

# The REPORTER

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

A community supported newspaper

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\$1

## End of an era: Bernie and Beth Carr plan their retirement

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—If ever there were an unofficial mayor of Brandon, Bernie Carr would certainly be at the top of the list of candidates. All their adult lives, Bernie and Beth Carr have been pillars of the Brandon community, running their businesses, volunteering, and generally trying to keep the town moving forward.

Now, after 50 years in Brandon retail—flowers and gifts—the Carrs have put their Center Street building on the market as they contemplate their well-earned retirement.

They spoke at length about their lives and businesses in a wide-ranging conversation at their shop—Carr's Gifts—last weekend.

### LOCAL ROOTS

Born in 1958, Bernie grew up on Franklin Street in Brandon. His father was a probation officer and his mother worked at the Ayrshire Breeders Association and at the Brandon Training School.

Beth came to Brandon in the 3rd grade, in 1965, having lived in Portland, Maine, Fort Bening, Georgia, and Arlington, Virginia. Her father, Neil Rideout, was a science teacher who brought the family to Vermont when he got a teaching position at Otter Valley.

And yet, they didn't meet until they were in their late teens.

"Bernie and I weren't in the same grade and we didn't have friends in common," Beth explained. "Then my parents got divorced and my mother moved us back  
(See Bernie and Beth Carr, Page 20)



**BETH AND BERNIE Carr** in front of their gift shop on Center Street in Brandon. After 50 years in retail, the Carrs are planning to retire. They plan to stay involved in the community, but look forward to finally having the time to spend with friends and family.

## Brandon Trustees of Public Funds face backlash

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—At a combative early-morning meeting on Thursday, May 1 at Brandon Town Hall, the Trustees of Public Funds (TPF) faced intense accusations of impropriety and mismanagement. The allegations came from a group of town residents determined to make clear to TPF, and to the public, that they believe TPF have violated their fiduciary duty to the town.

TPF manages a fund originally bequeathed to Brandon by Shirley Farr, one of the town's wealthiest residents when she died in the 1950s (her former home is now the Lilac Inn on Park Street). Vermont law stipulates that money left to municipalities must be managed  
(See Brandon Trustees, Page 7)



## Somewhere under the Rainbow!

**THE HALFOWEEN "WITCHES' Walk" on Park Street last Friday may have started a bit wet, but it ended with a glorious double rainbow.**

PHOTO BY BILLY Bullock



**THE BASEBALL FIELD** at Pittsford Rec has been dedicated to former Rec Director Randy Adams. The upper softball field is now dedicated to Joe Pomykala in recognition of his service maintaining the grounds.

## Pittsford Rec honors Randy Adams and Joe Pomykala

BY STEVEN JUPITER

PITTSFORD—A cold, gray day couldn't keep the people of Pittsford from coming out on Saturday to honor two of the town's most hard-working residents: Randy Adams and Joe Pomykala. The parking lot at Pittsford Rec was at capacity as folks came to witness the dedication of two playing fields to these two

gentlemen.

Both Mr. Adams and Mr. Pomykala devoted years of service to the Pittsford Recreation Department.  
(See Adams and Pomykala, Page 21)





# Ninth in a series on Brandon's historic buildings

## The Photographer's Building is oldest in Park Street business district

**BY JAMES PECK**  
Recently, the Downtown Business Alliance (DBA) unveiled Banker's Alley located in the alley between the Bar Harbor Bank (BHB) and the National Bank of Middlebury (NBM). As part of the "Park-2Park" project, it provides a place to showcase Brandon art and provide a more pleasant route between Central Park and Kennedy Park by the falls.

If you look closer at these two bank buildings, you will notice a decided difference in the bricks as to color, size, and mortar. The Bar Harbor building is a lighter tannish shade while the NBM building (called the Photographer's Building) is a darker red and the mortar on the NBM is whiter. Obviously, they were built at different times.

In fact, the NBM building at 6-8 Park is much older, the oldest in that row of buildings, which are all over 100 years old. Built in 1851 by George Washington Parmenter as a brick store, it is 67 years older than the BHB building on the corner which proudly displays its construction date at the top of "1918." As does the building to the east of the NBM/Photographer's

building, also in the light tannish brick which displays its date of "1919" at the top. Maybe an "1851" should go up on

each side. When the fire of 1918 that destroyed the bank cor-



**THE PHOTOGRAPHER'S BUILDING (red arrow) remained standing after a terrible fire on the Park Street business block in 1919. It had already survived a fire in 1918, and it remains the oldest building on that row.**

their elder sister!  
**TWO FIRES**  
As with the Blue Moon building at 31 Center, the survival of the Photographer's Building was due to the quality of its construction; both have a double fire wall of bricks 24 inches thick on

ner building occurred, the Dunmore Hose Company was able to stop the fire from spreading east across the alley mainly due to that fire wall. Then, only 16 months later in 1919,



**JAMES CADY, WHO was the first photographer to open a studio in the building in 1864. His rent was \$50 per year. The Brandon Museum has several of his stereo views of Brandon.**  
a fire destroyed all the buildings to the east up to the Brandon Inn, the fire wall (See Photographer's Building, Page 8)

# Addison County's Hometown Dealer



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**DIRECTOR KATIE ST. Raymond** instructing the actors as they rehearse for *"The Witch's Princess"* at Otter Valley. Photos by Mitchell Pearl

## Otter Valley's Walking Stick Theatre to present 'The Witch's Princess' this weekend

**BY MITCHELL PEARL**  
For the second year now, Otter Valley's award-winning theatre program will present a full-length production featuring underclass students. "The Witch's Princess" will be presented Friday, May 9, and Saturday, May 10 at 7:30 PM on the Otter Valley stage. The

play is directed by Katie St. Raymond, who joined Otter Valley as a social studies teacher last year with a significant background in theatre. She directed "A Midsummer Night's Dream" a year ago, which was the first Otter Valley production limited to the younger students. "The Witch's Princess" is a

relatively new, funny adventure story by playwright Don Zolidis. While "The Witch's Princess" is not yet a well-known play, the playwright Don Zolidis is a former high school and middle school theatre teacher and is the most-produced playwright in American schools. He has published more than 100 plays that have been produced in every state and 63 countries.

The play starts with a familiar trope: The main character's mother—the queen—is dead on the first page. The kingdom is cursed, and the princess, played by Calle Gibbs, is led to believe that the only way to lift the curse is to slay the witch who is thought to have killed the queen. The king offers princess Alessandra's hand in marriage to the knight who can slay the evil witch. But the knights who "try out" are ridiculous, and so there is only one thing for the princess to do: sneak out of the castle and try to kill the witch herself.

First, the princess assembles a team of friends for the adventure, a crack crew of the deadliest monsters in myth and legend to help. These are mythical creatures based on stories from around the world played by Asta Gamba, Winter Blaisdell, and Audrey Carrier. But as the adventure progresses, the princess discovers the monsters are



**THE ACTORS REHEARSE** a fight scene.

## Spotlight On Business RED CLOVER ALE COMPANY



At Red Clover Ale Company we're a community-focused, family-owned microbrewery founded by brothers-in-law Riker Wikoff, Pete Brooks, and Andrew Gates. We craft approachable, flavorful beers with a rotating tap list that includes hazy IPAs, amber ales, and lagers. Our cozy taproom offers live music, board

games, and a bring-your-own-food policy—creating a welcoming space where people can gather, relax, and enjoy great beer together. Check us out in beautiful downtown Brandon!

## Cafe Provence MOTHER'S DAY BRUNCH

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# Vermont Supreme Court upholds convictions for Rutland childcare provider in baby's death

BY ALAN J. KEAS/  
VTDIGGER

The Vermont Supreme Court has upheld the convictions of a former Rutland childcare provider found guilty on charges of involuntary manslaughter and cruelty to a child in the death of a 6-month-old baby more than six years ago.

Stacey Vaillancourt, 59, was charged in 2019 with giving a fatal amount of a sedative found in over-the-counter antihistamines to Harper Rose Briar, who was in her care.

Vaillancourt was convicted of the two charges against her by a Rutland County jury following a trial in December 2023, and was sentenced to three to 10 years in prison.

She appealed her convictions, and Friday the five-member Vermont Supreme Court in a unanimous decision affirmed the jury's guilty verdicts.

"Defendant has not identified any grounds to disturb the jury's verdict," Justice Nancy Waples wrote in the 17-page ruling.

"First, there was sufficient evidence presented for the jury to convict defendant for both involuntary manslaughter and cruelty to a child with death resulting," Waples wrote. "Second, the verdicts against her are not inconsistent and do not violate double-jeopardy."

Rutland County State's Attorney Ian Sullivan prosecuted the case at trial along with Deputy State's Attorney Daron Raleigh. Deputy State's Attorney Evan Meenan argued the appeal for the prosecution before the Ver-

mont Supreme Court in March.

"I hope today's decision brings closure and a sense of justice to everyone who loved Harper during her all-too-brief life," Sullivan said in a statement Friday.

Dawn Matthews, an appellate attorney with the Vermont Defender General's Office, argued Vaillancourt's appeal. Matthews could not immediately be reached Friday for comment.

The Pittsford infant died Jan. 24, 2019, at the child care facility that Vaillancourt ran out of her home on North Street in Rutland, according to charging documents filed in the case.

Authorities had been called to Vaillancourt's child care facility that day for a report that the infant was not breathing, the filings stated. Harper was taken by ambulance to Rutland Regional Medical Center, where she later died.

It was Harper's third day at the child care facility when, the charging documents stated, Vaillancourt gave her a fatal amount of diphenhydramine, an "over-the-counter (sedating) antihistamine used for treatment of allergic reactions."

An autopsy report from the chief medical examiner's office showed that Harper's death was a homicide caused by "diphenhydramine intoxication."

Vaillancourt's defense had contended the state case was based on circumstantial evidence and also raised the possibility that another person could have administered the medication.

Among the arguments in her  
(See Harper Rose, Page 7)



## Sing me a song of a sweet summer

THIS YELLOW WARBLER can be heard singing: sweet-sweet-sweeter-than-sweet.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

## Community Forums

# Turtles must be left in the wild

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department says keeping native turtles as pets is prohibited because it can harm the turtle and pose threats to wild turtle populations.

"Capturing a wild turtle and keeping it as a pet, even if only for a short time, is not only bad for that individual but it could hurt turtle populations as well," said Vermont Fish and Wildlife herpetologist Luke Groff. "Releasing captured turtles back into the wild can spread wildlife diseases and also affect the genetics of the local population."

Groff explains that adult turtles usually have well-defined home ranges and know where to find  
(See Wild turtles, Page 5)



# Calling all downtown flower helpers



'Tis the season for...flowerpots! Every year a host of dedicated individuals volunteer to plant and place our beautiful flowerpots around town. Join us this year on Saturday, May 24 at 10:30 a.m. in Central Park. We'll work and partake in homemade pastries and coffee (thanks to Judy Bunde). Please bring hand trucks. See y'all there!

## The REPORTER

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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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# Letters to the Editor

## Brandon Library fundraiser was a big success

Friends of the Brandon Library hosted “Cocktails for a Cause” last Sunday night. It was great fun and a wonderful success! Held in Cafe Provence’s private dining room, over 60 folks gathered to share friendship and joy. We celebrated Chef Robert, his culinary talent, and Line Barral for their generous presence in our town. Applause to the folks who sponsored cocktails, a hearty thank you goes to Kurt and Sharron Kenney, Charlie Thurston, Nick and

Lisa Curcio, Jessica Fjeld and Ben Bearnot, and the winner of the friendly contest—Linda Gebhard and Billy Bullock for the delicious concoctions. A huge thank you goes to our hard working and ever cheerful Celebrity Servers: Jeff Haylon, Harmony Van Eaton, George Fjeld, and our tip champion, Stephanie Jerome. Of course the heart of the operation cannot be thanked enough, our bar crew, mixologist David Roberts and bar back extraordinaire Brian Jerome! The evening am-

bience was ably provided by Shane Kennedy, who is a music master. Working in the background, I want to thank Courtney Satz for her design of our program, it was beautiful. This fundraiser goes to support our library, its programs and staff, who are a felt heartbeat in our town.

*Carol Fjeld  
President, Friends  
of the Brandon Library*

## National Homeless Awareness Day is a good time to reflect on how to assist those in need

As you may be aware, May 6th is National Homeless Awareness Day. This issue is important to me as a community member who believes that assisting those in need ultimately benefits society, and who believes those benefits work along both ethical and financial lines. It’s also an issue that I am keenly aware of via my work as a case manager at Charter House Coalition in Middlebury, and as part of the Addison County Homeless Outreach Team.

There aren’t many who’d argue that housing and homelessness

aren’t an issue in Vermont, nationally, or worldwide. And yet, in America, there’s little being done at the highest levels to combat the issues. We spend our resources posturing and politicizing rather than identifying and committing ourselves to logical, compassionate, and financially advantageous solutions, many of which we already have at our disposal.

I’m speaking of things like Housing First, which has an excellent track record virtually everywhere it’s been prioritized, and has been proven vastly cheaper than motel vouchers, hospital stays, mental institutions, incarceration, rehab beds, and other options that amount to no more than overpriced band-aids.

In my eyes, there’s never a good time to cut benefits and social services, yet I see us doing it more and more frequently—nationally and locally—often in the name of lowering

taxes. There is far too little conversation about how our tax money can be used for positive investment in our communities and future, and we don’t talk enough about the hidden costs of saving on taxes, either.

For example, things like the extra burden we put on social workers, medical staff, first responders, schools, businesses, and public institutions, all of

which we already know are frequently pressed well beyond their current capabilities.

And this is to say nothing about the human cost involved for those in need.

Not only are unsheltered individuals dehumanized by our general lack of attention to their lives and burdens, but we also literally create more crime and suffering through enacting certain encampment policies and laws that do not also create positive solutions and opportunities for outreach and engagement.

Any policy which merely discourages the presence of the unhoused only serves to alienate them further, pushes them further into the shadows, and should be avoided.

These problems will not disappear via migration; rather they will grow and manifest anew in places that may be less prepared and where it will be more difficult, and more expensive, to lend assistance.

Furthermore, if we want to lower crime, as we all say we do, it makes sense to be doing whatever we can to lower poverty (See *Homeless awareness*, Page 6)

*It’s too easy to make people into scapegoats and chalk their problems up to moral failures or personal insufficiencies.*

## A call to action to defend American democracy

“We the people, in order to form a more perfect Union...” are the opening words to the Constitution of the United States.

“...One nation, under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.” Concluding words of our Pledge of Allegiance.

“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” Opening sentence in the 2nd paragraph of the Declaration of Independence.

I have participated in recent rallies and protests and without exception find myself gathered with a group of people who are nonpartisan. Oh, they may have voted for Republicans, or for Democrats in the previous elections, and they may think of themselves as a conserva-

tive, a liberal, or a progressive, but as we gather together, the theme of the signs and the conversations are about rights and wrongs, the Constitution, and the rule of law. Labels aren’t at the heart of these protests, but rather the fear that our freedoms and rights are being torn down by the executive orders of one person who wants to rule with the authority of a king.

No, this isn’t just my perspective and opinion. See for yourself the plans that this “administration” wants to implement by googling Project 2025 (The Heritage Foundation).

We have a constitution with clear instructions as to how our democratic republic is to be organized and maintained. The United States is governed by a system intended to ensure order and to protect citizens through laws and processes to enforce those laws.

This is often referred to as “rule of law.” Laws in the Unit-

ed States follow the principles and rights outlined in the Constitution of the United States and are meant to apply to all persons equally and fairly by our courts of law.

Don’t just listen to the news or follow online headlines; don’t believe what I’m saying.

Educate yourself! Check out books at the library to learn about your rights. The library has many books about the Constitution—who wrote it, why it was written, why it was amended, and what it means for us and the functioning of our country.

Partisan feelings and hateful rhetoric should instead be replaced with an effort to understand the foundation upon which our great country was founded.

Let’s take action to preserve it!

*Barbara White  
Brandon*

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## Wild turtles

(Continued from Page 4)

food, mates and shelter. However, a turtle released in unfamiliar habitat may roam greater distances, increasing the odds it will cross roads and be run over.

For some turtle populations, such as rare species populations, the loss of even a few mature females can

have serious consequences because turtles are slow to develop, especially at northern latitudes where the growing season is short.

“Many of Vermont’s turtle species do not reproduce until they are at least 10 years of age,” says Groff, “and older, sexually mature females are critical to the long-term persis-

tence of some of Vermont’s turtle populations. Older females have already beaten the odds by reaching maturity and, because they are typically larger than younger females, they tend to produce more eggs.”

Two common species you are likely to see are the Painted Turtle and Snapping Turtle. The Wood

Turtle, Spotted Turtle, Spiny Softshell, and Eastern Musk Turtle are rare in Vermont, and Vermont Fish and Wildlife urges you to report sightings of these species to the Vermont Reptile and Amphibian Atlas (vtherpatlas.org). If you see some of Vermont’s native turtles in the wild, feel free to take a photo

home with you, but leave the turtles in the wild.

For more information on Vermont’s native turtle species, visit Vermont Fish and Wildlife’s website or contact Vermont Fish and Wildlife herpetologist Luke Groff at Luke.Groff@vermont.gov.



# Obituaries

## Jaida Lynn Cram, 20, Bristol

Jaida Lynn Cram, age 20, died on April 17, 2025 at the University of Vermont Medical Center, from injuries sustained in an automobile accident in Bristol.

Jaida was born in Middlebury on December 15, 2004 to Tina Marie Cram and Matthew Supernault. She grew up in New Ellenton, S.C. where she received her early education. She and her mother moved back to Bristol, Vt. and she completed her education at Mt. Abraham Union High School. She had worked as a respite care provider at the Residence at Otter Creek and was also working as a deli clerk at Shaw's in Bristol. She loved nature, art, and animals. Her family was



JAIDA LYNN CRAM

everything to her. Jaida was the most kind, loving girl whose smile was brighter than the sunrise and she ran as wild as untamed horses that roam.

Surviving is her mother, Tina Marie Cram of Bristol, and her bonus mom, Sarah Grennon; her father Matthew Supernault of Benson; 2 brothers, Logan Galante and Mason Galante; a little sister, Layana Galante; and her maternal grandmother, Amanda Cram. She was predeceased by twin brothers and her maternal grandfather, John Desabrais, Jr.

A private gathering "In Celebration of Her Life" will take place at a later date.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be made in her memory to Homeward Bound, 234 Boardman St., Middlebury, Vt. 05753.

Arrangement by Miller & Ketcham of Brandon.

## Mary Livia Lovelette, 74, Brandon

Mary Livia Lovelette, age 74, passed away April 28, 2025, at Rutland Regional Medical Center.

Mary was born in Rutland on August 17, 1950. She was the daughter of Charles and Livia (Paolucci) Sullivan. She grew up in Rutland, where she received her education. Mary worked in food service most of her life. She was employed for over 30 years in food service at Southwestern Vermont Medical Center in Bennington. She later worked 15 years at Middlebury College and food service at St. Joseph's in Rutland. She was a member of St. Mary's Catholic Church in Brandon. Mary loved music. Elvis Presley was her favorite.

She is survived by her son,



MARY LIVIA LOVELETTE

Christopher Lovelette, and his partner, Donna, of Brandon; 2 daughters, Stephanie

Lovelette of Rutland and Jennifer Lovelette of Barre; 2 sisters, Julia Sullivan of Chester and Charlene Sullivan of North Carolina. Four grandchildren, a niece, and a nephew also survive her. She was predeceased by her husband, Michael Lovelette, in December 2023. They were married in Brandon on October 17, 1981.

A private graveside commitment service and burial will take place at a later date in the family lot at Pine Hill Cemetery in Brandon.

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

# Homeless Awareness

(Continued from Page 5)

erty rates in general, not to be exacerbating them by cutting social services— something that will only put more and more people in precarious positions where committing crimes can become a necessary and reasonable option for survival.

There are many overwhelming and factually inaccurate stigmas attached to the homeless, especially in the idea that they're mentally ill, drug or alcohol addicted, or in some way

or by local officials seemingly more concerned about appearances than by solutions.

I urge everyone not to look the other way. Most of us are precariously close to becoming unhoused if things break the wrong way. Should that happen, we'd all wish we'd done more when we had the chance. Please ask your representatives, local and national, to make fixing the housing and homeless crisis a priority.

Please investigate models like Housing First for yourselves, as well. If you do, I think you'll see the success Housing First has shown in other parts of the world and ask, Why can't we do more of this here? Why

*We have massive systemic problems, and this kind of victim blaming is merely a distraction that won't help them get solved.*

AREN'T we doing more of this here when it's so much more effective, compassionate, and financially advantageous, particularly as we find ourselves so concerned with efficiency in the national discourse? The model is good for our hearts AND for our wallets.

I also urge you to remember that the unsheltered people you may encounter are every bit as human and valid as you or anyone else. They are someone's child, someone's loved one, perhaps someone's sibling or parent, and they have hopes and dreams, too.

They deserve to live in peace and in shelter, regardless of any challenges they may have. They deserve dignity and respect; a smile, a wave, a hello—at the very least.

They are not the problem or the burden that so many would have you think they are, and a little kindness can go a long way.


If you take the time to get to know these individuals, you may even, like me, find yourself delighted and continually inspired by their courage, their perseverance, their resilience, and even, sometimes, their joy in the face of it all. May we all be so strong.

And yet they do show up for themselves, time and again. Even when not giving up means having to navigate a system so splintered and inefficient that it feels dismissive to the point of being draconian.

I say draconian not to be dramatic but because that's what it feels like for me, simply in going through the process of being an advocate. I don't have to deal with the added stress and trauma of being on the streets, and don't realistically have to worry if I'll be accosted at any moment, either by bad actors

Mat Clouser  
Brandon

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# Harper Rose

(Continued from Page 4)

appeal, Vaillancourt’s attorney stated that Judge Cortland Corsones erred at the trial by allowing into evidence two short videos of Harper because they were “unduly” prejudicial.

“Here,” Waples wrote in the high court’s ruling, “the State argued that it had to prove causation, so videos showing (Harper’s) developmental capacity were relevant because they demonstrated that she did not have the capacity to either give herself medicine or protect herself from harm.”

The high court rejected Vaillancourt’s argument regarding the videos.

“Any emotional response generated in the jurors from the videos does not substantially outweigh the probative value of the videos,” Waples wrote in the decision.

As of Friday, Vaillancourt was incarcerated at the Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility, the state’s only women’s prison, in South Burlington, according to the state Department of Corrections.

*“I hope today’s decision brings closure and a sense of justice to everyone who loved Harper during her all-too-brief life.”*

— Ian Sullivan, Rutland County State’s Attorney



STACEY L. VAILLANCOURT, 53, of Rutland is brought in to Rutland criminal court for her arraignment after being charged with manslaughter and cruelty to a child arising from the January death of 6-month-old Harper Rose Briar at the defendant’s state-certified in-home day care facility.

Photo by Robert Layman/Rutland Herald

# Brandon Trustees

(Continued from Page 1)

by independently elected trustees.

These elected trustees are generally known as Trustees of Public Funds and are tasked with managing the bequests and distributing the income the trusts generate according to the original terms of the donors’ wills. In Brandon, the three elected Trustees are currently Laura Miner, Tanner Romano, and Courtney Satz, all of whom have served multiple terms as trustees.

The allegations leveled against TPF fell into two different, albeit related, categories. First, a general concern that TPF have strayed too far from the original terms of Farr’s bequest in the distribution of the trust’s income. Second, a specific accusation that TPF have engaged in self-dealing by distributing income from the trust to entities with which the trustees are personally involved.

Town Manager Seth Hopkins was first to address the trustees. Reading a prepared statement, he held that Ms. Farr’s will stipulated explicitly that the bequest go to the town of Brandon as a municipality and not to non-municipal organizations or entities based in Brandon. All requests to TPF for funding must, he said, come from the municipality. Moreover, he held that the income from the trust must be used first and foremost for municipal sewage and sanitation.

Mr. Hopkins based his assertion on the language of Farr’s will, which stated that two-twentieths of her estate would be left to “the town of Brandon, Vermont, to be used by it primarily for proper sewage disposal, drainage of swamps and other sanitary improvements and any amounts not needed and expended for such purposes shall be used for spraying trees or in the general improvement of the village in ways not sufficiently provided for by taxation.”

Mr. Hopkins argued that “the town of Brandon, Vermont” could mean only the municipality and that any grants awarded to non-municipal entities therefore violated the terms of the trust.

Recently, TPF has awarded thousands of dollars in grants to numerous non-municipal entities (See Brandon Trustees, Page 9)

## GARDENING FOR KIDS

Miller Hill Farm, Nursery & Gardens and Brandon Free Public Library

Gardening is a great way to introduce children to the important work of our different pollinators while learning about plants and cultivating a sense of environmental stewardship.

### What We’ll Do:

Start our day with story time.

Learn about plants and pollinators.

Kids then get their hands in the dirt by planting a French Marigold to take home that blooms all summer long!

Suggested ages 4-6.

Saturday  
24 May, 2025

Time  
1:30 TO 3:30 PM

Location  
2127 RT 73, Sudbury

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## Miller Hill Farm, Nursery & Gardens Open May 17th

## Leicester News

Test your luck, and help your neighbors

Green Up Day was a success in Leicester. 100 percent of the town roads were cleared of trash and debris. Green Up Co-Coordinator Diane Benware is grateful for the support. For next year, consider doing the Green Up during the week prior to the big day and come to the Green Up Day lunch to celebrate your efforts.

The Leicester Historical Society is sponsoring Prize Bingo on Saturday, May 10, at 1 p.m. at the Senior Center. Refreshments served and all are welcome.



# Photographer's Building

(Continued from Page 2)  
on the other side saved it again.

After each fire, the same contractor, Brandon's prolific Tom Rogers, rebuilt the two destroyed blocks, both in the light tannish bricks, both with their construction dates of 1918 and 1919 proudly displayed in marble at the top.

## PARMENTER'S BLOCK

George Parmenter, the 38-year-old son of Captain Nathan Parmenter, one of Brandon's first settlers, bought the lot at 6-8 Park in 1850 from John A. Conant for \$1,200 and the next year built his "brick store" as it says on the deeds. The first businesses located there were the boot and shoe shop of S. F. Paige ("Poverty is no excuse for going barefoot!") and the gentleman's clothing shop of L. C. Scott, both downstairs, and the hat shop of Mrs.

Salmon Farr (great grandmother of Shirley) upstairs.

## PAIGE'S BLOCK

In 1857, Parmenter sold the brick store for \$3,800 to Sylvester Frederick Paige, whose shoe shop was now called the People's Shoe Store, run by Milo Mott. The building then became "Paige's Block" and remained so for the next 56 years, until 1913.

By 1860, Sylvester Paige was a very successful merchant, with \$10,000 in assets, mostly real estate. When he moved to Rutland in 1866, he continued to manage the building and his other interests in Brandon.

## PHOTOGRAPHER'S BUILDING

Downstairs, a grocery store soon moved in and would be there until 1948 under various owners. Upstairs, beginning in 1865, a long line of photogra-

phers would lease studios there for 56 years, until 1921.

According to historian Blaine Cliver, because the building faces south, the second floor was ideal for photographers who needed sunlight to develop photos from glass plates. In fact, old photos of the building show that a small bay window was added in the 1890s, likely to facilitate more solar exposure.

The first to lease was 29-year-old James Cady, who signed a two-year lease at \$50 a year in 1864. Cady was known as "an Artist of ability and taste." Cady took numerous stereophotos (stereopticon, or stereoscopic, slides) while living in Brandon. Many of the early images of the town are his, including the oldest photograph showing the town hall and also the building that is now the library. In 1867, Cady likely took the accompanying photo of the Photographer's building.

Cady's assistant, Nathan Capen, took over the lease in 1869, on "the second floor, to be occupied as a Picture Gallery and dwelling—six rooms in number." Capen was there until 1876. Then Sanford Smith took over the lease, this time from Paige's widow Augusta.



(L TO R): Bill, Francis, and Tom Brown. The Browns ran a pharmacy and then a gift shop on the first floor of the building. The gift shop, Brown's of Brandon, closed in 2007.

By 1910, Etta Moody, the first female photographer to occupy the studio, took over the lease through 1921. It was she who took the accompanying photo after the 1919 fire. Her shop had been damaged by

became Collins & Needham's grocery in 1898 and would be there for 50 years.

It was operated by Harry Collins and Charles Needham. Harry bought the building from the Paiges in 1913 and it



THE BUILDING (RED arrow) and street as they looked in 1867. This photo is by Cady. Note Brandon House on the right, the predecessor to the Brandon Inn. Brandon House burned down in the late 1880s and was replaced by the current Inn in the early 1890s.

Smith was there until 1887, followed by the Parker brothers, A. O. Phillips, A. E. G. Fuller, Frank Grimes, Clayton Knowlton, and Charles Fuller through 1907. It was Frank Grimes who took the accompanying photo showing the "Photography" sign and bay window.


smoke and water, but she soon moved back in, as did the grocer downstairs.

## COLLINS BLOCK

While the photographers took over the second floor in 1864, a grocery store had moved in on the first. After exchanging hands a few times, it

became the "Collins Block." Their motto was "The Best of Everything" and their picture window displays were legendary (2,500 navel oranges). Like the building, the grocery survived the 1918 and 1919 fires, and flourished up to 1948.

(See Photographer's Building, Page 15)



## Golf Course

NESHOBEE

### LONG IRON RESTAURANT

Open Wednesday–Sunday

Wednesday—Wing night

Thursday—Burgers and Beer

Friday—Dinner Specials

Saturday—Lunch

Sunday—Brunch

The restaurant offers both indoor and outdoor seating options, with stunning views of the golf course and surrounding mountains. The indoor seating area features large windows that allow guests to take in the beautiful scenery while they dine.

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.....

## The golf course is now open for the season!!

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Wed–Fri 10–8, Sat 10–4, Sun 10–2

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\$34/hour except Wed–Fri 10–4 is \$25/hr

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# Brandon Trustees

(Continued from Page 7)

ties, including The Reporter, the Brandon Museum, the Forest Dale Cemetery, and the Brandon Free Public Library, among others.

"The Trustees cannot elect to distribute money from the trust, no matter how deserving they deem the recipient, if Miss Farr's bequest does not speak to [the] purpose [of the request]," said Mr. Hopkins. "This is important because only the Town of Brandon itself exists to serve every taxpayer, every resident, every family living under its jurisdiction without limitation of benefit," he continued. Non-municipal entities, he stated, served only subsets of the Brandon community and thus should not be entitled to funds that Ms. Farr intended for the benefit of all.

Mr. Hopkins then requested that TPF take some time to reconsider their approach to the trust and undertake a "fundamental reordering" of their role in managing it.

After Mr. Hopkins' statement, Mr. Romano asked whether Mr.

Hopkins intended that TPF entertain only funding requests that come directly from the town.

"Yes," replied Mr. Hopkins. "Through me." He reiterated that "the town" referenced in Ms. Farr's will was the official municipality only and could not be interpreted to include non-municipal organizations.

The town of Brandon currently spends over \$1,000,000 annually to run its wastewater treatment facility on Union Street and maintain its sewer lines. Mr. Hopkins argued that all the annual income from the trust, which usually totals between \$20K and \$30K per year, could easily go toward reducing the burden on taxpayers.

After Mr. Hopkins returned to his seat, other members of the community addressed the Trustees to express their displeasure and even anger. Several attendees called for the mass resignation of the Trustees, accusing them of having failed their constituents by diverting the income of the trust away from sewer- and sanitation-

related purposes. One attendee even suggested that the Vermont Attorney General open an investigation into breach of fiduciary duty and "clear malfeasance."

The Trustees did not respond at length but did note that they believed their management of the trust had been in accordance with legal guidance they had received from Brandon attorney James Leary after Mr. Leary had reviewed Ms. Farr's will in 2019. Before 2019, the will had not been reviewed by an attorney since 1975, said Mr. Romano.

The Trustees were also criticized for holding their public meetings in non-public spaces and at inconvenient times, making it difficult for the public to attend and monitor TPF's activities. The May 1 meeting, for example, had originally been slated to take place at the offices of Naylor & Breen, of which Mr. Romano is a principle, until public pressure compelled TPF to move the meeting to

the Selectboard meeting room at Brandon Town Hall.

The Trustees noted that attendance at the May 1 meeting far exceeded what they were accustomed to, with roughly 15 people in the room at 8:30 a.m.

*The Trustees were also criticized for holding their public meetings in non-public spaces and at inconvenient times.*

A more specific accusation against TPF was reiterated at the meeting as well. A particular TPF grant of \$20K for a feasibility study for a new community recreation center

had already become a matter of concern for many Brandon residents because Mr. Romano was personally involved in the project for which the study was intended.

The community center project, known as Valley Community Center (VCC) and estimated to cost over \$12 million to construct, was made public last fall when Mr. Romano approached the Otter Valley school board about acquiring a 10-acre parcel of unused school property on which to build VCC.

TPF had committed a total of \$20K toward a feasibility study for the project, although TPF says only \$10K of that amount was ultimately disbursed for expenses incurred before the project ground to a halt after a public vote denied VCC the ability to acquire the 10-acre site at the OVUU School Board annual meeting in February.

Hundreds of people attended that meeting specifically to vote against the proposal. If it had gone forward, VCC would have had two years to secure funding for the

construction or the land would remain with the school district. Additionally, VCC would have had to approach all the constituent towns VCC intended to serve in order to secure their financial participation. A successful vote in February would not have committed any town to any financial contribution or obligation toward the project.

Nonetheless, Mr. Romano's involvement in VCC—he was the point person for the project at the February school board meeting—raised concerns that he was acting unethically by voting to award \$20K for a feasibility study for a project he was personally involved with.

Moreover, residents were concerned that if the project had gone ahead, Mr. Romano would stand to personally profit because of his co-ownership of Naylor & Breen, one of the most prominent construction companies in Vermont. Some residents claimed that the VCC project was designed to benefit Naylor & Breen and Mr. Romano.

Mr. Romano has stated that the request for the \$20K came from the Otter Valley Activities Association and that VCC had not even organized at that point. He has also stated that if VCC had approached TPF for any additional funds after his involvement, he would have recused himself from those deliberations and votes.

An ethics complaint has been filed with the state against Mr. Romano. The state's ethics law tasks the local Selectboard with investigating ethics violations by local officials. The results of the Brandon Trustees, Page 19)



## Legislative Report

BY TODD NIELSEN

### An overview of my work in Montpelier

Legislative report bills passed the House: S.27 Senate bill, entitled An act relating to medical debt relief and excluding medical debt from credit reports, S.36 Senate bill, entitled An act relating to the Medicaid payment model for residential substance use disorder treatment services,

S.50 Senate bill, entitled An act relating to increasing the size of solar net metering projects that qualify for expedited registration.

Excellency, the Governor, signed the bills of the following titles: H.80 An act relating to the Office of the Health Care Advocate, S.3. An act relating to the transfer of property to a trust,

H.118 An act relating to expanding the scope of hate-motivated crimes, H.259 An act relating to preventing workplace violence in hospitals, H.243 An act relating to the regulation of business organizations, S.9. An act relating to after-hours access to orders against sexual assault, S.30. An act relating to updating and reorganizing the health insurance statutes in 8 V.S.A. chapter 107.

PROPOSED AMENDMENT TO THE CONSTITUTION OF

THE STATE OF VERMONT. This proposal would amend the Constitution of the State of Vermont to provide that the citizens of the State have a right to collectively bargain. The House adopted the constitutional proposal in concurrence. Yeas, 125. Nays, —.

Rep. Bosch of Clarendon provided the following vote explanation: "Madam Speaker: I believe requiring membership in a labor organization as a condition of hire will have a chilling effect on the workforce, and we have received testimony already that we have two vacancies for every applicant."

Rep. Gregoire of Fairfield provided the following vote explanation: "Madam Speaker: I support the right to join a union. I also support the right not to join. I do not support being compelled to join. However, I vote yes to give the people of Vermont the opportunity to decide for themselves."

In human service committee: H.46 - An act relating to the Rare Disease Advisory Council.

H.120 - An act relating to the study and design of a long-term care trust fund. Michael Pieciak,

Vermont State Treasurer presentation about possibilities to establish such a fund.

H.248 - An act relating to supplemental child care grants and the Child Care Financial Assistance Program.

During Oversight and Accountability presentation Rep. Golrang asked: "Just another quick question. I'm just always thinking about our federal situation and the ability to draw down funds. So we're in a continuing resolution with the OAA money. Have you been able to draw money down against the CR so?" Commissioner Jill Bowen answered: "We're not having any problem right now." Rep. Golrang asked: "The Medicaid is still the same." Commissioner Jill Bowen answered: "Not having any problem with that either right now."

I am available Sundays 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. at the United Methodist Church food shelf to discussions. Representative Todd Nielsen toddnielsenforvthouse@gmail.com.

Facebook: ToddNielsenforvthouse

## Spring Flowers Are Here! Now Open for the Season!

\$5 off 10" & 12" hanging baskets Fri, Sat and Sun of Mother's day weekend with extended hours  
Fri and Sat, open til 6 for Mom's day shoppers

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Fruit trees • Bushes  
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STUDENT: Maddie Rouse  
GRADE: 7  
SCHOOL: Otter Valley Union Middle School  
TITLE: Untitled  
MEDIUM: Watercolors  
TEACHER: Tiffany 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. Students were challenged to only use one color in their piece, but expected to create 5 values (with said color; allowing the use of black and/or white). Maddie chose to create an African Safari scene using watercolor paint. Her focus color was red,

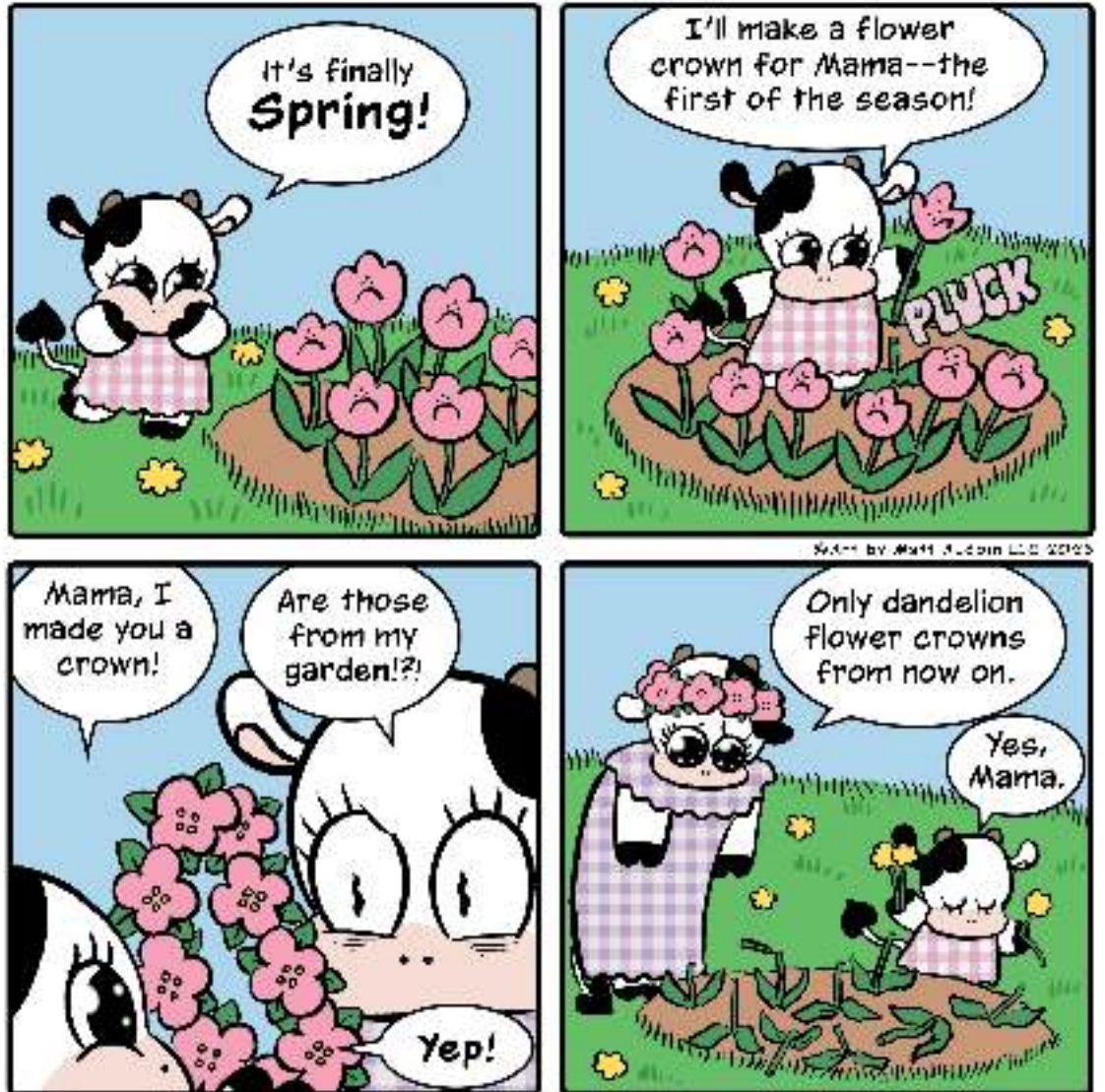
and she was able to master a variety of values, watering down her red to create softer shades for items further away, and adding black to darken shapes closer to the viewer. She used a dry brush technique to master the trees and was excited with her final piece.





THE WITCH IN "The Witch's Princess."

## the MAPLE COW<sup>TM</sup> by Matt Aucoin



## 'The Witch's Princess'

(Continued from Page 3)  
not what they seem, and neither is the witch, or the curse, or the kingdom. A twisted, rollicking, and wild quest of magic and adventure follow. Other key roles are played by Siena Many and Avis Sumner.

By limiting the cast to mostly middle-school students and ninth graders, these younger players can take on the harder

and more complicated roles that would otherwise be taken by upperclassmen. Jeffrey Hull, OV's Theatre Department Director, had been looking for some time to be able to provide this opportunity for the middle schoolers, and Katie St. Raymond's background and experience has now made it possible.

The students have been re-



REHEARSING A FIGHT scene in "The Witch's Princess."



THE "MISSION EXTERMINATE Bog Witch" scene being rehearsed.

hearsing four afternoons a week, and all are involved in set-building and learning other stagecraft skills. Some of the older Otter Valley students are helping with the "tech" work.

There is palpable excitement among the students. They know it will be a challenge to "get it all together" by opening night, but they know they will pull it off. Their message

to everyone is to come see the play, and they hope that the middle school play will inspire other students to work with the theatre.

(See 'The Witch's Princess', Page 18)



# Calendar of events

## May

### Mondays

#### Brandon Rec offers Aikido classes

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

#### 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](mailto: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!

#### Pokémon Club at the Brandon Free Public Library

3–5 pm. Ages 7+.

#### Magic the Gathering at the Brandon Free Public Library

5–7 pm

#### 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.

## Free Medical Care for Adults Wednesdays in May from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

A free walk-in healthcare clinic for uninsured or underinsured adults in Rutland County will be offered by the Rutland County Health Partners (formerly Rutland Free Clinic) every Wednesday in May from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at our offices at 204 North Main Street, Rutland, Vt. No appointment is necessary. Clinics (with recommended appointments) will also be held 5/1 (9-12), 5/5 (3-6), 5/13 (1-4), 5/19 (3-6), 5/27 (1-4) and 5/29 (9-12). For appointments or any questions, call 802-774-1082.

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

ing and a lifelong personal practice.

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

## Brandon Area Food Shelf changing day & time

The Brandon Area Food Pantry and Friend Zone will be changing day and time in May.

Beginning Wednesday, May 7, the community time of socialization known as the Friend Zone will be moving from Tuesday afternoons to Wednesday afternoons 2-5 p.m. All welcome to attend.



The Brandon Area Food Shelf will also be changing hours from Tuesday afternoons to Wednesday afternoons 2-5 p.m.

The Food Shelf is also open on Sunday afternoons from 12:30-2 p.m. If you have any questions, please contact pastor Vicki Disorda at (802)345-4125 or [vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com](mailto:vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com).



ours) and have some fun playing a great game of "Pong!" For further information about the Green Mountain Table Tennis Club, visit our club's website at [www.gmttc.com](http://www.gmttc.com).

#### Friends Zone

Need a safe space to socialize? Come join us at the Friends Zone. Open Wednesdays 2-5 p.m. 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 at [vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com](mailto:vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com) or 802 345-4125.

#### 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 teach-

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.

### Thursdays

#### Ukulele Group

Free at the Chaffee Art Center from 12–1 p.m.,

## 2025 Crown Po

#### Friday, May 9

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

The history parade steps-off at 6 p.m. and at 7 p.m. there will be a stage event depicting the Green Mountain Boy's War that was held before seizing Ticonderoga. We will carry our CPRA banner in the parade. There will be an info & sales table, and join other Rev. War patriots buried right there. Contact Tom at (802) 388-2967.



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

Sundays

**Brandon Town Hall Painting with Crystal**  
Crystal Ketcham leads an all ages painting event!  
Yes, you CAN paint! More info, contact Crystal at ceast-man88@gmail.com  
“The study of art is the most important study a garden designer can pursue.”

Point Road Association Outings

participate at  
ial 250th anni-  
e Green along  
  
p.m. Following  
d dramatization  
ys’ council of  
iconderoga.  
the parade, staff  
ers to honor  
e. For info, call  
  
**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](http://www.lcmm.org) or call Barry at (802) 492-3573.

**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.

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.

**Rutland Spring Job Fest**  
Find your next career opportunity at the Rutland Spring Job Fest! Employers are actively hiring and excited to meet you, so polish up your resume and come down from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
  
This event is completely free. Sponsored by the Vermont Department of Labor, Catamount Radio, and HireAbility Workforce Partners. If you have questions, call 802-786-5837.

Friday 9th

**Building Renovations and New Members — BAG**  
Spring brings all things new to The Brandon Artists Guild as we reveal our newly renovated and expanded gallery space and introduce two new members with a public reception Friday, May 9, 5-7 p.m. Complimentary treats served. Our renovations are complete. Our gallery’s new space is filled with a fresh collection of fine art and craft pieces by our member artists. Twice per year our talented display team gives the gallery a full refresh and our members present work they’ve been composing during the months leading up to this reset. A carefully curated collection of stunning original artwork by more than 30 Vermont artists and artisans hangs

Goings on around town

on our walls.  
Please join us to meet two new artists, whose work in glass and pastels, will be on display, and celebrate with our seasoned crew to revel in our thriving local artists guild. We wish you warmth and sunny days in this time of renewal and growth and hope to see you Friday, May 9.

**Derek & The Demons w/ Bull & Prairie and Honey — The Underground - Listening Room**  
Derek and the Demons is a rock trio from Windsor, Vt., known for their globally influenced sound. With over a decade of experience, they continue to release albums and perform at select events.  
  
Bull & Prairie is a Vermont-based band blending indie rock, freak folk, and Americana. Their music explores life’s beauty and pain through a unique melodic sound that captures diverse traditions and experiences.  
  
Honey is a Vermont-based rock band formed in May 2024, known for their original music and energetic performances. With a unique style, they continually create and connect with audiences through their engaging live shows.  
  
Advance: \$14 (+fees) // Day of show: \$17 (+fees). Doors: 7 p.m. // Show: 7:30 p.m. BYOB (21+) All Ages.

Friday 9th Saturday 10th

**Mary Poppins presented by Rutland Youth Theatre**  
Come joins us for the classic musical Mary Poppins presented by Award-Winning Rutland Youth Theatre at the beautiful Paramount Theatre! We promise it will be SUPERCALIFRAGILISTICEXPIALIDOCIOUS! These Actors are excited to bring back a full-length Broadway musical to the Paramount stage this spring!  
  
Performance dates & times: Friday, May 9 at 7 p.m. Saturday, May 10 at 1 p.m. and 7 p.m. (Please note new matinee time) Adults: \$15 + tax/fees. Children under 18/Seniors over 65: \$12 + tax/fees. Tickets available at <https://www.paramountvt.org/event/rutland-youth-theatre-presents-mary-poppins/>

Saturday 10th

**Multiple Vendor Flea Market — Rutland**  
Many vendors with lots of items—collectibles, vintage and all sorts of treasures. This event is outdoors and weather dependent. No rain date. No facilities or food. 8 a.m.-2 p.m. Italian Aid Society, 415 West Street, Rutland.

**Finishing Techniques — Green Mountain Yarn and Fiber**  
In this class, Ellen will teach several techniques needed for finishing your handknit items, including seaming and grafting using mattress, kitchener, and other stitches; weaving in your ends; and picking up stitches. Ellen will also discuss reasons for and methods of blocking. Students in this class will need to bring four 6”x 6” worsted weight swatches knit in a light color, 2 each in stockinette and garter stitch. The fee for this class is \$50. Preregistration for this class is required. We require a minimum of 2 students for a class to run, so consider registering with a friend! From 10:30 a.m.-12:30 p.m. at Green Mountain Yarn and Fiber, 217 Woodstock Avenue, Rutland.

Bruce Molsky and Ale Möller — Burnham Hall, Lincoln

Dynamic harmony from Nordic and Appalachian cultures. A celebration of creativity, tradition, and the joy of making music. Join us for this special evening of music at Burnham Hall. Two brilliant soloists and central figures within their respective traditions, driven by a curiosity and desire to constantly develop their music. Multiple Grammy Award-winner Ale Möller creates his own musical universe. Regardless of the genre, Möller works his way into the source code of the music he encounters and he obtains an almost unique legendary status for how he expanded the concept of folk and traditional music for decades. Grammy-nominated and described as “an absolute master” (No Depression), Bruce Molsky transports audiences to another time and place with his authentic and personal interpretations of rarities from the Southern Appalachian songbook and other musical traditions from around the globe. Best known for his work on the fiddle, Bruce’s banjo, guitar and distinctive, powerful vocals also resonate with listeners. His combination of technical virtuosity and relaxed conversational wit makes a concert hall feel like an intimate front porch gathering. Doors at 7 p.m. music at 7:30.  
  
Two sets of music and homemade desserts during the break. Great music, good company. Burnham Hall, 52 East River Road, Lincoln. \$25.

**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.

The Rutland Chapter of the UVM Extension Master Gardener Program invites you to an inspiring and educational evening! Join us for a free screening of Kiss the Ground, a powerful documentary nar-	rated 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!
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Sunday 11th

**Trinity Presents: A Concert of Beethoven’s Piano Classics — Rutland**  
Treat your mother this Mother’s Day with a piano concert featuring the artistic talent of local pianist Bruce Griffin, as he performs piano classics composed by Ludwig van Beethoven. The concert will be held at Trinity Episcopal Church, 85 West Street, Rutland on Sunday, May 11 at 3 p.m. All Trinity Presents concerts, including this one, are free events. (We gratefully accept donations.)

**Early Birders Morning Walk — Birds of Vermont Museum**  
Spring mornings are terrific for birding. Who’s singing, calling, nesting, or flying around the Birds of Vermont Museum? Discover birds on an early morning ramble in the Museum’s forest and meadows. Walks are led by experi-



enced birders familiar with Vermont birds. This week, Tom Jiamachello leads the walk. Bring binoculars and good walking shoes. Early mornings are often damp with dew and boots are definitely in order. Don’t forget bug spray/tick repellent! At 7 a.m., park at 900 Sherman Hollow Road, in the Museum parking lot.

Suggested donation: \$10-15. Max: 12 people.



# Ten Rod Road rocks out to a full house at Red Clover

BY SUSAN JOHNSON

In a blast from Brandon's past, Ten Rod Road proved this past weekend that some kinds of energy never fade away. With Wendy Fjeld leading the way on vocals and guitar, Mark Pelletier's rich guitar licks, and Carl Boss' sold bass lines, the band packed the Red Clover taproom—and only half of the revelers were extended Fjeld family members! Seriously, there were a lot of Fjelds and family, but they were outnumbered by friends old and new.

From the first Nanci Griffith words "He was a flyer for the Air Force...", the crowd was coddled by the band's comfortable groove I'll call alt-country-folk-rock. Coupled with a very acceptable sound set-up (not to mention the camera man—perhaps a new concert film is on the horizon??) and Red Clover and Morningside Bakery accompaniments, the trio created a carefree atmosphere that helped everyone forget any troubles.

Ten Rod Road—the name taken from a random road sign that caught the band's eyes—started around 2000 when the young families used to get together for BBQs, potlucks, and messing around with guitars and campfire songs. Wendy says she only knew around three chords back then, "enough to entertain my classroom," she recounted. "We just had so much fun; before we knew it, we were a band," adding she never actually planned to be on stage.

Wendy's daughter Heather Fjeld remembered the band's origins. Kids weren't invited to attend band practice. "They would let us in to say hello," she recalled, "and then tell us to run along and play!" In fact, many playgroup 1.0 and 2.0 parents were well represented in the audience Saturday, according to Heather.

The band's organic roots are mirrored in their Americana music choices. The band settled into song after song of crowd-pleasers from Chris Isaak to Roseanne Cash to Sheryl

Crow. My favorites included Lucinda Williams, Kasey Chambers (the lone Australian), and Michelle Shocked. Mary Gauthier, Sarah Shook, and John Prine—always a treat—also made appearances.

My high point of the afternoon was "Save it for Later" by the English Beat—a nod to those of us addicted to certain '80s music. The best part? Wendy on bass! So, not only is she a master singer/guitar player, gardener, grandmother, artist, spicy B&B pickle maker, etc., she plays bass, too. Oh, and the occasional harmonica!

Ten Rod Road clearly has fun playing for folks—the kind of fun that wears off onto anyone within listening distance. Saturday's crowd eventually made way for dancers twirling and twisting away the afternoon, which ended on an energetic rockabilly note.

For a band whose self-described motto is: "We're not too bad" (they actually use different words but you get the drift), their audiences past and present would say they're pretty darn good. Look for them later this summer at the Riverbend, behind the Brandon Inn.

**RIGHT: MARK PELLETIER on guitar, Wendy Fjeld on guitar and vocals, and Carl Boss on bass in Ten Rod Road at Red Clover last weekend. Above: The band plus drummer Mike Smith, who passed away several years ago.**

Photos provided



## Charlie Murphy - 3 to 7 Weekdays





# Photographer's Building

(Continued from Page 8)

After Etta Moody left in 1921, Collins rented the second floor out as apartments.

## BROWN'S PHARMACY

In 1954, the building was sold out of Harry Collins' estate to Harry Lazarus, a department store merchant from Middlebury who bought it as an investment property.

Lazarus already had tenants, including Brown's Pharmacy, which had moved across the alley in 1953 from 4 Park in the First National Bank building. Brown's was founded at 4 Park in 1937 by Francis Brown when he bought the Shangraw's Pharmacy.

Under Francis and his wife, Mary Ann, then his sons Tom and Bill, Brown's would operate for another 54 years until 2007. They had competition at first, but soon came to be the go-to pharmacy in Brandon. In the 50s and 60s, one of the main attractions was the long lunch counter and the fountain drinks and ice cream sold there.

In 1972, the Browns bought 10 Park Street next door and expanded there, opening a gift shop called Brown's of Brandon in #6. In 1978, they finally bought 6 Park from the Lazarus family. In 1995, Brown's

at 6 Park to Roseann and Larry Johnson, who bought it as an investment property.

According to Tom Brown, who still lives in Brandon on High Street, the Browns only used the upstairs for storage and not for apartments. It was left largely undisturbed.

## LOST FACES OF BRANDON

Soon after buying the building, the Johnsons gutted the upstairs to build a 3-bedroom, 2-bathroom residence for themselves. They created a condominium for the building with a unit on each floor.

In the course of gutting the upstairs, Roseann made an amazing find in the eastern wall bordering #10 Park: a box full of dusty glass plate photo negatives taken by the resident photographers in the late 1800s!

Not realizing their full significance, she put them in a safe place at their self-storage business north of Brandon. There they sat until 2014, when they sold that business and decided to give the box to the Brandon Museum, where they went to the attic.

That's where Kevin Thornton, a museum board member and historian, found them in 2016 while rummaging around.

come back to life! Tony then printed out seventeen of them to display at a photo show called "Lost Faces of Brandon" at the Brandon Library on August 11, 2017. It was one of the

best-attended talks there ever.

Eighty more of the lost faces have never been displayed to the public and Thornton and others are working on arranging that soon. According to

Kevin, "the entire collection deserves a showing."

## NATIONAL BANK OF MIDDLEBURY

The Johnsons sold the building (See Photographer's Building, Page 19)



THE BUILDING IN the 1890s in a photo by photographer Grimes. Note the bay window now protruding from the second floor to allow photographers to maximize the sunlight needed to develop their film. Note also the "new" Brandon Inn on the far right.



THE BUILDING AS it appears today, home to the National Bank of Middlebury. The bank undertook extensive renovations of the first floor when it occupied the space two years ago.

of Brandon split from Brown's Pharmacy, with Tom running the former and Bill the latter.

In 2007, Brown's Pharmacy was bought by Rite Aid and closed. Bill Brown worked for a time for Rite Aid at their 1 Union Street location next to the Congregational Church.

In 2008, Tom Brown sold the Brown's of Brandon building

Thornton then enlisted Tony Rankin, his brother-in-law and an expert on old photographic development techniques, including wet plate development, to help clean the 200 plates up, scan them, Photoshop them, and develop them using the albumen process.

The result was astonishing: photos of Brandonites had

## RAINY MAY SALE



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# Mim's Photos

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

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



## Recognized



Doug Kline and Linda Schmidt recognized former Otter Valley principal Peter Hughes in this photo. Mr. Hughes took over as principal in the mid 1980s after the retirement of Bob Sharrow.











The following Large Print were books donated by Brenda Whittaker:

**Land of Dreams by Lauraine Snelling, donated in memory of Florence LaRock**  
During her voyage on a ship to America, Norwegian immigrant Amalia Gunderson makes a solemn promise to a dying mother to watch over her five-year-old daughter, Ruth. Together, Amalia and Ruth trek to Iowa to claim the farm and former boarding house that Ruth has inherited, despite opposition from a difficult cousin. Struggling with an empty house and scarce resources, Amalia resolves to return the boardinghouse to its former purpose, aided by the kindness of strangers and the resilient spirit of her young charge.

**Sealed with a Hiss by Rita Mae Brown, donated in memory of Mary Blackmer**  
Restorations to the long-shuttered local segregated school are nearly complete, and to honor the former students, Harry and her friends are hard at work planning a reunion. It's a big affair, and the crew spends their days hanging plaques at the gym, arranging food, and writing speeches. But the fifteen acres behind the school are enticing for more than just a school reunion. One realtor soon reveals plans to buy the land and build over it—unless the crew can find a way to stop the sale. When they come across

a dead body, Harry will have a chance to solve this mystery and prevent the land purchase once and for all.

**New in adult fiction**  
**A Lesser Light by Peter Geye**  
It's 1910, and Theodulf Sauer has finally achieved a position befitting his ego: master lighthouse keeper at a newly commissioned station towering above Lake Superior. When his new wife, Willa, arrives on the first spring ferry, it's clear her life has taken the opposite turn: after being summoned home from college to Duluth when her father dies, Willa is rushed into this ill-suited arranged marriage before she can comprehend her fate.

**Great Big Beautiful Life by Emily Henry**  
Two authors vie to write the biography of a woman who claims, but may not be, the Margaret Ives. Tragic heiress, former tabloid princess, and daughter of one of the most storied (and scandalous) families of the twentieth century.

**Zeal by Morgan Jerkins**  
The stories of star-crossed lovers following the end of the Civil War and their descendants over 150 years of heartbreak, loss, and connection.

**The Raven Scholar by Antonia Hodgson**  
The reign of Bersun the Brusque has come to an end. In the dizzying heat of midsummer, seven exceptional warriors, thinkers, strategists

**DID YOU KNOW?**  
Cuss and Cut is back! Come carve blocks and make designs for printing. May 17th, 1 to 3:30 p.m. Space is limited—please pre-register at 802-247-8230 / info@brandonpubliclibrary.org.

compete to replace him. When one of them is murdered, it falls to Neema Kraa, the emperor's brilliant, idiosyncratic High Scholar, to find the killer and fight for the throne. Neema believes she is alone. But we are here to help; all she has to do is let us in.

**The Pretender by Jo Harkin**  
The story of Lambert Simnel, who was raised in obscurity as a peasant boy to protect his safety, believed to be the heir to the throne occupied by Richard III, and briefly crowned, at the age of ten, as King Edward VI, one of the last of the Plantagenets.

'The Witch's Princess'

(Continued from Page 11)  
Tickets are only five dollars and will be available at the door or online at Otter Valley Union High School Presents: The Witch's Princess - Events. For additional information, go to Walking Stick Theatre's Facebook page.  
Looking ahead, the upper-class students of Otter Valley's

Walking Stick Theatre will be presenting "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged)"—a hilarious romp through the works of Shakespeare—directed by Jeff Hull, on May 30 and 31. For many of the seniors, this will be their last opportunity to perform at Otter Valley.

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.

- April 28**
- Spoke with an individual at the BPD regarding a custody order violation. It was later determined that the matter was civil in nature and the complainant would need to go to the Rutland County Family Court to address the issue.
  - Received a report of an abandoned vehicle at New England Wood Craft on North Street.
  - Assisted the Brandon Fire Department with a fire incident on Carver Street.
  - Received a report of someone damaging a mailbox with their vehicle on Paint Works Road.
  - Received a complaint of suspicious activity around Thor's Elegance on Prospect Street after closing hours.
- April 29**
- Opened a background check for a per-diem admin position at the

- BPD.
- Located and removed a traffic hazard from the roadway while on patrol on Franklin Street in front of the American Legion Hall.
  - Responded, once again, to the area of Pearl Street for a report of a tractor trailer stuck both on and off the roadway in the area of the Sanderson Covered Bridge. Officers shut down the roadway for approximately an hour and a half while the tractor trailer was removed from the roadway by a heavy wrecker service. The Sanderson Covered Bridge was not damaged as a result of this incident.
- April 30**
- Served a restraining order at a residence on Carver Street. Order served in-hand.
  - Took possession of a wallet that was found on Grove Street and turned into the BPD.
  - Conducted a welfare check on an individual on Bridge Park.
- May 1**
- Provided scene security for the Indivisible Brandon event at Central Park on Park Street.
  - Received a complaint regarding a custody issue in which the complainant's daughter left Vermont to go to a relative's house in New (See Police report, Page 19)

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE



- ARIES March 21-April 20**  
Aries, you soon find yourself pushing forward with great determination. Your drive is unstoppable, but tread carefully and respectfully in the pursuit of greatness.
- TAURUS April 21-May 21**  
Introspection is paramount right now, Taurus. You may find yourself reflecting on your values, goals and personal growth. This week there are chances to change.
- GEMINI May 22-June 21**  
Gemini, right now is a good time to collaborate with others, whether at work or in personal projects. Use any time this week to your advantage to attend social events.
- CANCER June 22-July 22**  
Put your long-term goals in focus this week, Cancer. Start thinking about where

- you would like your career to go. You'll certainly feel driven to make progress.
- LEO July 23-Aug. 23**  
Adventure is the name of the game for you right now, Leo. Whether it is travel, higher learning or other new experiences, you just may soon break free of your routine.
- VIRGO Aug. 24-Sept. 22**  
This is a week when practicality and organization will be your friends, Virgo. You will likely feel a need to get things in order. If you have any outstanding debts, tackle them now.
- LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 23**  
Libra, the spotlight is on you for the time being. You are feeling more confident and ready to take charge of your destiny. Personal growth may come by way of a job promotion.
- SCORPIO Oct. 24-Nov. 22**  
Scorpio, you may be drawn to more quiet, intimate moments with your partner this week. This is a great time for reflection and connection for the both of you.
- SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23-Dec. 21**  
Sagittarius, expect to meet new people or form bonds with others who share

- similar interests and goals this week. Community-based projects may draw your attention.
- CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 20**  
This week the focus will be on your career, Capricorn. You'll feel more motivated than ever to achieve your goals, but it will take a lot of hard work to get there.
- AQUARIUS Jan. 21-Feb. 18**  
Aquarius, you might feel more connected to your spiritual side right now and want to seek knowledge or inspiration in areas like philosophy. Take every opportunity to learn and grow.
- PISCES Feb. 19-March 20**  
Pisces, now is a good time to focus on your financial situation and make some changes for your security and personal growth. Your intuition will guide you.
- ~~~~~
- FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS**
- May 9 – Mike Wallace, journalist (d)  
May 10 – Bono, musician (64)  
May 11 – Salvador Dali (d)  
May 12 – Ving Rhames, actor (65)  
May 13 – Stevie Wonder, musician (74)  
May 14 – Cate Blanchett, actor (56)  
May 15 – Madeleine Albright, ambassador (d)



# Downtown Brandon Alliance holds 1st ‘Business Fair’

**BY DEVON FULLER**  
On Tuesday, April 29th, Brandon’s newest downtown business, Pine Grove Organics, opened its doors to The Downtown Brandon Alliance’s new Business Fair event program. The DBA has started this new “Business Fair” program to help us get to know our downtown businesses better. The idea is not just to come and purchase an item or service from one of our great businesses and turn around and leave, but to join town residents and enjoy

each other’s company while sharing food, drink, laughter, and stories in one of our local businesses.  
Pine Grove Organics moved downtown after establishing itself just north of town. With Pine Grove’s move to their new location on Park Street, it allowed the DBA to launch this new event program with a new downtown business. It was a nice evening to come together and get to know this new business and each other just a little better.

Around 25 people joined one another in the newly renovated Pine Grove space to share, nibbles and drinks, conversations, and connections. The outstanding DBA board members provided tasty food and beverages for the get-together. Robert Black from the DBA provided information boards spread throughout the Pine Grove shop displaying the DBA’s 2025 goals of Communication, Connection, and Complete Downtown. The DBA feels that these goals can be reached in

part by having “Business Fair” events throughout the year.  
Nate Reitman from Pine Grove welcomed everyone and gave us a brief description of Pine Grove’s business model and their future plans. Nate also gave each visitor one of their “celebrate with deals and discounts” coupon books they have put together to thank all the local businesses that welcomed them into town, a very innovative idea from these new

entrepreneurs. The DBA is very excited to welcome Nate, Ben, Greg, and all the employees of Pine Grove Organics to downtown and wish them all the best. We also want to thank them for providing the space for our first DBA Business Fair.  
Devon Fuller is the President of the Downtown Brandon Alliance

## Brandon Trustees

*(Continued from Page 9)*  
don Selectboard’s investigation have not yet been made public.  
Brandon Selectboard members Doug Bailey and Cecil Reniche-Smith also addressed the Trustees, though in a more supportive tone. Mr. Bailey encouraged the Trustees to “hang in there” and to “take the opportunity to reboot.” Ms. Reniche-Smith stated that not everyone present at the meeting held the same sentiments about TPF. Ms. Reniche-Smith is one of two Selectboard members who have been investigating the ethics complaint. The other is Jeff Haylon, who was also present at the May 1 meeting.  
The Trustees moved to adjourn the meeting without considering the funding requests that were on the agenda: a request from the town for the wastewater treatment facility and a request from the Brandon United Methodist

Church for remediation of its bell tower. The Trustees stated that despite their belief that they had acted in accordance with the terms of the trust, it would be inappropriate to consider any new requests until they had additional clarity on their obligations and constraints under the terms of Shirley Farr’s will.  
TPF have scheduled another public meeting for Thursday, May 15 at 5:30 p.m. in the downstairs meeting room at the Brandon Town Hall. The agenda for that meeting is posted on the Brandon town website. It makes clear that the Trustees plan to address the allegations made on May 1.  
The Trustees also plan to read a statement at the May 15 meeting. A copy of the statement was made available to The Reporter.  
In this statement, the Trustees stated that they will consider all the feedback provided by the community. However, they reject

Mr. Hopkins’ belief that only the town can request money from TPF, stating that this position “directly contradicts the Last Will and Testament of Ms. Farr.” They also said they were surprised by Mr. Hopkins’ stance, since the current Trustees manage the trust as it has been managed “for the last 65 years.”  
Finally, the Trustees stated that they were “greatly disappointed in the personal attacks that were demonstrated” at the May 1 meeting and that they were concerned such behavior would dissuade others from seeking public office. They asked town leadership to establish a public forum where officials can receive constructive feedback without “detering hardworking individuals who are looking to give back to our community.”



**A COLLAGE OF cards and insignias from the various photographers who occupied the second-floor studio back in the day. A photographer, Don Ross, still occupies the space, but as a residence.**

## Police report

*(Continued from Page 18)*  
York State. The complainant was advised to contact law enforcement in New York for further assistance as the issue was not currently occurring in Brandon and/or the State of Vermont.  
**May 2**  
• Received a complaint regarding harassment involving two neighbors at an apartment building on West Seminary Street. The matter was referred to the Housing Authority for follow up.  
• Received a report from a landlord on Carver Street that he believed that his tenant left the water

running in her apartment and that it was going to flood the unit. The landlord wanted the matter documented at the police department, as he wanted to make an emergency entry into the apartment unit to make sure that no property damage was being done. The incident was documented for information purposes as the issue was determined not to be a police matter.  
• Assisted in filing a missing person report at the BPD regarding a woman who had not been heard from by her fiancé since this past Wednesday. The individual was later located and was determined to be okay.

• Received an after-hours call about a woman “shooting up drugs” in the bathroom of the Jiffy Mart on Grove Street. The individual was reported to have left the area in a blue Chevy Silverado pick-up truck, heading toward the downtown Brandon area. A Be On Look-out was put out to area law enforcement agencies for the vehicle.  
**May 3**  
• Received a report of a landlord/tenant dispute concerning a dog that was missing from a tenant’s apartment and was possibly stolen.

## Photographer’s Building

*(Continued from Page 15)*  
ing in 2017 to John and Heather Bierschenk. They sold it in July of 2023 to the current owner 6 Park Street Realty LLC. and a month later, the National Bank of Middlebury, which had leased the first floor and renovated it, had their grand opening on August 2.  
A “history wall” that tells the story of the early years of Brandon, with images from the Museum’s collection, was designed by the Brandon Museum. In a conference room are black-and-white photographs by accomplished local photographers Don Ross and

Caleb Kenna, as well as photos by bank employees. A wall plaque there that explains the building’s history as a hub for photography in Brandon in the 1800s.  
Upstairs, talented local photographer Don Ross, who has leased there since 2016, continues the tradition of lensmen (and women) living and working there, but has his studio at 29 Union Street. When he moved in, Ross had no previous knowledge of the history of the building, but he says he feels “fortunate and honored to have unwittingly contributed to furthering that history.”



# Bernie and Beth Carr

(Continued from Page 1)  
to Portland for my sophomore, junior, and most of my senior years. I came back in 12th grade to live with my father and graduated from OV.”

Bernie and Beth finally crossed paths in 1975 when they both began working at the IGA supermarket that used to occupy what’s now the liquor store on Conant Square. Beth had just graduated, but Bernie was still at OV. And one of his friends ended up asking Beth to prom while Bernie went with another girl. At some point during the evening, the two couples had the idea to switch partners for a dance.

“I was uncomfortable because it was a slow dance and I thought he was holding me too close,” Beth laughed.

“I was a pretty quiet guy. Not a ladies’ man at all,” Bernie said. “But my father had told me to use my hips to lead a girl while dancing. So I did.”

Though that first dance may have been awkward, a friendship blossomed between them at work and they were soon a couple. Music played a key role in bringing them together.

“There used to be a variety show in town called ‘Otter Nonsense,’” said Beth. “Bernie sang ‘There’s No Business Like Show Business’ and I fell in love watching him. He had such a good voice. I think I started chasing him at that point.”

They started dating in the fall of 1976.

They were married in May of 1978.

## EVERYTHING’S COMING UP ROSES

Mere months after their wedding, Bernie and Beth decided to buy Petty’s Florist, a tiny operation at the top of Seminary Hill.

“We had no experience with flowers,” said Bernie. “We were young and naïve.”

“I thought it sounded like fun,” said Beth.

Bernie had been working at Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon, having become a fully licensed apprentice.

“I was just about to start a course in Boston to become a funeral director when we decided to buy the flower shop,” said Bernie.

Instead of directing funerals, he ended up supplying the flowers.

He and Beth put together bouquets for funerals, weddings, birthdays, Mother’s Day, Easter, and, of course, Valentine’s Day.

But it was a struggle at first. The original shop was tiny and located outside the main shopping district. In 1981, taking advice from Bernie’s brother Steve, then a VP at the First National Bank of Brandon, they made the move down the hill to a storefront at 11 Center

Street, in a building that was eventually replaced by the Café Provence/Center Street Bar complex. They renamed the business “Carr’s Country Florist.”

It was another tiny space—only 20’ by 20’—but its location in the heart of the village gave their business a major boost.

“The rent was \$175 a month and we thought we wouldn’t be able to afford it,” Bernie recalled. “But we quintupled our revenue in the first year.”

“We were in the shop 24/7,” said Beth. “The window was right on the street. Everyone could see when we were in there at night.”

“We used to get guys banging on the door after they’d been drinking at LaDuke’s and wanted to bring a rose home to their wives,” Bernie laughed.

## BUSINESS BLOOMS

In 1982, feeling the constraints of their limited space, the Carrs moved their business to the building they now occupy at 21 Center Street. At the time, the building was divided into two adjacent storefronts: an insurance agency owned by Skip Davis (who also owned the building) and a gift shop owned by Buddy Wetmore.

“Buddy was a great guy,” Bernie said. “He was a good person to model myself after. He gave us a glass shamrock that we had in the window for

the longest time. I don’t know what happened to that.”

“I’m sure we’ll find it when we clean out the store,” joked Beth.

In 1987, the Carrs bought the entire building from Davis. It included the two storefronts and a space that then housed Yankee Kitchen and is now Delilah’s Hair Studio.

Buddy Wetmore eventually sold his gift shop and it passed through a series of other owners until ultimately closing in 1994. Instead of looking for a new tenant for that space, the Carrs decided to expand their shop.

They took down the wall separating the two storefronts and added a gift shop to their operations.

“We needed something else to bring in revenue between holidays,” said Bernie. The flower business reliably spikes on Valentine’s and Mother’s Days but can be unpredictable

the rest of the year.

“We were open the whole time,” he added. “We couldn’t afford to close, even when the place was under construction. We had no other income. We both worked at the shop.”

They kept the florist and gift shop running simultaneously until 2018, when they sold off the flower shop and focused their energies on the gifts. The flower shop was purchased by Annie Chartrand and still operates as the Brandon Florist Shoppe on Grove Street.

“Running a flower shop is harder than running a gift shop,” said Bernie. Flowers are fragile and perishable. Inventory that sits around too long can’t be discounted; it literally dies.

The Segment 6 construction project began in the spring of 2017 and turned Center Street into a construction zone for (See Bernie and Beth Carr, Page 23)



PETTY’S FLORIST AT the top of Seminary Hill. This was Bernie and Beth’s first location in 1978. It was tiny and off the beaten business path, so they soon moved to Center Street.



BETH AND BERNIE in the late 70s. They opened their flower shop only months after they got married in 1978. It was a baptism by fire, they now say.



# Adams and Pomykala

(Continued from Page 1)

ment, turning it into one of the area’s most admired programs. Mr. Adams was the longtime Rec Director while Mr. Pomykala maintained the immaculate grounds at the Rec facility on Furnace Road.

The dedication began with the National Anthem, sung beautifully by Otter Valley senior Miley Lape, who has become the local go-to girl for the Star-Spangled Banner.

Current Rec Director Liz Alvarado then spoke admiringly of her predecessor, Mr. Adams, and how the decision to dedicate the baseball field to him seemed natural. The field had been called the Pittsford Memorial Field, dedicated to the memory of Bradford A. Holden, Thomas Turner, George Hendee, Doris Wheeler, Paul Wheeler, Joseph Eugair, Helen Pelkey, Josh Erickson, Adam Day, and Ashley Fitzgerald. The plaque in their memory will remain alongside with the new plaque honoring Mr. Adams.

Robert Ketcham took the mic and expressed his thanks for all Mr. Adams did to make Pittsford Rec such a great program.

“It was wonderful to have someone to go to to say ‘what can we do to make things better around here,’” he recalled. And he heaped praise on Mr. Pomykala as well, noting that the Rec grounds were so well maintained “it looks like Fenway Park.”

Brandon Rec Director Bill Moore praised Mr. Adams for his commitment to Pittsford Rec and joked about the friendly rivalry between the neighboring towns.

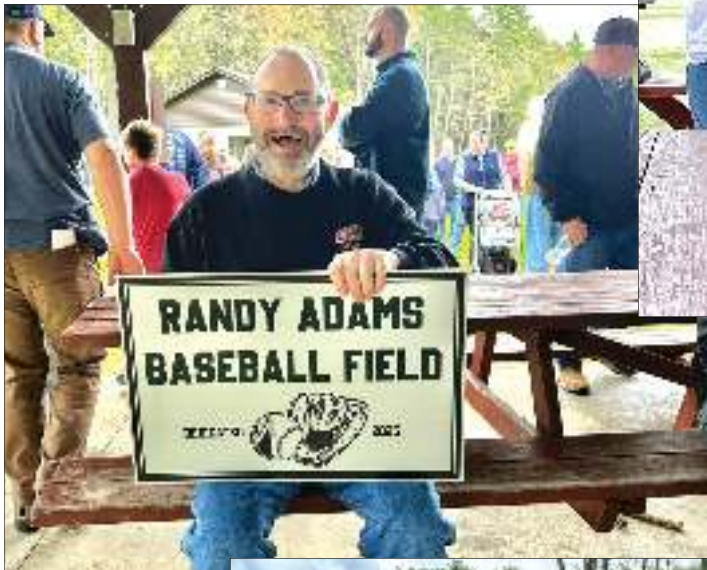
“It was clear Pittsford Rec was his passion,” Moore said. “Randy gave his life to his town. When he retired, we saw an opportunity to rename the baseball league after him. Baseball was his passion. Thank you for being a mentor to me. Randy and Joe, you guys deserve this.”

Mr. Pomykala himself addressed the crowd, saying that his goal had always been to make Pittsford Rec “a place where people wanted to come back. And we accomplished that. The biggest reward for me was getting the feedback from people that they wanted to return. Coaches want to play here rather than at their own fields.”

Ms. Alvarado then pre-

sented two ceremonial plaques to Mr. Adams and Mr. Pomykala, for their personal collections. Permanent plaques have been installed on the baseball field for Mr. Adams and on the softball field for Mr. Pomykala.

Congratulations, gentlemen! Thank you for your years of dedicated service to the town of Pittsford!



FROM TOP DOWN: Liz Alvarado, Miley Lape, and members of the Randy Adams baseball league; Randy Adams and his plaque; Joe Pomykala and his plaque; Rob Ketcham; Bill Moore.

## Restaurant guide



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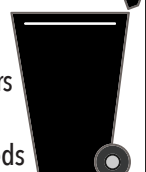
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# Bernie and Beth Carr

*(Continued from Page 20)*  
a few years, triggering fears among some that Brandon's retail community would wither and never recover.  
"We'd been talking about that project since 1982," said Bernie. "I supported it even though I knew it would affect my bottom line. It was good for the town."  
And just when the dust had finally settled on Segment 6, COVID dealt local retail another blow.

Brandon bounced back, adding new ventures like Red Clover Ale Company and the River Pub & Grill, making the town an attractive destination for tourists, who make up the bulk

of Middlebury now is (see the article in this week's issue on that historic building). When proprietor Tom Brown retired in 2007, he encouraged the Carrs to pick up some of the exclusive contracts he'd had with desirable giftware companies.  
"Beth has always done all the buying for the store. I've just got my spinner balloons," Bernie laughed, referring to the colorful array of colorful spinning balloons that hang from the store's awning and can be seen on front porches all over town.  
**PRUNING BACK**  
After 50 years in retail, the Carrs are ready to slow down and focus on themselves and

For years, Bernie has also had a side hustle of sorts as the Executive Director of the Brandon Area Chamber of Commerce, which allowed him to capitalize on his extensive network of local relationships and provided the Carrs with an additional income stream. He'll remain in that position even after the shop closes.  
"We've been so lucky," he said. "We've had so many people helping us over the years. Probably millions of dollars in volunteer labor just to help us keep these businesses going."  
"We couldn't have done it without our friends and family," said Beth.  
"We've also had some amazing employees, like Terrie [Patch], who has been the best store manager you can imagine for the last 22 years," added Bernie.  
Even after Hurricane Irene in 2011, friends and family showed up the very next day to help the Carrs clean up the mess in their flooded store.

Despite the demands of their businesses, the Carrs have always made time to get involved with local organizations and clubs. Beth has worked with the library, Nifty Thrifty, and taught confirmation classes. Bernie sings every Christmas with the Brandon Festival Singers.

"This community matters a lot to us," Beth said, her voice tightening with emotion.  
"This town has done a lot for us," added Bernie.  
And through the years, all the ups and downs of business, the stresses of raising a child, they've relied on each other.  
"There used to be a store we liked in Rutland where the owners were a married couple that were always yelling at each other," said Bernie.  
"We used to call them the Bickersons," laughed Beth.

"We didn't ever want to be that couple," said Bernie. "Whatever we were going through at home, we put it aside when we came to the store. We had to work things out because we had to work together. It helped us maintain a good, solid marriage."  
Closing the shop will mean big changes for the Carrs but also for those Brandonites who are used to seeing them down-

town, popping in for a visit at their shop.  
"People still come in and tell us we did the flowers for their wedding," said Beth.  
"We were a part of their lives from birth to death," said Bernie. "All the events...weddings, funerals, Valentine's Day...we were part of it all. We're going to miss that."



**THE CARRS' STOREFRONT** as it looked without the awning it now has. Bernie recalled how the sun used to beat through the windows and bake the interior.

of the Carrs' customer base.  
"People just driving through don't buy flowers but they do buy gifts," said Bernie. He added that the flower business had gotten more and more competitive as places like Home Depot and Hannaford started carrying cheap, lower-quality flowers and plants.  
For years, the Carrs also had a friendly rivalry with Brown's of Brandon, an established gift shop where the National Bank

their family.  
"We've missed so many family events working every weekend. We've only taken 4 real vacations in the last 40 years," Bernie said. Even attending their daughter Caitlin's college graduation was difficult because it coincided with Mother's Day, one of the most important days of the year for florists.  
So, in February, they listed their building for sale.

## PUBLIC NOTICES

### TOWN OF BRANDON, VERMONT

#### Notice to Property Taxpayers—4th and Final Quarter Payment Due Thursday 5/15/2025

Notice is hereby given that payment for the property taxes assessed upon the grand list of the Town of Brandon for the 4th quarter of the fiscal year July 1, 2024 – June 30, 2025 is due Thursday, May 15, 2025.  
**Fourth quarter payments not received by Wednesday, May 15th or postmarked after May 15th may be subject to interest at 1% per month.** An 8% penalty will be assessed on payments not received within 30 days. Please furnish the remittance slip with your

payment. Payments may be made by mail, at the Town Offices, 49 Center Street (M-TH, 9-4) at either of the two drop boxes located in front of the Town Office and at the Neshobe School or by credit card, echeck or Paypal through our online payment service which can be found on our website. Thank you.  
  
Susan Gage,  
Town Treasurer

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