstores - The Bookstore included - have loyalty programs that offer rewards or discounts that rival or surpass chains and online sellers). Bookstores are places of synergy and serendipity, where ideas are exchanged, acquaintances made, and friendships renewed. Bookstores and booksellers (like their siblings, libraries, and librarians) defend the right to read books, which includes preserving access to “banned books.”

Since 1982, the American Library Association has sponsored an annual Banned Book Week

in October to raise awareness of the threat of censorship, to publicize the lists of books that have been challenged, and to remind Americans of the fragility of freedom. At Saturday’s Indie Bookstore Day, one of the day’s first customers asked bookstore staff members what their favorite banned books are and ended up leaving with three books by Margaret Atwood (author of *The Handmaid’s Tale*), *The Left Hand of Darkness* by Ursula K LeGuin, and *Dear Martin* by Nic Stone, all of which have appeared on the list of banned and challenged books. Furthermore, the selection of books in a bookstore doesn’t rely on a computer algorithm but is curated by the booksellers based on customer interests, colleague recommendations, and other non-programmable criteria.

In a world increasingly controlled by billionaires (including Jeff Bezos, founder and CEO of a certain online book retailer), many customers recognize the value of supporting locally owned businesses where they experience human interactions and personal service. Sometimes, shopping locally means choosing community over cost. Indie Bookstore Day is a perfect snapshot of that distinction.

Throughout the day last Saturday, families brought their kids and grandkids in to shop, to chat, to sample a cupcake. Neshobe student Gary Brodowski came with his grandmother and immediately noticed the manual typewriter stationed just inside the front door. “Oh cool, a typewriter!” he exclaimed, sat down, and began typing. This prompted older shoppers to reminisce about their own typewriter-related memories. Merchants, farmers, brewers, restaurant owners, and elected officials arrived throughout the day to show their support by shopping locally.

It was not lost on indie booksellers that the aforementioned online retailer was holding its own annual book sale, and the American Booksellers Association



ABOVE: GARY BRODOWSKI tries out a vintage typewriter. **Right:** Jenny Coombs. **Below:** Alexa Herrera-Condry (l) and Barbara Ebling (r).

tion was ready with social media assets to respond: “An Am*zon book sale? On OUR weekend? If they want to go toe to toe with indies, good luck to them. WE DO IT BETTER. Indies don’t

send celebrities to space, but we do support our local economy. Algorithms don’t throw parties. INDIES DO.”

We do, indeed!

Restaurant guide

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://cafeprovencet.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.

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Ad design included in pricing
Call 802 236-4662, or email george@brandonreporter.com for more information

Kris Francoeur

(Continued from Page 1)
has become a scourge in American society, responsible for the overdose deaths of thousands of people over the last decade or so.

Sam Francoeur was an early victim of the narcotic, overdosing on fentanyl patches that he found in his grandparents' house in Ripton when he was 20 in 2013.

"We knew Sam was self-medicating," said Kris Francoeur, Sam's mother, in a recent conversation. "But we didn't know the extent."

The family had tried to keep narcotics out of his reach, but their unfamiliarity with fentanyl as a killer—Kris still believes the media downplayed the known danger even then—allowed those patches to remain where Sam could find them.

"I found the wrapper in his pocket," Kris recalled. The medical examiner then extracted the patch from Sam's mouth. Her special, beloved boy—the boy who befriended everyone and found such joy in human connection—was gone, taken by the addiction he fed to keep his own psychological struggles at bay.

The loss of a child is an unimaginable loss for anyone who hasn't

experienced it. And an unsurmountable one for many who have.

But Kris conquered the pain through writing about it, publishing a memoir of her experience called "Of Grief, Garlic, and Gratitude: Returning to Hope and Joy from a Shattered Life" in 2019.

"I would not be a published author if not for Sam," she said as a matter of fact.

Writing about her loss helped her process it. And she takes comfort in having brought attention to fentanyl, changing perceptions of addiction and helping others crushed by loss.

"There was a stigma attached to addiction, absolutely," she said. Kris' mother revealed Sam's cause of death at his celebration of life

and some attendees later chastised Kris for what they saw as an unnecessary revelation of something that should've remained hidden.

"We were at the lowest of the low at that point," she recalled. But now Francoeur often hears from people who have found great comfort in her book.

"My husband, Paul, and I didn't seek the spotlight before Sam's death," she said. "But we owe it

to Sam to bring some good out of this."

Francoeur credits her two editors with making sure the memoir was as powerful as it could be.

"The first draft was nowhere near as raw as it ended up being," she said. "My editor told me I was wasting my time if I wasn't going to really delve into the pain and emotions. I sat and cried but realized she was right. In the end, writing about Sam was cathartic. I ended up feeling very proud of how my family and I dealt with Sam's death."

In addition to her husband, Kris has a surviving son, Ben, and two stepchildren, Amie and Ryan.

"I was respectful of everyone in the family and only included what we were all comfortable with," she said. "But it's really my story. I grieve for Sam every moment. It's really my story of how I moved forward. There was a period when I wasn't sure I could."

Francoeur even has a tattoo on her foot that reminds her of her family and of the need to put one foot in front of the other to keep moving forward.

The path to publication wasn't immediate, however. Francoeur received hundreds of rejections before she finally found a publisher. And that wasn't even for the memoir. Her first published book was a novel called "That One Small Omission," which is being reissued this fall.

She now has 6 six published books under her own name, mostly romance novels. She's also become a prolific ghostwriter, produc-



KRIS FRANCOEUR

ing "hundreds" of books that end up published under other authors' names. In fact, Francoeur has quite a side hustle writing Amish and Mennonite romances.

"Amish romances are a huge moneymaker in the publishing

world," Francoeur said.

Romance stories that feature billionaire men "saving" poor women are also very popular these days, she said. But Francoeur would love to flip the genre and write a ro-
(See Kris Francoeur, Page 19)

It's MUD Season!

101.5 FM

MUD

RADIO

The Roots of American Music



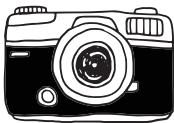
Mim's Photos

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
if you can identify someone
in these photos.
Or call us at 247-8080



Recognized



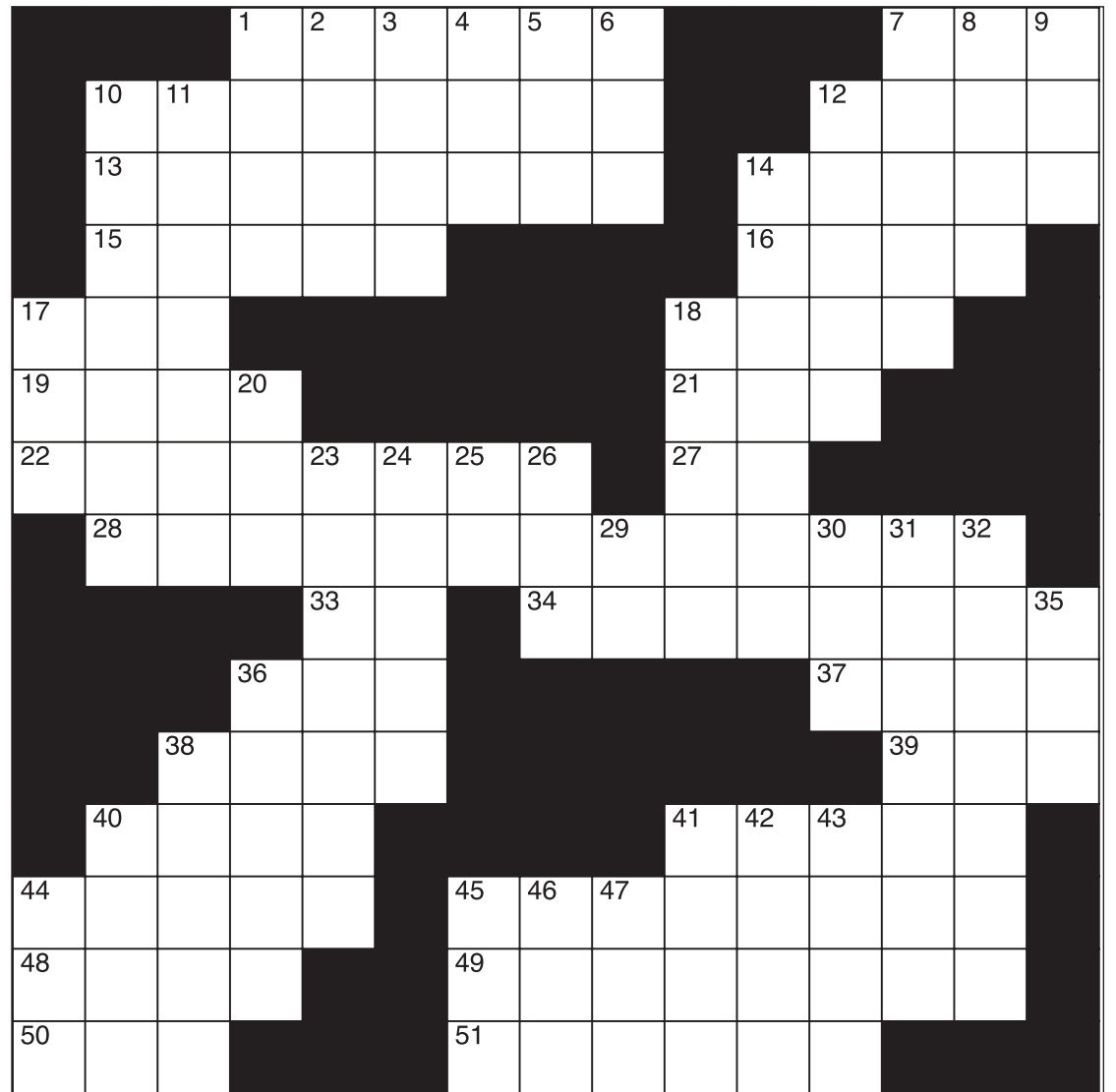
Terry Ferson recognized the coaches for this wrestling team: Pete Bearor, left, and Bob Bathalon, right.



Terry Ferson recognized this newlywed couple to be Jean (Scarborough) Whipple and Leon Whipple. Leon served in the Navy in Korea and Vietnam. Both are now deceased. Mr. Ferson believes the photo was taken in the mid 1980s.

1. Where entertainers perform
7. Miller beer variety
10. Ageless
12. River in SE Europe
13. Able to be repaired
14. Type of wrap
15. Atomic #54
16. Type of tent
17. U.S. Treasury position
18. Opposed to
19. Protective covering
21. Bridge building degree
22. Clouding of the lens
27. Priestess of Hera loved by Zeus
28. Unacceptable
33. Mr. T's "The A-Team" character
34. American national park
36. One point south of due east
37. Assist in a crime
38. Greek mythological personification of Earth
39. A major division of geological time
40. German courtesy title
41. English family dating back to Norman times
44. Discounts
45. South American nation
48. Former Milwaukee Buck Michael
49. Hostile
50. Passports and drivers licenses are two
51. Discourages from doing

1. Supreme god of ancient Egyptians
2. Nevada city
3. Energy, style and enthusiasm
4. Bird's beak
5. Language
6. Midway between south and southeast
7. Punjab village
8. Small biting flies
9. Sportscaster Patrick
10. A way to get around
11. Repeat
12. A way to cook with fat
14. Temporary loss of consciousness
17. Reciprocal of a sine
18. Fir tree genus
20. "Transformers" director Michael
23. Criminals who steal
24. Genus of leaf-footed bug
25. Music product
26. "Talk to you"
29. Santa says it three times
30. Doctors' group
31. African nation
32. Ageless
35. When you hope to get somewhere
36. Worn
38. Deprives of vigor
40. Used to have (Scottish)
41. Where you live
42. Muslim ruler title
43. Basics
44. Type of drug (abbr.)
45. Spanish soldier
46. It precedes two
47. Illuminated



Sudoku

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

Level: Intermediate

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

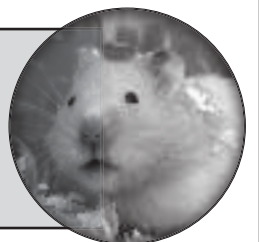
Spring Blooms Are Beautiful— But Not All Are Safe for Pets!

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



This sweet boy has a heart of gold, but he can be a bit shy sometimes! Once he warms up to you, he will be your best friend. He is a handsome boy who has so much love to give (and receive!). Jay came in with his best friend, Lola. They love to go on walks together and just be with each other. It would benefit Jay and Lola to go home together, but it is not a requirement. We do know that Jay does well with kids, but we have no known history of how he will do with cats or other dogs. Therefore, it will be important that he meets any potential dog friends. If this boy sounds like the right fit for you, please stop by and visit with him. The Adoption Center is open Tuesday through Saturday, 11 a.m. to 4 p.m.

WHITE GROVER 6 MONTH OLD: HAMSTER, MALE, GRAY:
This cutie arrived at RCHS on 4/4 because their previous owner could no longer care for him or his pal. Although he lived with another male hamster, they did not get along. He is a sweet little guy who enjoys being handled and loves to explore. Whether he's running around or snacking on his favorite treats, Grover is sure to bring joy to any family! If you're looking for a tiny, lovable companion, come meet him at the Adoption Center Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

RUTLAND COUNTY
HUMANE SOCIETY

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



OFF THE SHELF

NEW BOOKS AND NEWS

The following large-print book was donated by Brenda Whittaker

Strangers in Time
by David Baldacci,
donated in memory of
Madelyn C. Neumann

Two parentless teens find solace and friendship with a widowed bookstore owner during World War II in London.

New adult fiction

Your Steps on the Stairs
by Antonio Muñoz Molina

A man travels to Lisbon ahead of his wife to prepare their new home, while she stays in New York to oversee a research project on the neuroscience of memory and fear. Leaving behind a phase of their relationship indelibly marked by 9/11, the man revels in the Portuguese capital's temperate weather and the neighborhood's calmness, meticulously planning the details of their future. Yet beneath the peace and quiet of this routine, he feels a growing unease he can't explain. Is it the similarity between the two cities, and the two apartments? A mysterious threat waiting in the wings?

Citizen Orlov
by Jonathan Payne

Journey to an unnamed mountainous country in central Europe at the end of the Great War. Enter Citizen Orlov, a simple fishmonger and an honest, upright citizen, who answers a phone call meant for a secret agent and stumbles into a hidden world of espionage and secrecy. Recruited by the Ministry of Security, he is sent on assignment to safeguard the king. But Orlov soon discovers that his ministry handler, the alluring femme fatale Agent Zelle, is planning not to protect the king but to assassinate him. Caught in a web of plot and counterplot, confusing loyal-

ties, and explosive betrayals, Orlov finds himself on trial for murder. Given the opportunity to clear his name, he finds that the lives of his friends, mother, and fellow citizens hang in the balance.

The Death of Us
by Abigail Dean

Together, Edward and Isabel move to London. They are young and in love, occupied by friends, work, and fun. But late on a spring evening when they are thirty years old, their home is invaded by a serial killer. In the wake of this violation, each tries to come to terms with a night that changed everything—and their marriage begins to crumble. Twenty-five years later, their tormentor is caught, and Edward and Isabel reunite for his sentencing. Isabel has waited years for the man who nearly ended her life to be brought to justice. As they prepare to deliver impact statements in the public eye, it is time to revisit their love story. Will they finally be able to confront the secrets, longings, and lies that tore them apart?

Sister Snake
by Amanda Lee Koe

Sisterhood is difficult for Su and Emerald. Su leads a sheltered, moneyed life as the picture-perfect wife of a conservative politician in Singapore. Emerald is a nihilistic sugar baby in New York, living from whim to whim. But they share a secret: they were once snakes, basking under a full moon in Tang dynasty China. A thousand years later, their mysterious history is the only thing still binding them together. When Emerald experiences a violent encounter in Central Park and Su boards the next flight to New York, the two reach a tenuous reconciliation for the first time in decades. But Su soon begins to worry that Emerald's irrepressible behavior will out them both, in a sparkling, affluent city where everything runs like clockwork and any deviation from the norm is automatically suspect.

DID YOU KNOW?

May 3rd from 1 to 3 p.m. starts our monthly drop-in Sensory-Friendly Art Time. We'll provide art supplies and a quiet place. Ages 6 and up with adult.

The Last Hour Between Worlds
by Melissa Caruso

Kembral Thorne has a few free hours to be away from her newborn, and she's determined to enjoy herself at the year-turning ball. But when guests start dropping dead, she can't help sniffing out trouble—she's a Hound, after all. Especially when her professional and personal nemesis, notorious burglar Rika Nonesuch, is also on the prowl. Everyone knows you shouldn't get involved with Echo games. Let alone one involving ancient Echo lords who can turn layers of reality into a gameboard with human lives for pieces. But as the ballroom grows stranger and more otherworldly with each strike of the hour, it's clearly too late.

Brandon Police Report

Note from Brandon Police Chief David Kachajian: The Vermont State Police (VSP) are covering the Town of Brandon for emergency calls from 4 p.m./6 p.m. until 8 a.m., 7 days a week, due to the staffing shortage at the Brandon Police Department (BPD). This log may not reflect calls that VSP receives during the time Brandon officers are off duty.

The parent of the children was spoken to by the responding officer and she agreed to keep the children out of the neighbor's yard in the future.

- Received a vehicle complaint on Franklin Street regarding a black Jeep Renegade traveling at high speed and passing vehicles near the Otter Valley Union High School. A Be On Lookout was put out for the vehicle in-question.

April 21

- Received a report from a resident of Franklin Street that a silver Volkswagen was parked out in a field in the back of his property with a man inside who did not appear to be responsive. Upon police arrival on-scene, the homeowner advised that the car had left the area.
- Conducted a welfare check on an elderly man on Mulcahy Drive who had activated his Lifeline emergency response alarm. The subject was located safe and sound and had accidentally set the alarm off.
- Assisted a resident of Brandon on how to go about getting a Stalking Order.
- Responded to a juvenile problem on Country Club Road in which a resident reported that some children were running around on her property with a bow and arrow chasing a raccoon and was concerned due to "liability reasons."

April 22

- Received a report from the Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control District that several of their markers had been taken from multiple locations in Pittsford and one from Brandon.
- Responded to a call about an intoxicated individual causing a disturbance on Church Street. The individual was placed in protective custody and transported to the Marble Valley Correctional Facility for detoxification. The officer was assisted by the Middlebury Police Department.
- Received a report of a larceny of cooking oil from Mae's Place on Center Street.

April 23

- Conducted a traffic enforcement patrol on Mulcahy Drive at Arnold District Road.
- Assisted a tractor trailer unit (See Police report, Page 19)

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE



good to reconnect with loved ones and spend time with your immediate family. attention to your network as it may lead to connections.

LEO July 23-Aug. 23
Leo, now could be an excellent opportunity to express your ideas and opinions to some of the higher-ups at your place of employment.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 20
Your hard work is paying off, Capricorn, but you also need to tend to your personal needs right now. This is the week to find better balance and take care of your health.

VIRGO Aug. 24-Sept. 22
Exercise caution with your spending and investments right now, Virgo. Although you have some financial opportunities on the horizon, it's best to be careful going forward.

AQUARIUS Jan. 21-Feb. 18
Aquarius, you may be feeling more curious about the world around you and could find this is the week for some unexpected travel. It's a great time to embrace new ideas.

LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 23
A fresh burst of energy could be coming your way, Libra. This may provide the boost you need for self-improvement. You may be inspired to make many changes in your life right now.

PISCES Feb. 19-March 20
Your intuition will guide you this week, especially when it comes to romance and other matters of the heart, Pisces. Expect relationships to grow for the better.

SCORPIO Oct. 24-Nov. 22
Scorpio, you may find yourself reflecting on your mental and emotional well-being this week. Some introspection could lead to a breakthrough that helps you understand the past.

- ~~~~~
- FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS**
- | | |
|-------|------------------------------------|
| May 2 | Dwayne Johnson, actor (53) |
| May 3 | James Brown, musician (d) |
| May 4 | Audrey Hepburn (d) |
| May 5 | Soren Kierkegaard, philosopher (d) |
| May 6 | George Clooney, actor (64) |
| May 7 | Angela Carter, author (d) |
| May 8 | Robert Johnson, Blues singer (d) |

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23-Dec. 21
Expect your social life to pick up speed this week, Sagittarius. Invitations and opportunities to connect abound. Pay

ARIES March 21-April 20
Aries, this week you may feel a desire to take charge of your professional life. Trust your instincts, but remember that you may have to go out of your comfort zone at some point.

TAURUS April 21-May 21
Taurus, expect a week of self-reflection. Old emotions might resurface and offer you a chance to grow and heal. If you're feeling out of sorts, make a plan to hang out with close friends.

GEMINI May 22-June 21
Make sure you are not spreading yourself too thin this week, Gemini. Even though you are eager to connect and socialize, you might want to limit the number of events you attend.

CANCER June 22-July 22
Home and family matters may occupy most of your time this week, Cancer. It's

Yard Sale?

Call 247-8080 for details.

Advertise it in the Reporter!

Kris Francoeur

(Continued from Page 15)
mance about a billionaire woman’s adventures.

“The romances I write under my own name feature strong, independent women,” she said.

But her protagonists often have traumatic backgrounds, in keeping with her own experience as the only child of an alcoholic, bipolar father (the Rev. Wayne Holsman, who led the Brandon and Salisbury Congregational Churches) and a mother who, by Francoeur’s account, was not a traditional homemaker. As a child, Francoeur sought refuge in writing.

“I didn’t think I’d be a writer,” she said. “I just loved telling stories.”

But after Sam’s death, Francoeur resolved to try to get her work published. She’d kept writing even as an adult (“I was somewhat bored as a stay-at-home mom”) and she her first novel was released on the one-year anniversary of Sam’s death in

2014.
“I think Sam somehow made that happen, to make that anniversary something positive,” she said.

Francoeur is currently working on a cinematic adaptation of her romance novel “The Stained Glass Window,” which she plans to produce as a short film in anticipation of eventually turning into a feature-length movie. “The Stained Glass” is also set to be featured at the 2025 Los Angeles Times Festival of Books.

She’s also got a new novel in progress, a romance murder-mystery set in Rutland.

Her advice to those who dream of a writing career is simple: “Don’t give up. I received hundreds of rejections before I got my first contract. Keep trying.”

Anyone interested in finding out more about Francoeur and her work can visit her website: authorkfrancoeur.com.

Police report

(Continued from Page 18)
turn around on Long Swamp Road to avoid the Sanderson Covered Bridge.

April 24

- Responded to the Junction Store on Forest Dale Road for a report of an attempted burglary.
- Vehicle stop on Franklin Street for failure to obey traffic control devices (red light). Warning issued.

April 25

- Responded to McConnell Road for a report of a vehicle that was blocking a private driveway, was unoccupied, and appeared to have

been in an accident.
• Received a call regarding a late-reported dog bite on Basin Road. The matter was forwarded to the Town of Brandon Health Officer for further investigation.

April 26

- Received a report of vandalism to a vehicle at a residence on Carver Street.

April 27

- Received a report of harassment that has been occurring on social media. The caller was provided information on obtaining an order against stalking.

Community Development Report

Bill Moore provided the following Community Development Report:

“Table Tennis@ OV North Campus has been suspended/or the spring.

Congratulations to the 2025 Kids Idol winner, Owen Lewis. This second grader’s impressive rendition of the song My Shot from the musical Hamilton earned him the title and the opportunity to perform at the Brandon Idol finale on May 16th.

Adult Pick-up Basketball on Thursdays will be moving from Neshobe to Otter Valley starting

in May.
SUMMER PLANNING HAS BEGUN. SOME NEW OFFERINGS:

Basketball clinic at OV, Cheer clinic at the Town Hall, Field Hockey, Disc Golf, Archery, and outdoor photography camp and more being planned for the slate of summer programming. Brochure is being made for distribution in May.

TOWN HALL NEWS:

World of Hurt Wrestling returns to the Brandon Town Hall on April 26th 7pm. This is a rental; tickets are available at the door and on

Brandon Town Manager's report, April 28th

A number of items that I worked on during this reporting period will be considered in their own agenda items on the selectboard’s agenda. Delinquent tax collection update:

Chief Kachajian has had several applicants for the temporary clerical position at the police station. We have not yet had applicants for police officers; the Chief says agencies all over Vermont are at something of a standstill regarding recruitment. Chief Kachajian and Officer Kelleher have been made aware of the event planned for May 1st in Central Park.

Seasonal road postings have ended other than a few select roads (those at elevation). We have not had an applicant yet for the vacant position in the Highway Department.

The first itinerant vendor permits of the season have been issued. Anyone conducting business from a food truck / trailer is reminded to obtain a permit regardless of planned location within the Town of Brandon (public or private property). Applications are on the Town website.

A public forum regarding homelessness has been offered by local professionals in the field. plan to coordinate a date and publicize it to gain community and selectboard participation.

Thanks to Brandon’s Tree Warden Neil Silins for securing a Caring for Canopies tree grant and coordinating the planting of several tress by volunteers in the Downtown on Saturday, April 26th. Thanks, too, to Brian Kilpeck from the Brandon Highway Department for coming in to prepare the planting sites on a non work day.

Green Up Day is Saturday, May 3rd. Thanks to Brandon’s Green Up Coordinator Jim Leary for spearheading the effort in our community for many years. A colleague of mine at the State Archives has provided a collection of photographs from Vermont’s first Green Up Day in 1970, when Governor Deane Davis visited Brandon as part of his statewide tour. The photographs and the Governor’s itinerary may be viewed here:

<https://app.box.com/s/yq2hw147ipxdma93f8c-wtfkejqiik9u>

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT	
Unrestricted / Unassigned Fund Balance	\$482,043
1% (Local Option) Tax Fund Available / Undesignated	\$336,376
Known Grant Matches Not Yet Designated	UNION STREET
Delinquent property taxes (prior years)	\$441,220 (was \$460,654)
Delinquent wastewater (prior years [over 120 days])	\$190,017 (was \$214,604)

The Act 250 initial filing for the New England Woodcraft stormwater management project has been made. The Town is a pass-through for this but had agreed at the inception of the project to perform certain ongoing maintenance tasks post-construction.

The new due date on the Forest Dale Shared Use Path Scoping Study is June 1, 2027. This is an automatic extension provided by the State. This project is being managed by our RRPC planner and has local participation from a committee formed for the purpose.

The Seminary Street stormwater management project is fully designed and closed. We will connect with our state partners regarding potential implementation/construction funding.

Thanks to Nifty Thrifty for sponsoring (purchasing) two banners for Covered Bridge Week in Vermont this August. These will be placed on the Sanderson Covered Bridge. The Brandon Area Chamber is also supporting this initiative.

I attended the RRPC Act 181 (Act 250 land use revision) training on the evening of April 16th and provided the selectboard and planning commission with my notes and the slides from their presentation. RRPC Logan Solomon will meet with the planning commission at the Town Hall on May 13th at 6PM for an in-depth treatment of this effort to facilitate infill development which will grow our economy and increase housing. The public is invited to attend. Brandon is wellpositioned to avail itself of the provisions of Act 181 tiers, and the Town’s desired designation will be a matter of selectboard consideration at the May 26th selectboard.

I had many meetings with residents, town officials, staff, and filled a number of requests for information.

Seth M. Hopkins

sale at their website.

May 2nd the town hall will host “Haunted House” as a part of the Colleen Wright Events “Halfoween” weekend. Tickets at the door and online.

May 10th The Brandon Town Hall will once again play host to the wildly popular Jeff Raps is, silent Movie presenter, and the film “The Strong Man (1926). For years the Friends of the Brandon Town Hall (FOTH) would pro-

duce this unique monthly offering. With the FOTH completing their mission to renovate the town hall, their organization ceased operations BUT have worked to fund this time-honored late-spring to fall monthly offering. Free admission, donations accepted (donations will be used to fund the future year’s silent movie series). “

Bill Moore reported the Town received a FRCF application for 191 Newton Road for the buyout

and are currently going through the process. The State was glad to fund it as this property could be used for more floodplain restoration and groundwork capacity to accept more flow of the Neshobe River.

Doug Bailey asked when the roof work would be done for the Town Hall. Seth Hopkins reported they are expected to be here sometime in May to do the roof.

Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 7)

four years that the organization has been based in Brandon.

"We couldn't be happier in Brandon," said Mr. Bailey. "We're thrilled to be part of the Brandon community."

Mr. Bailey also stated that SolarFest had received grants

for the completion of a pathway connecting downtown Brandon with Estabrook Park that will traverse the organization's property. The portion of the pathway on SolarFest's land will be maintained by the organization, he said.

An attendee asked whether

SolarFest planned to use proceeds from its festival to repay the grant it received for the pathway from the Trustees of Public Funds. Mr. Bailey responded that the path and the festival are unrelated.

POLICE VEHICLE SALE AND PURCHASE

The Board discussed a proposal from Mr. Hopkins to sell two of the Brandon Police Department's police cruisers and

purchase a new cruiser with funds from FY2025 police budget that are now available because of the departure of several officers. Mr. Hopkins stated that the departures have made approximately \$70,000 available and that the cost of a new cruiser will be comparable.

The two vehicles proposed for sale are a 2014 Taurus that has been deemed uninspectable and a 2016 Explorer that is still in inspectable condition. This would leave a 2020 F-150 in relatively good condition and a 2022 Explorer in very good condition.

Board member Brian Coolidge expressed concern that a mechanic had not been consulted to determine which vehicles to keep and which to sell. Gerad Lowell of Thunder Towing was in attendance and offered his opinions of the vehicles, since he has worked on them. Mr. Lowell stated that the 2016 Explorer had over 100,000 miles and would pass inspection, though it would likely begin showing signs of metal corrosion on its undercarriage from the years of road salt and heated garages.

Board member Ralph Ethier proposed retaining the 2016 vehicle in case new officers were hired and additional vehicles were needed.

Ultimately, the Board voted unanimously to retain the 2016, 2020, and 2022 vehicles and provide them with undercoating while attempting to sell the 2014 Taurus, which Mr. Hopkins joked might have a successful new life in the demolition derby.

NO-MATCH GRANT FOR EV MINIVAN

The Board voted unanimously to accept an Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant of \$62,653 from the State of Vermont to purchase a 2025 all-electric Volkswagen minivan. The minivan would primarily serve the Rec Department but would also eventually be used to assist Brandon residents in traveling from outlying homes to downtown. The minivan would replace a vehicle once owned by the Rec Department that had failed inspection and been discontinued.

In response to questions from the Board, Mr. Hopkins stated that there might be situations in which he would use the minivan for official town business but only if it wasn't already being used for other purposes. The minivan would not be wheelchair accessible.

MUTUAL AID AGREEMENT

The Board unanimously approved an agreement between Brandon and the Rutland Re-

gional Planning Commission for mutual aid among participating towns in the Rutland area. The agreement would allow these towns to borrow equipment from one another so as to avoid having to purchase expensive equipment that the towns may need for only specific, short-term projects. The full text of the agreement is available in the Selectboard packet for 4/28/25 on the Town website.

APPOINTMENTS

The Board unanimously approved the appointments of Jack Schneider and Lisa Peluso as Brandon's representatives to the Rutland Regional Planning Commission (with Ms. Peluso acting as alternate). The Board also approved the appointments of Jeremy Disorda and Brian Kilpeck to the Rutland Regional Transportation Advisory Board (with Mr. Kilpeck as alternate).

LEGAL COUNSEL RETAINER

The Board unanimously approved the retainer of the law firm of Carroll, Boe, & Kite of Middlebury to handle the upcoming sale of tax-delinquent properties. The full text of the retainer agreement is available in the Selectboard packet for 4/28/25 on the Town website.

PUBLIC COMMENT

Brandon State Representative Todd Nielsen addressed the Board to update the community on his work in Montpelier. Nearing the end of his first legislative session, Mr. Nielsen said the office was "the toughest job" he ever had and that he was trying his best and learning a lot. He also stated that through his work on the Human Services committee, he felt that he was helping Vermonters while saving taxpayers money.

A member of Indivisible Brandon informed the community that the organization would be participating in a "National Day of Action" on Thursday, May 1 in Central Park to protest actions taken by the current presidential administration that the organization deems illegal and counter to the U.S. Constitution.

David Martin of the Brandon Energy Committee informed the community that the Committee would be holding another "Repair Fair" at the Brandon Library on Sunday, May 5. Anyone with a small appliance or piece of furniture they would like to have repaired can bring it to the event for free.

An attendee asked the Board to press the Trustees of Public Funds to focus its activities on sanitation, as per the original bequest from Shirley Farr. He also asked the Board to request documents from the Trustees

(See Brandon SB, Page 23)

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'The Strong Man'

(Continued from Page 9)

projects including handicapped access to the 19th century building; renovating the bathrooms; and restoring the structure's original slate roof.

Other films in this year's Brandon Town Hall silent film series include:

- Saturday, June 7, 2025, 7 p.m.: "Underworld" (1927) starring George Bancroft, Evelyn Brent. Director Josef von Sternberg's groundbreaking tale of big city mobsters, widely considered the father of all gangster pictures. Tale follows crime boss "Bull" Weed as he battles rival 1920s gangsters.

Incredible black-and-white photography; winner of first-ever Oscar for original story by Ben Hecht.

- Saturday, July 19, 2025, 7 p.m.: "Grandma's Boy" (1922) starring Harold Lloyd, Mildred Davis. A cowardly young man must learn to conquer his fears before dealing with a larger menace to his community. Riotous small town comedy that helped propel Harold Lloyd into the most popular movie comedian of the 1920s.

- Saturday, Aug. 16, 2025, 7 p.m.: "Manhandled" (1924) starring Gloria Swanson. Up-roarious comedy from silent



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screen legend Swanson tells the story of a down-on-her-

luck salesgirl who climbs the social ladder by pretending to be a Russian countess.

- Saturday, Sept. 20, 2025, 7 p.m.: "Spies" (1928) directed by Fritz Lang. Director Fritz Lang's tale of espionage was the forerunner of all movie spy sagas, packed with double agents, hi-tech gadgets, beautiful (and dangerous) women, and an evil genius with a plan to take over the world, mwah-ha-ha-ha!

- Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025, 7 p.m.: "The Magician" (1926) starring Paul Wegener, Alice Terry, directed by Rex Ingram. Just in time for Halloween: a scientist uses an ancient spell to reanimate a dead body. The secret missing ingredient is, of course, the blood of a virgin, making it a good bet for all

kinds of creepy goings-on.

- Saturday, Nov. 15, 2025, 7 p.m.: "Seven Chances" (1925) starring Buster Keaton. Buster is about to be saved from bankruptcy by an unexpected inheritance of \$7 million—but only if he gets married by 7 p.m. that very day. Can Buster somehow find the girl of his dreams while being pursued by an army of women eager to marry a soon-to-be millionaire?

See Harry Langdon in the 'The Strong Man' (1926) with live music on Saturday, May 10 at 7 p.m. at the Brandon Town Hall and Community Center, Route 7, in Brandon, Vt. All are welcome to this family-friendly event. Admission is free, with free will donations accepted to defray expenses.

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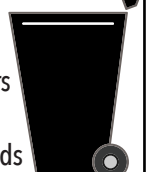
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Feds threaten state

(Continued from Page 11)

tion agents board a bus or come to one of the agency's transit hubs in downtown Burlington or Montpelier.

The state Agency of Transportation got the letter late Thursday, said Amy Tatko, an agency spokesperson, in an email Friday, and is in the process of reviewing it. In the state's budget for the current fiscal year, which ends in June, federal funds make up almost 60% of transportation spending, according to the Legislature's Joint Fiscal Office.

Joe Flynn, the transportation secretary, said in a brief emailed statement that the letter "requires further understanding," especially about the Trump administration's intentions, but added the state agency is "not overly concerned at this time" about what it says.

Clark said that Green Mountain Transit — which operates local and commuter bus services, as well as on-demand transit for people with certain medical needs, across Chittenden, Franklin, Grand Isle and Washington counties — would, broadly, tell its employees to comply with federal immigration enforcement officials.

"We would not want them to interfere — but we also would not want them to, you know, be aiding," Clark said. The agency's staff has not had any such interactions with federal immigration enforcement so far, he said in an interview Friday morning.

Still, Clark said he is concerned by the nature of recent detentions by federal agents in Vermont and other states that took place with little warning and were conducted by officers wearing plainclothes and masks. This could make it difficult, for instance, for the agency's employees to get a clear sense of what

was happening, Clark said.

He noted that Green Mountain Transit's No. 56 bus stops just down the street from the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services office in Colchester where Mohsen Mahdawi, a Palestinian activist and lawful U.S. resident, was arrested earlier this month in that manner. Clark said he expects that some people use the No. 56 to get to appointments at that office.

"When folks are not in uniform, not wearing any type of identification that would let you know what organization they're from," Clark said, "how do we know that this is ICE — and not somebody who's, you know, trafficking New Americans?"

Clark said he is concerned that the prospect of immigration enforcement raised by Duffy's letter could discourage people from taking public transportation. But he said Green Mountain Transit could not afford to put its federal funding at risk, regardless of how he felt, personally, about this week's federal guidance.

He estimated that the agency, which is already facing steep financial challenges and has had to cut some services in recent months, would only be able to provide about 20% of the service that it currently offers if it were to lose all of its federal funding.

Green Mountain Transit has already made one change to its operations in response to recent actions by the Trump administration, Clark said. After learning the administration could target federal funds used for what are — at least in the White House's view — diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives, Clark said, the transit agency pulled the plug on its "Justice, Equity, Diversity and Inclusion Committee" meant to ensure its services were

meeting the needs of people from historically marginalized communities. The agency made the decision to disband the committee in March, Clark said.

Trump has taken aim at what he considers "DEI" programs in government and the private sector from the outset of his second term. His billionaire adviser Elon Musk's cost-cutting "government efficiency" department has, meanwhile, repeatedly targeted federal jobs for cuts that it has said were related to diversity and inclusion efforts.

Clark said Green Mountain Transit plans to replace its "JEDI" committee with "rider engagement" committees, still aimed at soliciting feedback from its passengers.

At the statewide level, the Trump administration earlier this year put federal grants for some major transportation projects under "review," including large new bridges and a planned buildout of electric vehicle charging infrastructure across the state. During Gov. Phil Scott's weekly press conference on Wednesday, Flynn, the transportation secretary, said in response to a question that the EV funding was the only pot of transportation money he knew of at that point that was still under threat.

Sen. Richard Westman, R-Lamoille, who chairs the Senate Transportation Committee, said Friday that he was concerned by the position that the letter put the state in. He said it is difficult, if not impossible, to predict what steps the Trump administration will take, and noted the state's transportation revenue challenges gave it little flexibility.

"I wouldn't want to comply," he said, referring to the immigration enforcement described in Duffy's memo, among other measures. "But I can't afford to live without the money."

Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 20)

regarding the grant of \$10K for the feasibility study for the proposed Valley Community Center, which is the subject of a pending ethics complaint before the Board.

Finally, the Board discussed implementing a tracker to prevent pending business from slipping through the cracks.

WARRANTS

The Board unanimously ap-

proved a warrant in the amount of \$147,253.01 to cover the Town's obligations and expenses. It also unanimously approved the disbursement of \$1,412.49 to the Vermont Treasurer's unclaimed monies fund, where it can be reclaimed from the parties to whom it belongs. The Town had tried to return the funds to their owners but the owners did not come forward to claim them.

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PUBLIC NOTICES

TOWN OF PROCTOR, VERMONT

Notice of Public Hearing

Town of Proctor Zoning Board of Adjustment/Planning Commission

Under the provisions of The Town of Proctor Zoning Regulations 24 VSA § 4461 the Proctor Board of Adjustment/Planning Commission will hold a public hearing at 6:00 p.m. on Thursday June 5, 2025 at the Town Office Meeting Room, 45 Main Street, Proctor, VT 05765 to consider a waiver to reduce the setback requirements for a new addition on existing structure at 42 Eden Avenue, Proctor, VT 05765, and to address any appeal filed by abutters.

Property Owner: Tim and Carrie Covey
Applicant: Tim and Carrie Covey
Location: 42 Eden Avenue, Proctor, VT

District: Residential
Action Requested: Request for 900 square foot addition

Abutters are hereby notified that further information can be found at the Town Clerk's office which is open Monday through Friday 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. Participation in this hearing is a per-requisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

Proctor Planning Commission
Carol Protivansky, Chair.
April 25, 2025



COUNTRY STORE!

Here's your chance to revitalize the old Sudbury Store and the 3 bedroom apartment upstairs. It will take some work but should be worth the effort! Great storefront location along a scenic road with beautiful country views beyond. The store area is 750 SF with hardwood floors, bead-board panels, and includes lots of shelving and the original product coolers. The 1.0 acre parcel includes land across the road that once had a barn, creamery, and single wide. Pleasant Brook runs along the west side of the property, and the Sudbury School is a neighbor across the street.

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EXALTED RULER MIKE Gauthier (left) and Lodge Grant Writer Carolyn Ravenna (right) presented a \$500 check to Otter Valley Unified Sports, a portion of The Beacon Grant from the Elks National Foundation. \$500 checks were also delivered to Mill River, Rutland Intermediate, and Rutland High Unified Sports Teams.

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