

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

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\$1



Brandon and Pittsford remember

MEMORIAL DAY CEREMONIES in Brandon and Pittsford took place this past Monday. See pages 8 & 9 for photos of Pittsford and pages 14 & 15 for Brandon.

Photos by George Fjeld and Steven Jupiter



MELISSA D HAS just released her new single, "Will I Be Bored in Heaven?" The local singer/songwriter will perform in Brandon's Kennedy Park on June 7.

Photo by Steven Jupiter

Brandon's Jim Leary finishes his 36th Burlington Marathon

BY STEVEN JUPITER
BRANDON—When Jim Leary ran in the first-ever Vermont City Marathon in Burlington, Bernie Sanders had finished his fourth (and last) term as mayor. The Berlin Wall was



LEARY AT THE finish line on Sunday.

still standing. And Madonna was topping the charts with "Like a Prayer."

It was 1989 and Leary had no idea he was starting an annual tradition for himself and his family that would last for at least the next 36 years.

Last Sunday, at the age of 63, he crossed the finish line for the 35th time, continuing a streak that has spanned 7 presidential administrations and gained him entry as a Charter member into RunVermont's Hall of Fame when it was first formed in 1995. In fact, Leary is one of only two runners to have competed in every single Burlington Marathon since the first in 1989, even when the race was reduced to a half-marathon in 2021 because of COVID (it was cancelled entirely in 2020).

Though he'd always been physically active, Leary wasn't an experienced runner when he signed up for the very first (See Jim Leary, Page 23)

Brandon SB discusses police cars, zoning, and Trustees of Public Funds

BY STEVEN JUPITER
BRANDON—The Brandon Selectboard convened on Monday evening for its regular meeting.

SEWER COMMISSIONERS
Under their authority as Sewer Commissioners, the Board approved the purchase of two vacuum samplers for the town's wastewater treatment plant. The total cost of the samplers is \$20,514, of which \$20,000 will be reimbursed by the Trustees of Public Funds.

Brandon Town Manager Seth Hopkins estimated that the cost of installation would run into the low thousands.

TOWN MANAGER REPORT

Mr. Hopkins delivered his report, the full text of which is re- (See Brandon SB, Page 11)

Local musician Melissa D releases new single, 'Will I Be Bored in Heaven?'

BY STEVEN JUPITER
Vermont definitely punches above its weight when it comes to the arts. The state is filled with writers, artists, and musicians, all contributing to the vibrant creative scene in the Green Mountains and all hoping to be noticed.

Local singer/songwriter Melissa D has been drawing attention with her new single "Will I Be Bored in Heaven?," a playful musical rumination on the afterlife that wonders whether heaven still allows its denizens to have earthly fun.

Melissa sees herself as alt-country ("I don't fit into the mainstream"), but this new single takes its musical cues from the Caribbean, with a calypso feel and guitar picking that somehow seems to mimic a steel drum. It has a bit of an old-school Jimmy Buffett feel, albeit with a softer edge (although the song does ask

whether smoking and drinking are allowed in heaven.)

"I was getting ready for a road trip with my husband when the song first occurred to me," Melissa recalled. "I started writing it on the road. It was a lot of fun."

"I grew up in a very conservative religious environment," she replied when asked about the religious aspects of the song. "I've moved away from organized religion but am still a very spiritual person. I feel God in nature. My songs reflect 'Earth school,' which is just what you learn from the ups and downs of being a human on this planet."

"I'm definitely 'woo woo,'" Melissa added. "I incorporate (See Melissa D, Page 6)



Names lost in Vermont, Part 50: Fountain, Koska, Murcray, Abare, and Hibbard

BY MICHAEL DWYER

It's not a difficult stretch to see how Fountain came from the French name Fontaine. The real reason for chasing down this name comes from a Pittsford descendant's family story that there was Native American ancestry in this family. Québec-born Joseph Fontaine married Philomene Rock around 1867, location unknown. They had eight children all born on the New Hampshire side of Vermont. The 1900 census finds this family living in Hartford, Vermont, with an important clue in the last person in the household, Theodore

Souci, named as Joseph's stepfather. Joseph Fountain died in 1920, according to his gravestone, yet oddly, neither Vermont nor New Hampshire has any record of his death, which would have named his parents.

How then could I find his parents? Fortunately, Catholic records once again filled in details. The baptismal record of Edward Fontaine in 1876 gives the full name of his father, Joseph Odille Fontaine. With that information, I discovered that Joseph Odille Fontaine was baptized in Gentilly, Québec, on January 6, 1840, son of Chrysanthé Fontaine and Eme-

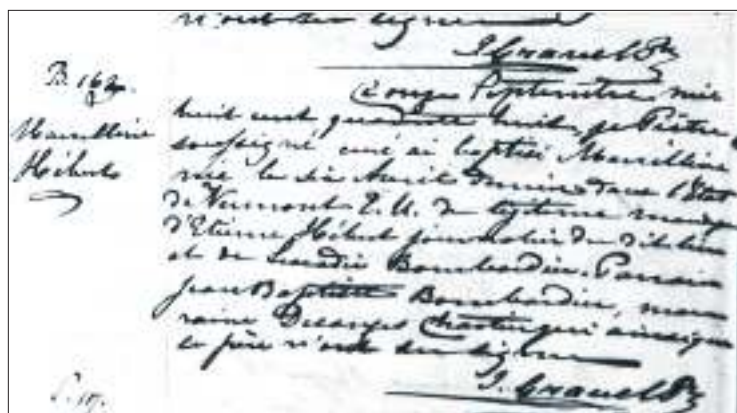
lie Boisvert. Emelie married, as her second husband, Theodore Souci, another confirmation I had found the correct family. Tracing the Fontaine line back to Etienne Fontaine, the immigrant ancestor from France, I found no evidence of Native Americans. In more than two dozen research requests to document a family's Native American ancestry, I have failed to prove any of them true.

So, how do these stories get started? They usually involve the appearance of a female ancestor with "exotic" looks, high cheekbones, dark hair, and an aquiline nose. Ironical that at the same time the Indian Wars were concluding, and many indigenous people were relegated to reservations, families held onto these stories of what some have described as "Indian princesses."

Of course, there are Vermont families with Native American heritage, but they are hard to document in the 19th century. Often, they were erased from the historical record. The 1860 census was the first to list subjects as "Indian," if they paid taxes. It then became standard practice in the 1880 census to list race with "I" for Indian. With this search technique, I discovered a father and son living in Pittsford in 1880: Canadian-born Franklin Koska, age 50 [sic] and his 17-year-old son of the same name. I was temporarily mystified by his Polish last name. Frank Koska died in Wells, on January 7, 1888, age 67, with no indication of race or parentage. Looking for earlier clues of him in Vermont, I found Francis living with his mother, Mary Kaskey and younger brother Antoine in



CIVIL WAR SOLDIER Alex Murkery (1822–1862).



BAPTISMAL RECORD OF Marcelline Hebert from Iberville, Québec.



ALEX AND MERCY, Bolton, Vt., ca. 1910, courtesy of James Bean.

Pawlet's 1850 census. Without an indicator of race in this census, the giveaway they were Native Americans was that Antoine was a basket maker, a common occupation among indigenous people of Vermont. Continuing to follow this family's trail into Québec led me to the Jesuit Mission to the Hurons at Ancienne Lorette where François Xavier Koska [Francis Xavier, Jesuit saint] was baptized on December 3, 1818, son of Bathelemi Koska. Bathelmi's father, Stanilas Koska Tchachitarahenre married at the mission in 1766. His Christian name came from Stanilas Koska, a young Jesuit saint held up as a role model. "Stanilas," the Huron, was likely baptized on the feast day of the saint.

In wrapping up this series, I'd like to share with you two of my hardest puzzles that went well beyond recovering a lost name and took me over twenty years to solve. They involve my late brother-in-law's fam-

ily, which was a long-standing brick wall for him. Alex Murcray/Mercure, as he was known in Vermont records, lived most of his life in the around Bolton, Vermont. He was baptized as Alexandre Mercure son of Alexandre Mercure and Saphronie Cayer in 1855. Alex Murcray's wife was named Mercy, maiden name Abar or Hibbard in Vermont records. Their marriage record, circa 1876, has not survived which may have named her parents. A Catholic baptism record for their daughter indicated the mother's name as Marcelline Hébert—Abar a rough phonetic pronunciation of the French name that has a silent H. Three census records stated she was born in New York, while one indicated Vermont. Her year of birth ranged from 1848 to 1852. A few months before Mercy died in 1922, she moved to Bolton, Québec, to live with her daughter. Her burial record only gave her age and that she

(See Names lost, Page 19)

Brandon man elected officer

Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War hold annual encampment

BY ANDREW R. WHIPPLE

Members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) Department of Vermont recently gathered for their annual Department Encampment at the American Legion Hall - Post 91 in Colchester, Vermont.

This annual event brings together members of the Order from throughout the state to discuss issues important to the fraternity and to vote on leadership for the coming year. In 2025, the Department was privileged to host Commander-in-Chief Kevin L. Martin and his wife Rosemary Martin, President of the Auxiliary of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (ASUVCW).

Each year a different Camp in the state hosts the event. Major General George Stannard Camp #2 from Milton, Vermont hosted the event this year.

During the meeting the following Department officers were elected: Wade A. Johnson, Sr., Commander; Andrew R. Whipple, Senior Vice Commander; Daniel J. Celik of Brandon, Junior Vice Commander; Bruce G. Amsden, Secretary; Francis Owen, Treasurer; and Maurice Cerrutti, Council Member.

Organized in 1881 and chartered by Congress in 1954, the SUVCW is the legal heir

and successor to the Grand Army of the Republic (GAR). In 1866, Union Veterans of the Civil War organized into the Grand Army of the Republic and became a social and political force that would control the destiny of the nation for more than six decades.

The Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War is a fraternal organization dedicated to preserving the history and legacy of veteran heroes who fought and worked to save the Union in the American Civil War. Membership is open to men who trace their family lineage to those who served honorably in the Civil War and to associate members who do not have the requisite ancestry but wish to join the fraternity.

The SUVCW is one of five Allied Orders of the GAR. The other four Orders are: Auxiliary to the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Daughters of Union Veterans of the Civil War, Ladies of the Grand Army of the Republic, and Woman's Relief Corps.

The local organization welcomes individuals to join them! For more information, contact Charles Miller, Secretary/Treasurer at suvcw.stannardcamp2@gmail.com.



OFFICERS OF THE Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War (SUVCW) Department of Vermont pose with the National Commander-in-Chief. Left to Right: Bruce G. Amsden, Secretary; Daniel J. Celik, Junior Vice Commander; Francis Owen, Treasurer; Andrew R. Whipple, Senior Vice Commander; Wade A. Johnson, Sr., Commander; Kevin L. Martin, National Commander-in-Chief.

Covered bridge maker contributed to Vermont's historic value Pittsford among the communities to receive new historic markers

The Vermont Division for Historic Preservation announces the installation of 15 new Roadside Historic Sites Markers for 2025. These iconic green and gold markers allow places and people to come alive, sharing glimpses into the history of our Brave Little State. To date, there are 335 markers placed throughout Vermont.

"The Vermont Roadside Historic Site Markers provide summaries of history worth remembering," said Laura V. Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer. "The Markers are sharing history that has often been overlooked or forgotten, stories important to our understanding and respect of the past."

For 2025, fifteen new Markers listed below are being installed, recognizing Vermont's contributions to rebellions and wars, outdoors recreation, eco-

nomic identity, and education:

- Revolutionary War hero Col. Seth Warner in Bennington
- Lt. Col. Udney Hay of Underhill, Revolutionary War hero and State Legislator
- Grand Army of the Republic in Cambridge, recognizing the 1937 designation of VT Route 15 to honor those who fought in the Civil War

"The Vermont Roadside Historic Site Markers provide summaries of history worth remembering."

—Laura V. Trieschmann, State Historic Preservation Officer

- Leonard Lord of Swanton, the first Vermont killed in action during World War I
- Prosper Ski Lodge in Woodstock, started in 1936 by farmer Rupert Lewis
- Long Trail Lodge in Killington, the 1923 lodge through which the Long Trail once traveled

• Burlington Country Club, the only Vermont club by designer Donald J. Ross, and its predecessor, Waubunakee Golf Club

• Devil's Bowl Speedway in West Haven, New England's fastest dirt track

• Bag Balm, manufactured in Lyndonville since c. 1908

• The Vermont Country Store in Weston, founded by Vrest and Mildred Orton in 1945

• Village of Pittsford Mills and covered bridge builder Nichols M. Powers, Pittsford

• Newton Academy, Vermont first private boarding academy that became Shoreham High School

• The Old Mill of Shaftsbury where the carpenter's square was produced in 1823

• Sylvia and Charity, a same-sex couple in Early America living in Weybridge

• Ralph Waldo Ellison, author of *Invisible Man*, which was penned while he was visiting Fayston

The Vermont Roadside Historic Site Marker program was established in 1947 by the Vermont Legislature. The first markers were installed in 1949, the initial being for Joseph Smith, Mount Independence, and Hubbardton Battlefield. These 3-foot signs of cast aluminum are crammed with

765 characters that outline the stories of Vermont's heritage, commemorating her people and important events. Today, 335 markers are in production or have been placed throughout Vermont. There is one Roadside Historic Site Marker located outside Vermont, grac-

ing a roadside in Middletown, Virginia, to honor Vermonters' efforts at the Battle of Cedar Creek during the Civil War. The Roadside Marker Program is administered by the Division for Historic Preservation.

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BRANDON REPORTER

Community News

Vermont State Police investigates suspicious death in Brandon

VIA VERMONT STATE POLICE PRESS RELEASE
BRANDON—The Vermont State Police is investigating a suspicious death that was reported over the weekend in Brandon.

The victim is identified as Brian Bailey, 46, of Brandon. He was found unresponsive shortly after 7 a.m. Saturday, May 24, 2025, at his home on Champearl Road and pronounced deceased by first responders. Troopers from the Vermont State Police were called and began an investigation. Based on evidence at the scene and following an examination of Bailey’s body at the Chief Medical Examiner’s Office in Burlington, the death appears to be suspicious.

This investigation is active and ongoing and involves members of the Vermont State Police Ma-

jor Crime Unit, Bureau of Criminal Investigations, Crime Scene Search Team, Field Force Division, and Victim Services Unit. The Brandon Police Department and the Rutland County State’s Attorney’s Office are assisting.

Preliminary investigative work by the state police indicates this was an isolated event, and there is no known threat to the community. No one is currently in custody.

Investigators ask that anyone who might have information that could assist in this case call the Vermont State Police in Rutland at 802-773-9101. Tips also may be submitted anonymously online at <https://vsp.vermont.gov/tipssubmit>.

No further details are available at this time. VSP will provide updates as the investigation unfolds.



My my you do look tasty...

THIS CURIOUS BLACK & White Warbler is on the lookout for an insect meal. It’s song is weesy weesy, which sounds like a squeaky wheel.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

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Community Forums
The Shoreham Strawberry Festival returns on June 19!

Mark your calendars for Wednesday, June 19, 2025 from 6 to 8 p.m. at the Gazebo on the Shoreham Town Green. As it has for decades, the Shoreham Congregational



Church is proud to offer its famous Strawberry Shortcake with fresh Vermont strawberries, biscuits, and real whipped cream. The regular generous portion of shortcake made with one biscuit costs \$7, while a smaller portion made with half a biscuit costs \$4. Bottled water will be available for an extra \$1.

Buy your tickets near the side door of the church, proceed through the kitchen to get your shortcake, and exit through the back door to enjoy your shortcake on the lawn by the Gazebo.

Bring your lawn chairs or picnic blankets for seating on

the lawn to socialize, enjoy your shortcake, and listen to the music provided by Nick Thornblade and his accordion. Please be generous with your free-will offering in the basket for the musician!

We will also be selling tickets for this year’s raffle prize—a beautiful hand-knitted afghan. This wool/acrylic throw is machine washable and dryable. Tickets are only \$5 each or 3 for \$10. The drawing will be held at AppleFest in September.

Join us for a great evening of good music and good food!

‘Play Every Town: 252 Community Concerts for a Cooler Climate’ comes to Pittsford

Join composer-pianist David Feurzeig as he performs Concert #81 in his series “Play Every Town: 252 Community Concerts for a Cooler Climate,” on Saturday, May 31, at 4 p.m., at the Pittsford Congregational Church,

121 Village Green, Pittsford, Vt.

In 2022 Feurzeig embarked on Play Every Town: 252 free concerts in each of Vermont’s 252 towns to confront climate change through the power of community and music.

“Like so much of our everyday life, routine jet travel is unsustainable—which means something it’s literally not possible to keep doing. I want to model a performance culture that doesn’t require (See ‘Play Every Town’ Page 12)

Letters to the Editor

Thank you to everyone who makes Brandon's music scene so great

Is anyone else scared to death of what's happening with our present-day federal government? Me, too. If you need a break from all that lays heavy on your shoulders, then I suggest that you shut off your TV and computer, get off the couch, put on your dancing shoes, and find your way to one of Brandon's many venues that take place almost every week.

It seems that little Brandon is on its way to becoming another Austin, Texas. For those who don't know, Austin is known for its diverse music scene. A lot of the world's best (think Stevie Ray Vaughan) got their start playing the bars and clubs of this Democratic city that is right smack in the middle of a very Republican state. Although that really has nothing

to do with anything other than I wanted to point out that miracles can and do happen.

Let's start with a very cool little shop right here in the middle of town known as Sister Wicked. Perhaps we should call the proprietor, Gina Germond, the "godmother of Brandon's music scene." For some years now, Sister Wicked has provided a place for folks to gather and play or just listen to both open mic acoustic and electric. As well as live bands. There is even drum circle night, which is totally mind-blowing. If you have ever been to a drum circle, then you know what I mean.

Directly across the street from Sister Wicked sits the Brandon Town Hall, a place with a beautiful stage and dance floor thanks to some of

Brandon's contractor-type talent. The Town Hall hosts a variety of live music from country rock to classic. They also offer Brandon's Got Talent, and they are right. Brandon's got talent, no doubt.

If you'd like a cold beer with your music, then you for sure have to find your way to the Red Clover Ale Company. Every Thursday night is open mic at the brewery, which sits right in the middle of town. Some highly talented musicians have graced the front step of the Red Clover. Absolutely no doubt about that. Also they host live bands almost every weekend.

In the summertime (my favorite month—just kidding), you don't want to miss the music scene that takes place directly behind the historic

Brandon Inn on the beautiful Neshobe River. Every Wednesday evening features a different band consisting of some really great musicians.

Everyone should know that the American Legion often has a variety of live music, from karaoke to D.J. nights to live music bands. With a great dance floor, you can't go wrong with "the Legion." If you like to dance, then that's where to go. Because dancing beats sitting on the couch. Hands down.

The Hilltop Tavern is not in Brandon, it sits on the hilltop in Pittsford, which is more or less a suburb to Brandon. This cozy little place offers a great assortment of musical acts and is only minutes from Brandon. So go check it out. It will be worth it for sure.

I personally want to say thank you to Sister Wicked, to the volunteers at the Town Hall theater, to the proprietors of Red Clover, to all who sponsor the music behind the Inn, to the Hilltop, and of course to the veterans of Post 55 without whom we wouldn't have a country where we could dance and as free as one could be. Thank you.

If you should find yourself in one of these great places listening to great music with a room full of music lovers, then you will know that you all have something in common.

The love of music.

Steve Bryant
Forest Dale

The federal government must respect due process and the rule of law

I am writing in response to the letter of May 14 by Aida Nielsen. Ms. Nielsen states that federal immigration law is the law of the land and must be respected. However, what is disturbing is that our own government is not respecting the law, in particular people's right to due process of law. Due process of law under the 14th Amendment of the Constitution protects the individual against abuse by the state or federal government. Due process of law is not a suggestion. The Supreme Court has held that non-citizens who are in this country are entitled to due process. Under our Constitution, it is the courts that ultimately determine what due process of law is.

Unfortunately, it has been all too common for masked ICE agents to grab people off the street without identifying themselves and whisk them off to prison or out of the country without explanation. The headlines on the front page of the

May 18th edition of the Boston Globe is "Courts Hold the Line on Due Process." The article in the Globe states that federal courts have held that the Trump Administration cannot sidestep people's due process rights in its headlong efforts to expel people from this country. The Supreme Court recently held that a 24-hour notice was insufficient warning to a group of Venezuelan immigrants to give them the ability to contest their removal.

There are many examples of the Trump Administration not respecting the law. Recently, the Trump administration was ordered by the Supreme Court to facilitate the return of an American citizen who was mistakenly removed from this country to a prison in El Salvador. It appears that nothing has been done to comply with this order. The person remains in prison in El Salvador. The Trump Administration's position seems to be that it doesn't have to comply with

the order because the citizen expelled is a bad person (which is debatable). However, the President has no more right to pick and choose which laws to obey than we do.

Finally, Ms. Nielsen states that if we don't like current immigration law, our Congressional Representatives should work to change the law for people seeking to immigrate. However, this nearly happened last year. In the run up to the last election, Congress was on the verge of passing a comprehensive immigration bill. It included additional funding for the Border Patrol and increased funding to speed up the process for legal immigration and was supported by both Democrats and Republicans. However, then-Candidate Trump decided that a legislative fix of the problems at the border would take away his strongest campaign issue. He pressured Republicans in Congress to oppose the bill and Republican support of the bill vanished. It never came up for a vote.

Unfortunately, our immigration laws as practiced by the Trump Administration are completely lacking in compassion. They are harsh and punitive. We have been called a nation of immigrants. Now our government seems to treat immigrants as the enemy.

Bob Clark
Brandon

Pat Roberts was a special teacher and deserves our thanks

Reading last week's Reporter, I found myself filled with that odd emotion that we all have experienced, it's that one of mixed joy and sadness. You know like Christmas morning when all the presents have been opened or after finishing that competition you've trained so hard for. It's not a bad feeling, just a bit odd. I had that feeling after seeing that Pat Roberts, Otter Valley's music instructor, is retiring. Sad that he will no longer be imparting his musical wisdom to the next generation, but joy in knowing how many young people (my two daughters included) he has inspired over the years. I want to thank Mr. Roberts for all the years he has dedicated to the art of teaching; it's not an easy job and it takes a very exceptional

type of person to teach for over thirty years. I find people like Pat Roberts to be inspirational in the fact that they not only find their passion, but they find a way to make a living doing it. Let's face it, high school music teaching is not a way to become a millionaire, but it is a way to give to and receive from others far more than money can buy. I have had the pleasure to get to know Mr. Roberts while my daughters were in band at OV and I can't think a person who deserves a sincere and heartfelt thank you more than him. I wish him an adventurous retirement filled with all the joy he has given us over the years.

Devon Fuller
Brandon

Community Forums continued Mosquito season is here!

The Otter creek flood plains have experienced extensive flooding in the past three weeks and are now in full flood stage. Continuous rain is prolonging the mosquito reproduction phase and technicians have been sampling and applying larvicide treatments. They will continue to sample, monitor, and treat local hotspots.

The adulticide vehicles have all been equipped with flow-rate meters (thanks to a donation by the lake Dunmore Fern

Lake Association), which adjust the amount of adulticide to the speed of the truck. Below 5 mph no Adulticide is released and above 20 miles an hour, it also shuts off.

OCWICD has recently been victimized by a series of vandalisms. The building was broken into, and a number of tools and records are missing, also more than 20 of our no-spray stakes have been removed from their locations.

(See Mosquito season, Page 13)

Letters to the editor

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

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

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

Send your Letters to the Editor by Fridays before 5 p.m.
news@brandonreporter.com

Obituaries

Robert “Butch” Trombley, 75, Brandon

Robert (Butch) A. Trombley, age 75 passed peacefully on May 23, 2025, at his home in Brandon, surrounded by his loved ones, following a short but very courageous battle with pancreatic cancer.

Butch was born in Proctor on May 13, 1950, the son of Arthur (Birdie) and Mary (Douglas) Trombley. He received his early education in Brandon and graduated from Otter Valley Union High School in 1968. A proud husband of almost 55 years and proud father to a loving son. His presence, laughter, and jokes will be missed beyond measure. Butch is survived by his wife and high school sweetheart Sandra (Forrest) Trombley of Brandon, son Travis A. Trombley and his wife Liz (Egbert) Trombley of Rensselaer, N.Y.; his brother David Trombley and wife Brenda, of North Clarendon, Vt., and his sister Mary Adams. He is also survived by several cousins, nieces, and friends that were like family. His sweet baby girl Bella, a Staffordshire terrier. He was predeceased by his paternal and maternal grandparents, Delore & Julia Trombley and Patrick & Bessie Douglas. Butch worked summers on a farm, and after graduation worked for a year



ROBERT TROMBLEY

at General Electric. Following General Electric, he worked at Vermont Marble Company in Proctor and Jaymar Specialty in Poultney. In his early years he worked as a part-time Special for the Sheriff’s Department and Brandon Police Department. An entrepreneur at heart, he started his own business of Trombley’s Mini Mart & Gun Shop in Brandon and later started Artifacts Arms making custom gun stocks for competitive shooting sports. He designed and opened Talon Hill Gun Club in Leicester, Vt. Although he continued Artifacts Arms on the side, he started working full time for the State of VT Highway Department in May 1999, working out of the Middlebury Division, and later out of the

Mendon Traffic Shop. He retired from the State of Vermont in December 2018. Butch was a perfectionist in all he did. His greatest loves were his family, friends, and pets. His passion was clay target shooting, winning many championships over the years in skeet, trap, and sporting clays. He loved to go fishing and motorcycling. He enjoyed caring for his property and woodworking in his machine shop. Butch was a firm believer in the Lord, and we know he is at peace with Him in heaven.

A Mass of Christian Burial will be celebrated on Friday May 30 at 11 a.m. at Our Lady of Good Help, (St. Mary’s) Catholic Church in Brandon. The Rev. Maurice Moreau, Pastor will be the Celebrant. Following the mass, the family will receive friends at the Brandon American Legion Post 55 for a time of remembrance. A private graveside committal service and burial will take place in Forest Dale Cemetery. Memorial contributions may be made in his memory to Rutland Area Visiting Nurse & Hospice, 7 Albert Cree Drive, Rutland, Vt. 05701.

Arrangements are by Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home, Brandon.

Grace Ellen Simonds, 85, Whiting

Grace Ellen (Baker) Simonds, 85, passed away Monday, May 26, 2025.

Grace was born in San Diego, Calif, on August 15, 1939. She was the daughter of Cushman and Ellen (Gage) Baker. Her family moved back to Brandon in 1944 and she graduated from Brandon High School in 1957. She earned her bachelor’s degree from Castleton State College and then taught at Burr Pond School and kindergarten in Whiting. She served 33 years as the Whiting Town Clerk from 1983 until her retirement in 2014.

She married Wilson (Bill) J. Simonds on March 10, 1962. They lived in Sudbury and later bought the longtime family home in Whiting where they raised their four children.

Over the years she enjoyed family gatherings, reading, television, playing the organ, quilting, sewing, genealogy, showing old family photo albums, and socializing.

She is survived by three daughters and their spouses: Marie & Dan Berry, Michelle & Rick Lincoln, Marlene Al-

den. She is also survived by one son and spouse Mark & Tracy Simonds. Two sisters Carol & Dick Bird and Susan & Keith Puffenbarger. Ten grandchildren and spouses: Denise Berry, Adam (Heidi) Berry, Stephanie (Brandon) Mokris, Ross (Rania Jaber) Lincoln, Matthew (Juliette) Berry, Kirstyn (Mike) Mayhew, Kacey Scheuereman, Kaley (Kobe) Pinkham, Kira (Travis Hornbeck) Simonds and Rocco Alden. Nine great-grandchildren: Emory, Callen, Finn, Hudson, Jace, Ellie, Maverick, Dudley, & Maci.

She was predeceased by her husband Bill in 2020 and by her parents.

A funeral service will be held at 2 p.m. on Friday, May 30 at Miller & Ketcham Funeral Home in Brandon. The graveside committal service and burial will be in the family lot at the Whiting Community Cemetery.

Memorial gifts in lieu of flowers may be given in her memory to the Whiting Volunteer Fire Department, Whiting, Vt. 05778.



GRACE ELLEN SIMONDS

Melissa D

(Continued from Page 1)

crystals into my spiritual life. I’ve had my own walk with God and my music connects me to my spirituality.”

Born in Kansas, Melissa has lived in Vermont since

she was 4 or 5.

“I had to lose my accent,” she said. “I got picked on. I was really shy growing up. Music helped bring me out of my shell.”

Softspoken even now, songwriting allowed her to express herself in ways she otherwise found difficult. Her song “Little Girl,” for example, was written to her own “inner child” and focuses on a woman who was bullied and felt unseen. “I’ll Remember You” expresses her grief at losing her “soulmate” dog. “Indigo Child” is about a sensitive, empathetic boy who’s “strong in a quiet way, like me.”

For years, she used that quiet strength as a caseworker for the state, helping troubled teens learn skills for independent living. She retired last year and is now focusing on her music.

She tries to bring her love of music and spirituality together in what she calls “sound baths,” in which the audience is

“bathed” in the sound of her own gentle compositions, which incorporate singing bowls, tongue drums, and chimes. “People lie on yoga mats and do breathwork,” said Melissa. It’s a program she developed last year and has already done 3 or 4 times.

Anyone interested in hearing the new single or learning more about Melissa D can visit her website (melissadmusic.com). She can be found on all the major music platforms: Spotify, YouTube, Apple, Bandcamp, Pandora, etc. She’s also on Instagram as Melissadsings.


She’s got live performances coming up on June 7th at Kennedy Park and June 21 at Sister Wicked, both in Brandon. She’ll be at the Middlebury Farmers Market on July 19 as well. Details can be found at melissadmusic.com.

Melissa has chosen to release songs as singles rather than wait for a full album. “It allows me to focus on one song at a time,” she said.

And her growing fan base looks forward to the next release.

Softspoken even now, songwriting allowed her to express herself in ways she otherwise found difficult.

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GARDENING CORNER

The beautiful Iris bridges both time and space

BY LYN DESMARAIS

Like the daffodil and the tulip, the iris is an ancient flower. Earliest recording finds them

being cultivated in Syria in 1749 BCE. King Tutmosé II of Egypt had fabulous gardens. When he conquered Syria,

he found these flowers and brought them home to his garden. They were described as “carpeting the land” there. The three petals were understood to represent faith, wisdom, and valor. Since then, irises in their many sizes and colors have spread across the globe. The earliest recorded history of irises in the United States is in Virginia in the 1600s, but it was also brought to North America by the French, and it still prominent in New Orleans. It’s hardy, can tolerate all sorts of temperatures, and comes, and came historically, in many colors. It was prized by kings and royalty all over Europe. Many colors of Japanese iris have also been around for hundreds and hundreds of years, also, if not longer. They too are prized for their beauty and utility and show up in all sorts of art.

Who was Iris and why the name? According to Ancient Greek beliefs, when the gods wanted to talk to a human, they sent Iris the messenger god. She was kept busy and was known to race across the heavens. She is credited with the creation of rainbows, hence the word “iridescent” to describe something with a rainbow sheen. It is said that where she walked, colorful flowers grew, who were also

given her name.

Other religions honored the iris. With its three distinct petals, early Christians associated the Iris with the Virgin Mary. It was used medicinally to cure stomach, liver, and kidney issues, ulcers, used as a purgative, and used for skin complaints like eczema. I have no idea if any of these uses worked. The iris has a grape scent to it. It was used in perfumes and in incense for religious ceremonies. It is a much-loved and clearly much-used flower by humans. Pollinators love the iris as well. In Vermont, bumblebees and single bees especially love the iris. Bees respond to the blue/violet spectrum of light.

To date the most highly priced art depicting Irises are Vincent van Gogh’s iris paintings. Van Gogh painted the Iris twice: once in a still life (vase) and once as a thick clump, in the last years of his life. He painted them, it is said, because they made him happy. I certainly hope that this is a true story.

It is so easy to grow. Its tubers lie close to the surface of the ground. It has been and continues to be bred in a riot of colors the most recent ones in popularity are red iris. There are now hundreds and hundreds of types. Cottage or English

cottage gardens abound with them. Because like almost all perennials they have their season and then are gone, they need to be planned for in a garden. Like the spring bulbs you must have a Succession plan.

It’s not going to be as violent sexy or overtly true to life as the hit TV series, Succession, nor will it make you a famous actor, but it will make your garden fabulous to have waves of blooms all summer long.

Since you must leave the iris foliage after the bloom, there are great companion plants to grow up and hide the iris greenery. Sedum is always a great option, daylilies, asters, allium, phlox, black-eyed Susans, and Shasta daisies. As with anything you choose, try to choose those that aren’t so vigorous that they take over, native phlox and some asters will do that. Black-eyed Susans and Shasta daisies can too. Other great choices are colored cone flowers and daylilies. They clump. You could start with daffodils, iris, and allium then have all three’s foliage hidden by successive plants like daylilies and phlox then the later summer bloomers in the group ending with sedum.

Iris are heavy feeders and (See Gardening corner, Page 11)



Pittsford remembers our fallen soldiers



ANNE PELKEY OF the Pittsford Historical Society led the Memorial Day ceremony in Pittsford. Pastor Michael Dwyer of the Pittsford Congregational Church gave both the benediction and the keynote speech, which focused on the contributions of Vermont's French-Canadian population in the Civil War. Students from Lothrop read poems they had written for the occasion. The Brandon American Legion Post #55 Color Guard fired a salute in memory of our fallen soldiers. The RNE Super Band accompanied with a military medley.



STUDENT: Chloe Aube
GRADE: 6
SCHOOL: Neshobe
TITLE: Have Fun Drawing
MEDIUM: Paper, marker, and colored pencils
TEACHER: John Brodowski



STATEMENT FROM CHLOE:
I did this because I wanted to remind people to have fun.

STATEMENT FROM MR. B:
The artwork says it all!!!

MAPLE the COW by Matt Aucoin



Gardening corner

(Continued from Page 7)

need room to grow and need good circulation. They do suffer from a few pests but not unmanageable ones. If your iris is producing fewer flowers, look to see if they need to be thinned out.

Although I recognize none of them, there are several poems about iris. Here's the one I chose to share:

*The garden with its little gate
of green,
Invite you to enter, and view
mysteries unseen,
Its vine laden bowers and*

*overhanging trees,
The air filled with sweetness,
the hum of the bees,
The flagged walks with Iris
galore
Of most beautiful coloring,
unknown before
Pink, white, purple, yellow,
azure blue
Mixed and mingled of every
hue,
You come away wondering,
can more beauty be seen
Than in the garden with its
little gate of green.*

Winstead

Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 1)

printed in this issue and is also available in the Selectboard packet for 5/26/25 on the town website.

Mr. Hopkins announced the resignation of Laura Miner from the Trustees of Public Funds (TPF). Ms. Miner had submitted her resignation earlier that day. Ms. Miner's resignation follows the resignations of Courney Satz and Tanner Romano earlier this month. This leaves all three seats on TPF vacant.

Applications to fill these vacancies will be accepted by Mr. Hopkins until 5 p.m. on Thursday, June 5 and the Selectboard will interview applicants on Monday, June 9. The appointments will remain in effect until March 2026, when all three seats will appear on the ballot.

Mr. Hopkins noted that the town sold its 2015 police cruiser for \$1,400 on Municibid, which he said was significantly more than the car would've fetched as scrap.

Mr. Hopkins also stated that the town has been informed that health-insurance premiums for its employees will increase by 13.7% for those employees on Blue Cross and 7.5% for those on MVP. All town employees except for some at the police department are on MVP.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT REPORT

Deputy Town Manager Bill Moore delivered his report, the full text of which is reprinted in this issue and is also available in the Selectboard packet for 5/26/25 on the town website.

TIER 1B ZONING REQUEST

The Board unanimously agreed to request des-

ignation as Tier 1B under Act 181 for certain areas within Brandon. According to Mr. Hopkins, the designation allows further streamlining of the permitting process for new construction and bypasses Act 250 review for most cases within the 1B areas.

In Brandon, the areas that would be designated as Tier 1B are downtown Brandon and its adjacent neighborhoods and Forest Dale village and its adjacent neighborhoods. These areas already have municipal infrastructure and would not need the scrutiny under Act 250 that new construction in undeveloped areas might require.

A map of the designated areas is available in the Selectboard packet for 5/26/25 on the town website.

Some attendees questioned whether this decision should be made without input from the community, as increased development in the town would strain already limited resources such as parking.

Jack Schneider of the Brandon Planning Commission noted that the proposal had been discussed in public meetings and that the Rutland Regional Planning Commission intended to have more public meetings.

Mr. Schneider also noted that the town's own zoning and land-use regulations will remain unaffected.

"It's not like people will suddenly be able to do whatever they want," he said. "There's no downside to Tier 1B designation."

(See Brandon SB, Page 21)

S — BSCRIBE

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WE NEED U

The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged) will be playing at Otter Valley this weekend

BY MITCHELL PEARL

This weekend, Otter Valley's Walking Stick Theatre will present "The Complete Works of Shakespeare (Abridged) [Revised, Again]."

Works of William Shakespeare (abridged)" was London's longest-running comedy, having clocked a very palpable nine years on London's West End—England's version of Broad-

and understandable for today's American audiences.

Whether you are a Shakespeare scholar or a complete newbie, strap in for a wild, fast, funny crash course in

("To be, or not to be, that is the question . . ."), which are featured in this play like nowhere else.

Many of these experienced Walking Stick student actors have just recently returned from the New England Drama Festival presenting their festival piece "Queens." With "The Complete Works of William Shakespeare (Abridged),"

sword fights, sock puppets, pop culture, and plenty of audience participation.

Tickets are just five dollars and will be available at the door, or can be purchased online at www.ovwalkingstick-theatre.com. The show runs for about an hour and 40 minutes, and there will be one intermission. Back in Shakespeare's day, his plays would have been



REHEARSING THE BALCONY scene in *Romeo and Juliet*.

The play features student actors in the upper-grade levels at Otter Valley. Many are seniors, and this will be their last time performing on the Otter Valley stage as students. Performances are Friday evening, May 30, and Saturday Evening, May 31, both nights at 7:30.

The play, "The Complete

way. It is a wild romp through all of Shakespeare's 37 plays in just under two hours—sixteen actors, dozens of characters, and zero time for iambic pentameter—though even some of Shakespeare's sonnets are covered! The "Revised, Again" version has been updated to ensure that the humor is relevant

Shakespeare like you've never seen before. If you "brush up your Shakespeare" you are sure to catch some references you might otherwise miss, but everyone is familiar with the familiar scenes from *Romeo and Juliet* ("Romeo, Romeo, wherefore art thou Romeo?"), or the soliloquy from *Hamlet*



REHEARSING A PARTICULARLY gruesome scene.

expect something completely different, but the same skills, energy, and intensity are apparent. Shakespeare has never been this ridiculous or, perhaps, this much fun. Expect

rated at least PG-13 for their language and "bawdiness"; this play follows suit.

'Play Every Town'

(Continued from Page 4)
hopping on a plane and flying all over the world."

With this project David will become the first musician to perform in every Vermont municipality. He is traveling in his solar-charged electric vehicle throughout the state, offering free concerts to bring attention to the interrelated issues of climate and community, and to call into question the normality of long-distance touring and travel, while bringing the joy of music to his audiences.

"I want to support Vermont's local communities with live performance in village centers and downtowns, while fulfilling

UVM's mission to serve as a resource for the whole state."

Feurzeig, a professor of music at UVM, specializes in genre-defying recitals that bring together music of an astonishing variety of musical styles, from ancient and classical to jazz, avant-garde, and popular traditions. These striking juxtapositions, peppered with informative and humorous commentary, create eye- and ear-opening programs that will change how you hear all kinds of music.

Each program is locally tailored. In Pittsford, David will play Mozart's very first pieces, composed in 1761, the year the town was chartered. Pittsford's

Samuel Hopkins was granted the first ever US patent (signed by George Washington) for an invention improving the production of potash, so naturally David will play Bach's Invention No. 1.

Music by Schumann marks the year the present Congregational Church was built. And in 1850, the church excommunicated Hannah Smith for holding a woman in slavery; to honor this momentous event, the program includes Stephen Foster's 1850 song "Angelina Baker," which tells in oblique tones the story of a house slave sold down the river for advocating for the freedom of the field hands. Scott Joplin's "Heliotrope

Bouquet" dates from the year the state's first TB sanatorium opened, and James P. Johnson's "Carolina Shout" the year it was donated to the state. Like every concert in the project, this one will have its own unique sonata by Domenico Scarlatti: Sonata no. 81 for this eighty-first concert in the project. Other solo pieces and a collaboration with Pittsford musicians TBD will round out the program. Admission is free, with voluntary donations going to 350 Vermont.

Feurzeig finds his approach attracts new audiences to so-called "classical" concerts and brings new insight to existing fans. "Classical music culture puts the 'Great

Composers' on an almost religious pedestal. Once this was an indication of the audience's love and respect, but now it just distances people from the music. It turns away new listeners, who feel like they're in a stuffy museum instead of a live concert. If I don't get a laugh from the audience in the first two minutes, I get worried!"

Follow David on his journey on Instagram, find up-to-date events for your town via Facebook, or visit the website at PlayEveryTown.com. Contact:

PlayEveryTown@gmail.com
(802) 434-3819.

Max Knouse varies the vibe at Red Clover in Brandon

BY SUSAN JOHNSON
Anyone looking for a change of pace on Friday evening could find it at Red Clover, where Max Knouse played to a packed house. Currently living in Los Angeles and on the cusp of a third album, Max couldn't bring us the sun, but did bring music to open our minds.
Jake Wildwood of Rochester, Vt. guitar fame played first, showing he's not just an experienced luthier—though he prefers "country guitar doctor"—but a skilled guitarist playing a pleasing Relaxed Bluegrass Chamber mix (my layperson genre, or just call it Americana) just right to ease us out of the work week.
Max took the stage solo and continued the stretching of my music-genre identification skills. A swaying yet intentional guitar

sound accompanied his ethereal voice to form a music you don't often get to hear, a music reflecting my recent moods spurred by questioning purpose and identity and trying to understand the mix of wonder and dismay that humanity invokes.
Next, Max was joined by the Spacey Basements—Shane Kennedy on drums and Walter Stone on bass—a duo with solid synergy laying down a groove to guide Max's musical lead. By the way, Spacey Basements, your local fans want to hear more! Max has played with many others, including Califone and Jolie Holland, whose haunting, melodic sound has graced the Ruth Stone House a few times in the last few years. A big thanks to Shane Kennedy for bringing us both Jolie and Max.



MAX KNOUSE AND the Spacey Basements defying definition.
Photo by Susan Johnson

In an interesting juxtaposition, the usual jovial and sometimes boisterous Red Clover crowd was treated to music that's not loud, pushy, or mindless, but rather satisfying, thought-provoking arrangements that leave enough space to let the intentional sounds speak for themselves. If you must have a mainstream reference, maybe Wilco or the Counting Crows (the angst not the pop), and Max did refer to Lightnin' Hopkins as an influence. Put that together however you'd like.
I still haven't defined a genre, you say? Alt-Indie-Experimental? How about Minimal Integral Soul (my creation)? Since I fail at a clear classification of Max Knouse, I'll just say it was real music and we appreciated him bringing it to Brandon.

Mosquito season

(Continued from Page 5)
Property owners who have requested "NO SPRAY" should check their property boundaries to make sure their properties are adequately posted! Every effort has been made to replace the missing stakes! If you find your property is not properly posted, please call the

district answering service at (802) 247-6779
A great deal of information can be found on the Otter Creek Watershed Insect Control Districts' website: <http://blsgmosquito.wordpress.com>
The adulticide spray routes for the 6 Towns serviced by OCWICD are posted on the

website. Adulticide treatments can only be done in the evening when the temperature is above 60°F, no rain and low wind speeds.
If treatment conditions are right, the adulticide coordinator will post by 2 p.m. which spray routes will be done that evening.

HELLO SUMMER SALE!

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 <p>2024 TOYOTA CAMRY SE Hybrid, Auto, Loaded, Like new! 12k miles \$32,995</p>	 <p>2019 FORD RANGER Crew Cab, 4X4 XL, 4cyl turbo, 102k miles \$22,995</p>	 <p>2015 SUBARU FORESTER Touring AWD, Leather, Loaded, 113k miles \$13,995</p>

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Mim's Photos

Like all things vintage?

are on page 24!

Brandon commemorates Memorial Day 2025



BRANDON'S FLOWER GIRLS left their tribute to our fallen soldiers at the Civil War monument on Monday. Jean Lamarre of the American Legion Auxiliary led the ceremony. Pastor Vicki Disorda of the Brandon United Methodist Church offered the benediction. June Kelly offered the keynote address, with another speech from Gary Stanley. Nicholas Savela read the Gettysburg Address and the Scouts led the Pledge of Allegiance.



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

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!

2025 Crown Point Road Association Outings

Saturday, June 14

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

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

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

Earth Conscientious, Spiritual, Gentle Physical Yoga Practice. We meet on Mondays via zoom. Contact for Zoom link. (There is also a Monday Zoom only class)

nearly every Wednesday year-round in the gym at the Rutland Area Christian School in Rutland, located at the corner of Melrose Ave. and Lincoln Ave. in Rutland, a block from the intersection of Route 7 and Melrose Ave. (110 Lincoln Ave., Rutland, VT 05701).

Being a part of this unique and exciting club offers a variety of activities, including regular practice, a challenge board, clinics for beginner and advanced play, singles and doubles, inter-club events with other table tennis clubs, and even tournaments. If you are interested in table tennis as a recreational or athletic activity, we're interested in you! There is a modest membership fee of only \$30, although you

Not everyone can get up and down off of the floor easily, making traditional yoga classes difficult. If you have physical limitation or a health issue this might be the ideal class for you. With the help of a chair most people can practice yoga and reap the benefits of increased circulation, balance, flexibility, mobility, strength and more.

We spend a fair amount of the time exercising in a seated position in the chairs but if possible, we also do exercises standing, using the chairs for support. The exercises can be adjusted for individual needs and we move at a comfortable pace. I think you will soon notice a difference once you start. Looking forward to seeing you in class!

Lina (Parvati) has 20 plus years of experience teaching and a lifelong personal practice.

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

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.



If you are interested in table tennis as a recreational or athletic activity, we're interested in you! There is a modest membership fee of only \$30, although you

can come twice free as our guest. Bring your sneakers and paddle (or use ours) and have some fun playing a great game of "Pong!"

For further information about the Green Mountain Table Tennis Club, visit our club's website at www.gmttc.com.

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 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

Stories from the Vermont Queer Archives Brandon Free Public Library

Wednesday, June 4, 6-7

Meg Tamulonis, volunteer curator of Vermont Queer Archives at the Pride Center of Vermont, discusses how objects mark various milestones, from Pride events to legal rulings, and considers why some parts of the queer community aren't well-represented in the Archives. She'll explain why there aren't many artifacts from the era before the Stonewall Uprising in 1969, and some of the ways we can continue to gather and learn about Vermont's many queer histories.



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
5-7pm

Pins & Needles Craft Club at the Brandon Free Public Library

Drop in from 5:30-7:00 pm, and bring your projects to work on.

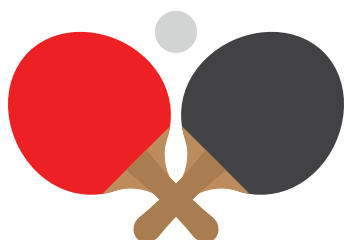
Free Drop-In Tech Support at the Brandon Free Public Library
5-6 pm

Wednesdays

Ping Pong

The club has begun playing on Wednesday evenings starting at 7 p.m. It will meet

Goings on around town



Thursdays

Ukulele Group

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

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

Open Mic at Red Clover in Brandon

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

Storytime at the Brandon Free Public Library

Starts at 10:30 a.m. Join us for stories and bubbles!

Fridays

Chaffee Art Center All About the Arts Free Class for kids 3-5

From 11am-Noon...FREE! Students will have fun creating and doing activities with art, music, literature, and more!

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

Instructor: Lori Sullivan; Minimum 3.

Brandon Senior Center Game Day

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

Corn Hole at the Godnick Adult Center

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

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

Saturdays

Bingo at the Brandon Senior Center

First Saturday of each month from 12 p.m. to 3 p.m. Bring lunch, and the Center will provide beverages, desserts, and a good time. A great way to pass a Saturday afternoon. Please direct any questions to Kathy Mathis at 247-3121.

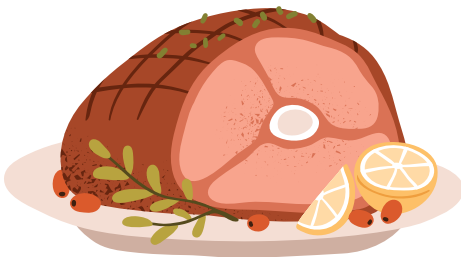
Free Medical Care for Adults
Wednesdays in June from 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

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 County Free Clinic) every Wednesday in June from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at our offices at 204 North Main Street, Rutland. No appointment necessary. Clinics (with recommended appointments) will also be held June 5 (9-12), June 17 (1-4), and June 23 (3-6). For appointments or any questions, call 802-774-1082.

recent transplant from Boston, with deep roots in New England. Having spent most of his life in the region, he draws constant inspiration from its rich visual tapestry—an ever-changing mix of urban centers, small and large towns, green mountains, rocky coastlines, peaceful beaches, historic landmarks, and forgotten mills. New England's diversity is both broad and beautiful, often sparking a deep well of creativity. Much of Ricky's work centers on vintage and abandoned manmade structures. He is espe-

cially drawn to the quiet tension between the built environment and the natural world—where light, shadow, and creeping greenery reveal the slow reclaiming of human spaces by nature. His subjects often tell a layered story: places once carefully designed, constructed, and celebrated, now fading, yet still echoing their original beauty and intention.

On view through August 10. The Next Stage Gallery is open during events, and by appointment with the artist or by contacting Next Stage at info@nextstagearts.org or (802) 451-0053. From 6-8 p.m at Next Stage Arts, 15 Kimball Hill, Putney.



Community Dinner — Brandon United Methodist Church

Come join us from 4:30-6:30 p.m. for a dinner of Pork Roast, Roasted Potatoes, Stuffing, Broccoli with Cheese Sauce, Cauliflower with Cheese Sauce, Rolls and Cherry Squares for Dessert. Free Will Offering All Welcome to Attend 2 Union Street, Brandon

June

Sunday 1st

WWI Event — Brandon American Legion

The Goshen Historical Society is sponsoring an event honoring WWI area Veterans from 2-4 p.m. at the Brandon American Legion Post #55, Franklin St. Rt.7 South. Displays, information, refreshments, 50/50 raffle & door prize. All welcome.

Friday 6th

PhotoPlace Gallery Exhibition — Middlebury

PhotoPlace Gallery is pleased to present Dreams and Imagined Realities, a juried exhibition exploring the spaces where imagination and reality intertwine. Juror Emma Powell selected 35 images for display in the gallery and an additional 50 for the Online Gallery, assembling a powerful collection of work that invites viewers into the realm of the surreal and the visionary.

The exhibition opens in our Middlebury gallery on Friday, June 6, with an opening reception from 4-7 p.m. All selected images can also be viewed online on our website. Exhibit runs June 6-27, 2025. 3 Park Street, Middlebury.

Peer Archives —
Library
p.m.



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

Sundays

Brandon Town Hall Painting with Crystal

Crystal Ketcham leads an all ages painting event!

Yes, you CAN paint! More info, contact Crystal at ceastman88@gmail.com

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

Chess

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

Thursday 29th

Art Array: Diverse paintings from Vermont Artist Ricky McEachern, Opening Reception — Next Stage Arts

Vermont artist Ricky McEachern captures the fading beauty of abandoned spaces, blending nature and history in oil paintings inspired by New England and his travels.

Ricky is a Vermont-based artist and a

Adult Pour Painting — Chaffee Art Center

Follow along with instructor Lorrie Amerio Manieri to learn the pour painting technique, and leave with a finished painting. \$40 per person includes all supplies. 6-8 p.m. Must pre-register.

Three Tall Women — Artistree Community Arts Center

Three Tall Women by Edward Albee is a Pulitzer Prize-winning drama that offers a profound and introspective look at aging, memory, and identity. The play follows three women—simply named A, B, and C—who represent different stages of a single woman's life. As they interact, past and present blur, revealing truths about love, regret, and the inevitability of time. With Albee's sharp wit and emotional depth, Three Tall Women is a compelling exploration of the human experience, both poignant and thought-provoking. May 29-Jun 8, 2025. Tickets: \$35 Adults/\$30 Children and Seniors.

Artistree Community Arts Center, 2095 Pomfret Road, South Pomfret.

Friday 30th

The Sable Project's Food & Art Friday "Soft Opening" with Mikahely

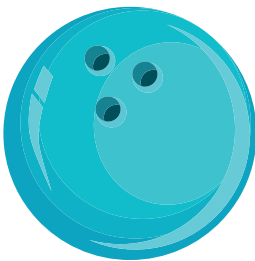
Come celebrate The Sable Project's first Food & Art Friday of the summer! Hang out on the beautiful Sable Land & enjoy delicious wood-fired pizza from Fat Dragon Farm.

Singer/songwriter Mikahely will play lifting and healing songs from Madagascar from 6:30-7:30. All ages welcome! 5:30-8:30 p.m. BYOB & Blanket. \$5-20 suggested donation.

588 N Taggart Hill Road, Stockbridge.

Saturday 31st

Strike Out Child Abuse Bowling Event — Rutland Bowlerama



Upcoming events at the Brandon Free Public Library

Saturday, May 31

Accordion Book Making with Jane Ploughman from 1-3:30 p.m. Join us at the library for a fun bookbinding workshop and learn how to create your own accordion fold book! All materials provided, no experience needed. Please register via info@brandonpubliclibrary.org

Saturday, June 7

Sensory-Friendly Art Time from 1-3:00 p.m. This monthly drop-in event (on the first Saturday of every month) is a space for children with sensory needs to relax and create. We provide the art supplies and a calm, quiet space. Ages 6+, parents/guardians will need to stay with your children.

OFF THE SHELF

NEW BOOKS AND NEWS

New adult fiction

Summer in the City
by Alex Aster

Twenty-seven-year-old screenwriter Elle has the chance of a lifetime to write a big-budget movie set in New York City. The only problem? She's had writer's block for months, and her screenplay is due at the end of the summer. In a desperate attempt at inspiration, Elle ends up back in the city she swore she would never return to, in an apartment she could never afford, all good until she realizes her new neighbor is tech "Billionaire Bachelor" Parker Warren, her stairwell hookup from two years ago. It's been a lovers-to-enemies situation ever since. When seeing him again turns into a full night of hate-fueled writing, Elle realizes her enemy/twisted muse might just be the key to finishing her screenplay... if she can stand being around her polar opposite.

Isabella Nagg and the Pot of Basil
by Oliver Darkshire

In a tiny farm on the edge of the miserable village of East Grasby, Isabella Nagg is trying to get on with her tiny, miserable existence. Dividing her time between tolerating her feckless husband, caring for the farm's strange animals, cooking up "scrunge," and crooning over her treasured pot of basil, Isabella can't help but think that there might be something more to life. When Mr. Nagg returns home with a spell book purloined from the local wizard, she thinks: what harm could a little magic do?

The Dark Maestro
by Brendan Slocumb

Curtis Wilson is a cello prodigy, growing up in the Southeast D.C. projects with a drug dealer for a father. But through deter-

mination and talent, he rises to unimagined heights in the classical music world—even soloing with the New York Philharmonic. And then, suddenly, his life disintegrates. His father, Zippy, turns state's evidence, implicating his old bosses. Now they all must enter the witness protection program if they want to survive. This means Curtis must give up the very thing he loves the most: sharing his extraordinary music with the world. When Zippy's bosses prove too elusive for law enforcement, Curtis, Zippy, and Larissa realize that their only chance of survival is to take on the criminals themselves.

The following Large Print books were donated by Brenda Whittaker

The Retirement Plan
by Sue Hincenbergs,
donated in memory of Meryl Sawyer

After their husbands make an investment that goes terribly wrong, four women devise a new plan— one that involves their husbands 7-figure life insurance policies and a hitman.

Shelterwood by Lisa Wingate, donated in memory of Maxine Sawyer

In 1990, a law enforcement ranger investigates the discovery of the bodies of three children. While in 1909 a young girl flees her abusive stepfather and starts a small community of other children she names Shelterwood.

The Missing Half by Ashley Flowers, donated in memory of Doris S. Whittaker

Two women band together to

DID YOU KNOW?

On Wed. June 4th, Meg Tamulonis, curator of the Vermont Queer Archives, explores how artifacts reflect key milestones in queer history, addresses gaps in representation and discusses ways to continue preserving Vermont's diverse stories. 6 p.m. at the library, light refreshments provided.

solve the disappearance of their sisters several years before.

Previously featured in regular print

The Maid's Secret by Nita Prose, donated in memory of Maxine Sawyer

My Name is Emilia Del Valle by Isabel Allende, donated in memory of Meryl Sawyer

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.

May 19

- Completed a VIN verification requested on Wood Lane.
- Responded to an abandoned vehicle by the intersection of McConnell Road and Paint Works Road. Officers ultimately towed the vehicle after not being able to reach the owner.

May 20

- Responded to an abandoned vehicle on West Seminary Street. Officers were able to locate the owner, who retrieved the vehicle.
- Received a complaint of a larceny of a truck and cattle trailer on East Seminary Street. The vehicle and trailer were later located in Bristol.
- Received a report of a break-in to a vehicle on Champlain Street. The incident is un-

- der investigation.
- Received a report of a hit and run vehicle crash in which a driver backed into a shed at the Junction Store & Deli on Forest Dale Road. Incident under investigation.
- Vehicle stop on Park Street for failure to stop at a red light. Warning issued.

May 21

- Responded to a domestic disturbance on North Street between a mother and son. The son left prior to the arrival of the responding officers. No crime was determined to have been committed and the complainant was advised as to her legal options moving forward.

May 22

- Opened a background investigation into an applicant for a part-time officer at the BPD.
- Conducted traffic enforcement on Grove Street at the intersection of Arnold District Road. No violations were observed.
- Responded to a mental health call on Franklin Street in which a man standing in front of the Brandon Fire Station was (See Police report, Page 20)

Yard Sale?

Advertise it in the Reporter!

Call 247-8080 for details.

ARIES March 21-April 20

This week you might feel a surge of energy, Aries. It's a good time to get moving on a long-term project or any passion projects that you may have been avoiding.

TAURUS April 21-May 21

Taurus, this week is all about finding balance. You may be torn between your career and personal life, but don't forget to set aside time for yourself.

GEMINI May 22-June 21

Gemini, your creativity is at an all-time high, so use this week to explore new hobbies or start a creative project that excites you. You can be creative at work as well.

CANCER June 22-July 22

This is a week you may feel pulled toward home and family, Cancer. It's a time for reorganizing your space or even simply enjoying quiet moments however you choose.

LEO July 23-Aug. 23

Leo, your communication skills will be on display this week. It's a great time to express your ideas and connect with other people. Start that conversation.

VIRGO Aug. 24-Sept. 22

Pay attention to your budgeting and spending this week, Virgo. There may be opportunities to invest your money in a wiser way. Finances will be on your mind a lot.

LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 23

Libra, you may feel like the spotlight is on you right now. Either at work or in social settings, your leadership abilities will be put to the test and on display.

SCORPIO Oct. 24-Nov. 22

This might be a week that calls for introspection, Scorpio. Although you might feel like retreating, don't close yourself off entirely from others for too long.

SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23-Dec. 21

Connections with friends and groups will be front and center this week, Sagittarius. You might receive an unexpected invitation and make new friends who share your interests.

CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 20

Capricorn, you should prioritize your professional goals over the next few days. Might there be something you can do to land a promotion or step into a leadership role?

AQUARIUS Jan. 21-Feb. 18

This week may present opportunities for learning, exploring or even travel. A spontaneous trip might be just what you need to recharge and reflect on yourself, Aquarius.

PISCES Feb. 19-March 20

It's time to put some effort into making deeper connections and fostering your relationships, Pisces. That requires spending a little more time with the people around you.

FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

May 30 Agnes Varda, filmmaker (d)
May 31 Kenny Lofton, baseball player (58)
June 1 Brandi Carlyle, singer-songwriter (45)
June 2 Edward Elgar, composer (d)
June 3 Anderson Cooper, news anchor (58)
June 4 Alexei Navalny, anti-corruption activist (d)
June 5 Laurie Anderson, artist (78)

WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

It took a different research strategy to open up the ancestry of Alex's father, Alex Murkery, born circa 1822, in Clinton County, New York. He first shows up as a coal stocker in Saranac New York's 1850 census. Alex Murkery Sr. enlisted to fight in the Civil War but soon died from smallpox in the Plattsburgh barracks. His wife Saphronie died a few years later, leaving three children as orphans. Their uncle-by-marriage was appointed guardian, which came with a Civil War widow's pension of \$6.00 a month to



FOUNTAIN GRAVESTONE.

[illegible]

FOUNTAIN, HARTFORD, VT 1900 census.

Henry Bostley	72	1			Canadian Cat
Barrie	27	10		Acorn	
Antoin	51	10		Black Moll	
Andrew & Louise	28	10		Green	

PAWLET 1850 CENSUS.

Name	Rank	Cat.	Age	Duty Station	Religious	Marital Status	Occupation	Remarks
Nickolas Franklin	S	M	60	/			Town Laborer	
F. Franklin	S	M	17	/	None		Town Laborer	

1880 PITTSFORD, KOSKA.

With no birth or baptismal record for the Civil War soldier, I needed to cast a wide net. My hypothesis was that a man named Peter Mercury, a head of household in Plattsburg's 1820 census, was his father. From census categories through 1840 [that did not list names], it indicated that Peter had at least two other sons. Speculating that neighbors Peter Murcrae Jr. and Lewis McRae were the Civil War sol-

dier's brothers was indeed a leap of faith. Peter and Lewis's descendants, who posted trees on Ancestry.com, believed they were Scottish. My persistence with these families eventually paid off when DNA evidence irrefutably proved that the three men were brothers, descended from François Mercure, an 18th century immigrant from France, the sole progenitor of all French-Canadian Mercures.

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*Subject to availability and delivery



Northern lights dazzle over Fern Lake

RENEE KING SENT us this amazing shot of the Aurora Borealis, also known as the Northern Lights, over Fern Lake. Thanks, Renee, for sharing this and for having the patience to stay up to capture something so beautiful and elusive.

Police report

(Continued from Page 18)

allegedly making comments about committing self-harm and was asking for EMS. Upon police arrival on-scene, the individual in question denied all resources and did not wish to speak with anyone.

- Received a complaint of an individual who had allegedly taken a coat from her former boyfriend, with a set of keys in the pocket, from a residence on Carver Street.
- Received a complaint of a violation of a court order/conditions of release. It was later determined that the incident occurred in Poultney, not in Brandon.

May 23

- Received a report of a child custody issue. The complainant was advised to contact the Family Court regarding the possible violation of the family’s visitation order.
- Conducted a welfare check on an individual on Pearl Street who was reportedly having suicidal ideations. The subject was later located safe and sound with a family member.
- Received a report of an Amazon delivery person getting bitten by a dog while delivering a package on Quenneville Drive. The matter was referred to the Brandon Animal Control Officer and town health officer for further investigation.
- Received a report of a building alarm at the Neshobe

Elementary School.

May 25

- Received a 911 hang-up call from Green Mountain Market on Grove Street. It was determined that the call was made accidentally by an employee and that no police response was necessary.
- Received a complaint on Forest Dale Road regarding the custody of a dog.
- Received an after-hours report of a hit and run vehicle crash on Route 73, possibly in Brandon. No suspect vehicle information was available from the complainant and no injuries were reported. The incident was documented for insurance purposes.

‘Underworld’ to screen with live music at Brandon Town Hall on Saturday, June 7

BRANDON—‘Underworld’ (1927), a silent drama that spurred a boom in ‘gangster’ movies, will be screened with live music on Saturday, June 7 at 7 p.m. at the Brandon Town Hall and Community Center, Route 7, in Brandon, Vt.

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

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

‘Underworld,’ directed by Josef von Sternberg and starring George Bancroft, is notable for

being the first major motion picture to portray a criminal in a sympathetic light instead of as a villain. Its popularity touched off a Prohibition-era boom in Hollywood gangster pictures that reached its peak following the stock market crash of 1929.

The story of ‘Underworld’ follows gangster Bull Weed (George Bancroft), who becomes entangled in a love triangle involving a reformed drunkard, “Rolls Royce” (Clive Brook) whom he takes on as his right-hand man, and Bull’s girlfriend “Feathers” (Evelyn Brent). Bull Weed’s imprisonment leads to a dramatic climax.

(See ‘Underworld’ Page 31)

Vermont's Summer Free Fishing Day is Saturday, June 14

Grand Isle Family Fishing Festival, Bass Opener both on Free Fishing Day

MONTPELIER—Vermont's annual, statewide Summer Free Fishing Day is Saturday, June 14 this year, and it will be highlighted by a free family fishing festival in Grand Isle as well as opening day of the state's regular bass fishing season.

"Vermont's Free Fishing Day gives resident and nonresident anglers the opportunity to go fishing without a license for the day in Vermont lakes and streams," said Fish and Wildlife Interim Commissioner Andrea Shortsleeve. "Free Fishing Day is a great opportunity for an experienced angler to be a mentor to friends who have not gone fishing before. A day on the water could lead to a lifetime of great experiences and healthy local food."

Free Fishing Day in Vermont also will be celebrated at the "Grand Isle Family Fishing Festival," to be held at the Ed Weed Fish Culture Station at 14 Bell Hill Road in Grand Isle. The festival will run from 9:00

a.m. to 3:00 p.m.

Designed for young or novice anglers and families, this exciting event offers a variety of activities to participate in -- including basic fishing instruction, fish biology and ID, crafts and lure making, and more. It also includes a chance for participants to catch big trout in a hatchery pond. No prior fishing experience is needed, and Vermont Fish and Wildlife will be supplying fishing rods, reels and bait for use by participants.

Vermont's regular bass season also opens on June 14, marking the start of some of the hottest bass fishing action in the northeast. The season opens each year on the second Saturday in June and extends through the last day of November.

To learn more about fishing in Vermont or to purchase a fishing license, visit the Vermont Fish and Wildlife website.

The bill now heads back to the House, which is expected to call for a conference committee to work out its differences

Vermont Senate passes landmark education bill after days of debate and uncertainty

BY SHAUN ROBINSON/
VTDIGGER

MONTPELIER—The Vermont Senate voted on Friday evening to approve its version of this year's landmark education reform bill, H.454. The decision came just before 6:30 p.m., after hours of discussion on the floor and days of debate in committee hearings and a number of other meetings behind the scenes this week in the Statehouse.

The Senate's bill largely mirrors the version that the House passed last month, though with

some changes that senators indicated may need to be worked out in a committee of conference in the coming days. The vote was not unanimous, but it was taken by voice, so individual senators' votes weren't on the record.

It wasn't certain, even at the start of the day on Friday, whether Senate leadership had enough votes to get a bill over the line. At a tense meeting earlier this week of the Senate Democratic caucus, it became clear support had faltered for (See Education bill, Page 22)

Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 11)

Mr. Hopkins pointed out that the town had already opted to change its development threshold for Act 250 review from 1 acre to 10 acres, meaning that development in denser neighborhoods would already be exempt from Act 250 review in most of the neighborhoods to be designated Tier 1B.

PUBLIC INFORMATION FOR APPROPRIATIONS

The Board discussed but did not act on a request from Board member Ralph Ethier to publish the financial reports submitted to the Town Clerk by organizations seeking appropriations from taxpayers at Town Meeting in March.

The change had been proposed by a citizen at a previous meeting and Mr. Ethier had thought it was "a good idea."

Currently, organizations that seek appropriations must submit financial records to the Town Clerk. Those records are available for examination by the public at the Town Office but are not actively made public by the town.

The Board discussed the cost of including all of that information in the annual Town Report, the cost of which the town now bears on its own, since RNESU and the Fire District have decided to publish their own annual reports.

It was suggested that the financial reports be posted on the town website so voters can determine for themselves whether the organizations need Brandon's tax dollars.

Mr. Hopkins also noted that this might be a good opportunity for the Board to review its overall approach to the Town Report going forward.

POLICE CRUISER

The Board unanimously approved the purchase of a Dodge Charger AWD to replace the 2015 cruiser that was just sold. The cruiser was chosen from among 11 sealed bids and will cost \$62,436, including delivery and police-specific fixtures (e.g., lights, partitions, etc.).

The winning bid came from Utilitac in Ridgeway, Pa.

Mr. Hopkins said that Chief Kachajian and Officer Kelleher had personally tested several of the cars that had been proposed and felt that the Charger was best suited to the department's needs.

Two of the proposed cars were fully electric and one was hybrid. The Brandon Energy Committee had prepared material for the Selectboard in favor of electric vehicles (the Energy

Committee's material is in the Selectboard packet), but the Board deferred to the Chief, with several Board members and attendees stating that the police were best positioned to know what was best for the department.

Mr. Hopkins added that though he fully supported the town's Green Fleet policy, which seeks to meet state goals on carbon emissions, "officer safety must take priority." Chief Kachajian and Officer Kelleher did not feel that the other proposed vehicles were large enough to accommodate all the necessary equipment.

ETHICS REPORT

The Board unanimously approved a statement to be appended to its final report on the ethics complaints against Tanner Romano and Laura Miner, both former Trustees of Public Funds.

The statement clarifies that the original complainant, Brent Buehler, did not explicitly accuse Mr. Romano or Ms. Miner of financial conflict of interest. Instead, he maintained that his complaint alleged only that Romano and Miner had a personal conflict.

The report found that a reasonable person could perceive (See Brandon SB, Page 29)

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Education bill

(Continued from Page 21)

a now-defunct version of the bill that had passed out of the chamber's education and tax-writing committees. Meanwhile, school district leaders from across the state had issued missives in recent days panning many of the Senate committees' proposals.

That led Senate President Pro Tempore Phil Baruth, D/P-Chittenden Central, to scrap the chamber's initial version of the bill on the floor Thursday morning. Plans were to take up an amendment to the House's bill Thursday afternoon—and then, when that didn't happen, Thursday night. But it wouldn't be until late Friday afternoon that the slate of changes, spearheaded by Sen. Ruth Hardy, D-Addison, made it onto the floor.

"I will say that we have given Vermonters, and our colleagues in the House, a bit of a show over the last couple of days," Baruth said on the floor Friday after senators passed the bill. He then suggested people had "underestimated" the chamber, but the fact that senators came to a consensus shows people do so "at your peril."

Senators were facing intense pressure from Republican Gov. Phil Scott to pass a bill before adjourning for the year. He had all but demanded it, warning that he would use his powers to call them back for a special session until they came to a consensus. This year's Legislative session is already well into overtime compared to years past.

Both chambers of the Legislature, and the Scott administration, have broadly agreed the state should transition to a new "foundation" education funding formula and move toward consolidating school districts. But they have disagreed over the details and the timeline. A foundation formula, the most common type of education funding system across the country, provides districts a set amount of money per student in each district and how expensive those students are to teach.

The legislation senators approved Friday maintains much of the form of the House's bill, including the overall timeframe for lawmakers' proposed education transformation. Like the House bill, it lays out a four-year transition, with both new school districts and a new foundation funding formula taking effect at the same time on July 1, 2029. The Senate-passed language would also, like the House version, empower a task

force made up largely of experts and representatives of different public school constituencies to create three school district consolidation maps for legislators to consider next year.

Before the bill's final approval, senators from two other parties had their say. Sen. Tanya Vyhovsky, P/D-Chittenden Central, proposed two changes to the bill that did not pass. Then, Senate Minority Leader Scott Beck, R-Caledonia, offered up two additional amendments—one he later withdrew, and the other of which was voted down.

Part of Beck's goal, he said on the floor, was to address concerns of people who live in school districts that currently spend relatively less per student to fund their schools and that, under the bill's proposed new funding formula, would see their taxes increase significantly—as much as 30% or more for some districts in one estimate.

Those districts would also, under the bill's proposed formula, receive significantly more money than they currently spend per student. While voters would be able to choose to pay a higher tax rate to spend more on their schools, as the proposal is currently structured, they could not vote to lower their tax rate by spending less than the base amount set statewide.

Sen. Ann Cummings, D-Washington, who chairs the chamber's finance committee, responded to Beck and other similar comments from other GOP senators. She said that she shared their concerns, but that it was not possible to fully understand the proposal's tax rate implications until new school district boundaries are drawn up and approved by the Legislature next year, the schedule proposed in the bill.

"We're aware that there are going to be problems we need to solve. But we don't need to solve them tonight in order for this process to go forward," Cummings told her colleagues. "To do it now, is premature."

Both chambers' proposals set new average class size minimums, though the Senate's proposal would have lower average numbers of students per class. For example, the House bill suggests minimums of 12 students for kindergarten and 15 students for grades one through four, while the Senate's bill sets the standards at 10 students for kindergarten and 1st grade and 12 students for 2nd through 5th grade. The

Senate bill would also give the state secretary of education greater discretion over the enforcement of the class size standards.

Senators also set a maximum size allowed for proposed new, consolidated school districts to 8,000 pre-k through 12th-grade students, compared to a 4,000 student minimum in the House version of the bill. The Senate bill also nixed a requirement for a uniform school calendar across the state.

Some parts of the bill senators passed Friday appear to be designed to appease Democratic senators who represent towns in school districts that currently pay tuition to send students to independent schools for some, or all, grades. Specifically, the bill added back certain measures first crafted in the Senate Education Committee, which is chaired by Sen. Seth Bongartz, D-Bennington, who served for 19 years on the board of Burr and Burton Academy, a historic independent school in Manchester. He stepped off the board in 2020.

For one, the Senate version now requires the task force that will develop new school district boundaries to include at least one option that maintains the current supervisory union and supervisory district structure, which would support historic tuitioning arrangements with independent schools. It also broadens the group of independent schools that would be eligible to receive tuition under the new system.

In the House version, an eligible independent school would be one with a student body that was at least 51% public school students in 2024, while Hardy lowered the threshold to 40% in her initial proposal. The standard ultimately approved by the Senate allowed schools with 25% or more public school students in the 2023 school year to participate.

After approving the bill, the Senate voted to immediately send its proposal over to the House for that chamber's consideration. As of Friday night, plans were for the House to take up the bill Tuesday and call for a conference committee that same day, according to Conor Kennedy, chief of staff to House Speaker Jill Krowinski, D-Burlington.

Kristen Fountain contributed reporting.



REP. ALYSSA BLACK, D-Essex, fourth from left, speaks with Rep. Larry Labor, R-Morgan, sixth from left, at a huddle at the Speaker of the House's podium during debate on a prescription pricing bill at the Statehouse in Montpelier on Friday, May 23.

Photo by Glenn Russell/VTDigger

Vermont hospitals are charging more than five times the average sales price for outpatient drugs—the highest markup in the nation by a wide margin. Lawmakers are seeking to cap those prices

'How is this not price-gouging?': Hospital drug markups spark legislation, anger

BY PETER D'AURIA/VTDIGGER

Last year, Andy Kehler, a co-owner of Jasper Hill Farm, was looking to renew his employees' health insurance plans.

The first quote the Greensboro-based cheesemaker received—for an "apples to apples" renewal of the plans, Kehler said in an interview—would have cost 74% more than the 2024 plans. For a company with flat sales, now facing the threat of tariffs on its sales to Canada, the increase was high unaffordable, he said.

"We ended up scrambling to get an only 44% increase," Kehler said. "That's just ridiculous. It's completely unsustainable."

One big factor driving that price tag up: drugs. Jasper Hill is paying tens of thousands of dollars—a significant chunk of its roughly \$300,000 annual health care costs—for pharmaceuticals to treat an employee's autoimmune condition, Kehler said.

The company is grappling with one of the state's dubious distinctions. According to data from 2020 through 2022 compiled by RAND, a national policy think tank, Vermont has the nation's highest prices for outpatient pharmaceuticals, by a wide margin.

In Vermont, the average prices of outpatient pharmaceutical drugs—meaning, drugs administered to patients without admitting them to hospitals—are more than five times the manufacturers' average sale prices, according to RAND. That's the highest average markup out of all 50 states.

Over the past several weeks, as lawmakers seek to rein in skyrocketing health care costs, that statistic has sparked criticism—and a legislative effort to cap those prices.

"I can't move beyond the immorality of this," Rep. Alyssa Black, D-Essex, the chair of the Vermont House Committee on Health Care, told a hospital lobbyist Tuesday.

"How is this not price-gouging?" she added.

LOW FEDERAL PAYOUTS

Outpatient pharmaceutical drugs are generally administered via in-
(See Drug markups, Page 26)

Jim Leary

(Continued from Page 1)

Burlington marathon. In fact, though he'd never run a marathon before at all, he managed to finish in roughly 3.5 hours, a very respectable time for even experienced marathoners.

"I was a lot younger and lighter then," Leary joked in his law office in downtown Brandon.

His best time is 3:26 (the record for men is 2:17, for comparison). For many years, he remained in that 3.5-hour range, though in late middle age (he'll be 64 in August), the demands of the race have begun to take a physical toll.

"In 2022, it was the first full marathon since COVID, and I started cramping up around mile 19," he recalled. "Every muscle in both legs wanted to explode. I had to walk the last miles of the route."

"As long as it's still fun, I'll keep doing it."
—Jim Leary

That painful experience didn't put Leary off the race, though. He's been back at it every year since.

On Sunday, he finished in a little more than 5 hours.

"I had a good pace and felt great until around mile 18," he said afterwards. "Then my legs ran out of juice and the final 8 miles were a grind. Been there before... so I kept chugging along to the finish."

He's worn the same bib—#62—since 1989. One year, there was a sign directing "elite runners" with

that speed up and the top runners started passing me.

But I can honestly say for a brief period I was winning the race."

In addition to the bib, Leary maintains several other traditions. Every Memorial Day weekend is given over to the marathon in the Leary household, with a huge spaghetti dinner the night before. Leary's wife, Nancy, and their children, Jennifer and Carson, travel up to Burlington to cheer him on from the sidelines, often with other



JIM LEARY WITH his children (l to r) Carson, Sarah, and Jennifer after the marathon in 1998.



JIM LEARY IN 1990, his second year in the marathon.



LEARY WITH HIS daughter Jennifer in 2017. The Leary family has always rallied around Jim for marathon weekend. Family traditions include spaghetti the night before and always parking in the same spot in Burlington.

friends and family members.

"I know when I pass the brewery on Pine Street, they'll be out on the patio," Leary teased. "My wife and brother will ride bikes and follow along the route."

Nancy ran the marathon with her husband just once, in 2010, the year after their daughter Sarah passed away at the age of 16.

"I was inspired by Jim," Nancy said. "It's always been a family thing. We always have the same meal the night before and park in the same spot up in Burlington. The kids have always come up to cheer him on, even know that they're grown."

During the rest of the year, Leary stays in shape with hikes and bike rides—he still doesn't see himself as a runner.

"I just keep heading toward the finish line," he said. "I know eventually I'll get there."

At this point, with only one other runner sharing the distinction of having run every Burlington marathon, keeping the streak going motivates Leary to show up every year.

"It's a club that can only diminish," he said.

He may walk a bit stiffly for a few days afterwards, but he's still enjoying the experience, especially as a family activity.

"As long as it's still fun, I'll keep doing it."

bib numbers lower than 100 to mass together at the starting line.

"I wasn't really an elite runner, but I used my bib number to join the group," Leary laughed. "I took off like a rocket for the first 100 yards. I couldn't keep

Golf Course

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.
Follow us on Facebook for updates and daily specials

.....

The golf course is now open for the season!!

Simulator hours:
Wed–Fri 10–8, Sat 10–4, Sun 10–2
Price:
\$34/hour except Wed–Fri 10–4 is \$25/hr

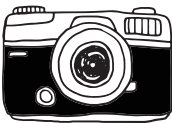
<https://neshobe.com> • (802) 247-3611



Mim's Photos

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

E-mail
kate@brandonreporter.com
if you can identify someone
in these photos.
Or call us at 247-8080



Recognized



Bud Coolidge, Terry Ferson, Kurt Kimball, Marcia King, Ellen Knapp, Dennis Marden, and Sue Wetmore recognized Robert Ripley in this photo. Ms. Knapp noted, "The photo may have been taken at the A&P when he worked at the deli during the summer and weekends."



Terry Ferson, Kurt Kimball, Marcia King, Ellen Knapp, and Sue Wetmore recognized Arlyn Phillips (left), of Brandon, in this photo. [His daughter, Stacey Coburn (Phillips) was recognized in Mim's on May 14.] On the right is Robert (Bob) Ripley, who was a teacher at Otter Valley for many years. According to Mr. Kimball, Mr. Ripley was his history teacher in 1977, while Ms. Wetmore told us he was her geography teacher. After retiring, Mr. Ripley worked in the kitchen at Neshobe School and drove a school bus. Ms. Knapp noted that the photo "was taken at the Brandon Fire Station with Jaws of Life Equipment—newly purchased for the department—early 80s."

Crossword

CLUES ACROSS

- 1. McCarthy acolyte Roy
- 5. Ancient Korean chiefdoms
- 10. Not soft
- 14. Jai ___, sport
- 15. Philosophy
- 16. Do what you're told
- 17. Gaffe
- 18. Widely known and esteemed
- 19. Amusement park attraction
- 20. Popular comic strip Viking
- 22. Usually has a lid
- 23. American sportscaster
- 24. Lung fibrosis
- 27. General's assistant (abbr.)
- 30. Pouch
- 31. Upset
- 32. Partner to hem
- 35. Astronomy unit of distance
- 37. Witch
- 38. Gradually disappear
- 39. Regions
- 40. Possesses
- 41. Body parts
- 42. A way to comprehend
- 43. Defraud
- 44. Sandwich type
- 45. Expression of disappointment
- 46. Popular Dodge truck model
- 47. The 17th letter of the Greek alphabet
- 48. Soviet Socialist Republic
- 49. Songs to a beloved
- 52. Custom
- 55. Partner to cheese
- 56. West Indies trees
- 60. Member of a Semitic people
- 61. Plant that originated vegetatively
- 63. Squandered one's money
- 64. Ethiopian river
- 65. Excessive fluid accumulation in tissues
- 66. Acquire by one's efforts
- 67. Irish goddess
- 68. Hungarian village
- 69. Cereal grasses

CLUES DOWN

- 1. Currency
- 2. Ceramic jar
- 3. Reagan's Secretary of State
- 4. God worshipped in Kanesh
- 5. One thousand cubic feet (abbr.)
- 6. Semitic
- 7. About blood
- 8. Benign tumors
- 9. Move one's head
- 10. Hours (Spanish)
- 11. Hebrew calendar month
- 12. Advise someone
- 13. Colors clothes
- 21. The sun does it
- 23. Concealed
- 25. City of Angels hoops team (abbr.)
- 26. Droop
- 27. Away from one another
- 28. Challenges
- 29. A harsh scraping sound
- 32. Attaches to a wall
- 33. Capital of Ethiopia: ___ Ababa
- 34. German river
- 36. Disappointed
- 37. Star Wars character Solo
- 38. Supervises flying
- 40. Not mass-produced
- 41. Nonsense
- 43. Automobile
- 44. Hogshead (abbr.)
- 46. Soak in water
- 47. Flower cluster
- 49. Romanian city
- 50. A parent is often one
- 51. Fencing sword
- 52. Body part
- 53. Region
- 54. Farm building
- 57. Ali's surname at birth
- 58. Waxy bird beak covering
- 59. Stiff bristles
- 61. VCR button
- 62. Small amount

1	2	3	4		5	6	7	8	9		10	11	12	13
14					15						16			
17					18						19			
20				21		22				23				
			24		25				26					
27	28	29		30				31				32	33	34
35			36				37				38			
39						40				41				
42					43				44					
45				46				47				48		
			49					50			51			
52	53	54				55				56		57	58	59
60						61				62		63		
64						65					66			
67						68					69			

Sudoku

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

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

Level: Intermediate

PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

S	E	A	R		D	E	R	E	C		U	N	V	D
N	R	V	E		V	W	E	D	E		I	R	E	N
W	E	T	R		I	E	W	V	H		B	V	A	V
V	C	O	V	A		O	V	W		L	I	B	V	H
				S	E	D	V	N	E	R	E	S		
H	S	S		O	H	H		W	V	H		X	S	L
E	I	G	V	O	H		N	O	C		D	V	E	R
S	O	N	V	H		S	V	H		S	V	E	R	V
E	D	V	F		G	V	H		C	E	S	R	V	P
W	V	H		D	V	W		O	V	S		C	D	V
			S	I	S	O	C	I	T	I	S			
H	E	B	V	H		N	I	B		H	V	G	V	H
E	O	I	H		O	E	W	V	J		d	I	T	S
A	E	B	O		O	D	E	R	C		I	V	T	V
D	R	V	H		N	V	H	V	W		N	H	O	C

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

June is Adopt-a-Cat Month

Each June, shelters across the country, including the Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS), see a rise in cats and kittens needing homes. Adopt-a-Cat Month is a time to highlight the value of feline companionship and the importance of adoption. Cats make excellent indoor pets as they are independent, affectionate, and well-suited for small spaces. Whether you're looking for a playful kitten, a calm adult, or don't forget about the loving senior, there's a cat for every lifestyle. Adopting not only saves lives but also opens shelter space for others in need. Before bringing home a cat, consider the lifelong commitment of daily care, regular vet visits, and proper enrichment. If you have other pets, introduce them slowly and patiently. RCHS has many cats waiting for loving homes. Visit us Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m., or browse available cats at rchsvt.org. This June, open your heart to a cat in need. A little love can go a long way.

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



MEET YOSHI *BONDED WITH TIGGER - 2-YEAR-OLD. SPAYED

FEMALE. DOMESTIC SHORTHAIR. TIGER WITH WHITE. Yoshi came to us with her buddy, Tigger, and we feel that they need to find a home together. Yoshi is very sweet and will happily greet you at the door with a warm hello! She gets along with other cats, but we don't have a history of how she would do with dogs or kids. If you have a hole in your heart big enough for two, come meet Yoshi and Tigger! The Adoption Center is open Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.

MEET TIGGER *BONDED WITH YOSHI - 2-YEAR-OLD. NEUTERED

MALE. DOMESTIC SHORTHAIR. BUFF. This sweet boy loves to love! Tigger came to us with his buddy, Yoshi. They will need to find a forever home together. Tigger is very sweet and a bit more reserved than his pal, Yoshi. He gets along with other cats, but we don't know how he would do with dogs or kids. If you have a hole in your heart big enough for two, come meet Yoshi and Tigger! The Adoption Center is open Tuesday-Saturday 11 a.m.-4 p.m.



RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

802-483-6700 • WWW.RCHSVT.ORG
765 STEVENS RD. • PITTSFORD



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

Drug markups

(Continued from Page 22)
jection or infusion in hospitals or clinics, rather than dispensed by a pharmacy. These are generally specialty drugs used to treat cancer, Crohn's disease, autoimmune disorders or other conditions.

"These tend to be drugs where you have a doctor and a nurse watching you while you're taking the drug to make sure it's working," Sara Teachout, a lobbyist for Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont, said in an interview.

Some hospitals are able to buy some of the drugs in question at a discount under a federal program called 340B. And yet, according to data Teachout presented to lawmakers last week, the markups for some of those drugs are steep.

At the University of Vermont Medical Center, for example, one cancer treatment drug, Neulasta, costs private insurance nearly 70 times the manufacturer's average sales price.

Rep. Daisy Berbeco, D-Winooski, said on the House floor Friday that that markup means Vermonters who need that drug may pay \$95,000 a year for Neulasta—compared with an average sales price of \$1,357 a year.

It's not clear—even to the state's hospital association—why Vermont's drug markups are so large.

"I don't know exactly why we're so high," Devon Green, a lobbyist for the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, said in an interview. She

said that she was not sure hospitals were even aware of the state's disproportionate costs.

But Green said she believes the reason has to do with low payments from the federal government's Medicare and Medicaid programs.

According to data compiled by a hospital consultant for Southwestern Vermont Medical Center, Vermont receives smaller Medicare payments than all other states for a variety of hospital procedures.

"The hospitals in Vermont are the least paid (by Medicare) of any hospitals in any state in the union," James Trimarchi, Southwestern Vermont's planning director, said in an interview Thursday.

The reason for that? "We don't know," Trimarchi said. Medicare calculates reimbursement rates based on numerous factors, including the procedure, type of facility and geographic region. "I hesitate to speculate," he said.

But, he noted, when Medicare reimbursements do not cover the cost of the procedures they help pay for, hospitals must make up the losses elsewhere—such as prices charged to private insurance for commercial drugs.

'I DO FIND IT CRUEL'

Some health care players, however, expressed doubt about that logic.

"There are many reasons that Medicare reimbursements may be low, and I'm not sure that I necessarily agree with the premise," Owen Foster, the chair of the



ANDY AND MATEO Kehler, co-owners of Jasper Hill Farm. The cheesemaker has faced steep hikes in its insurance costs, driven in large part by outpatient drug prices. Photo courtesy of Andy Kehler

Green Mountain Care Board, told lawmakers in the House health care committee Wednesday.

He wondered whether Vermont's hospital leaders are doing all they can to maximize their Medicare reimbursements—and why they weren't dipping into cash reserves rather than hiking prices for drugs.

"I do have to say that I do find it cruel to charge enormous markups on life-saving treatments to patients who are incredibly sick," he said.

On Thursday, Vermont's House health care committee voted unanimously to advance an amendment that would cap those

drug costs at 130% of their average sales price starting July 1, and 120% of their average sales price starting January 2026.

The amendment, part of a larger bill relating to drug pricing, passed out of the House Friday and now heads to the Senate.

Blue Cross Blue Shield of Vermont has said that the proposal could reduce their requested premiums—which are expected to rise by double digit percentages—by four percentage points for individual and small group insurance plans on the health care marketplace, and three percentage points for school health insurance plans.

The Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, however, said the proposed legislation would cause millions of dollars in losses, and would require multiple Vermont hospitals to cut staff or services.

Asked in an interview later that day about the morality of charging large markups on critical pharmaceuticals, Green, the hospital lobbyist, paused for a long time.

"I do not think that it is right," she said finally. "And I think it is an unfortunate byproduct of a very flawed way of paying for health care."

Charlie Murphy - 3 to 7 Weekdays



Spring flowers brighten up downtown Brandon!

THE DOWNTOWN BRANDON Alliance enlisted volunteers to create and distribute flowerpots in downtown Brandon last weekend. The pots are an annual tradition that brightens up the village. Thanks for all your efforts to keep Brandon looking great, DBA!

Photo by Pat van der Heijden

VERMONT BOWLING ALLEYS PRESERVING RETRO FUN WHILE FACING BIZ TRENDS

BY ELIZA WALSH

Eliza Walsh is a reporter with the Community News Service, a University of Vermont journalism internship

Rick Wilbur surveyed each lane at Rutland Bowlerama, marking up a scoresheet as pins crashed, high-fives smacked and kids scurried around decked-out competitors.

It was a mid-April night of bowling in this year's Green Mountain Open Tournament, and Wilbur, who's been around the Rutland alley for over 50 years, was right at home.

His family has been coming to Bowlerama for decades; he's competed as a bowler for close to six. He started teaching his son

Jon the craft of the game when the boy was 10 years old. Twenty-six years later, in 2019, Wilbur watched his son become the first Vermonter and 35th person in the U.S. to bowl a 900 series in open league play, achieving three consecutive perfect games in one set—all at Bowlerama on a Monday night.

As Wilbur meandered his way among the lanes last month, regulars at the bowling alley patted his back and chatted with him while he kept score.

"Being that I've been here so long, it's like a family reunion every weekend," he said.

Owner Chip Forte came into the business shortly after his grandparents started the institution in

1965. Originally a 16-lane bowling house, the facility is now 32 lanes large, many of which still boast the original wood.

Ron Carrara, lifelong Rutland resident, has worked maintenance at Bowlerama since he was a kid and grew up with Forte and his family—Forte's mom being his Boy Scouts den mother.

"It's changed a lot," Carrara said. "In the early '70s this place was packed. Now, we're lucky if we fill 10 or 12 lanes."

Bowling seems to be a dying pastime, with digital technology taking the forefront in family entertainment.

According to industry firm Hansell Group, the U.S. had around 5,800 sanctioned bowling centers

and nearly 120,000 lanes in 2003. By 2019, there were about 4,500 commercial centers with around 95,000 lanes in operation, the group reported.

Increasingly, old bowling alleys nationwide have been converted into facilities offering a host of other games, activities and amenities. And new businesses opening up have focused on sleek, upscale experiences, according to the same report.

But for the few rural bowling centers in Vermont, old school charm and long community ties have been tough to beat. Bowlerama still uses the analog keypads installed in the 1990s, and prior to that the center relied on halogen-lit, handwritten scorecards.

While the regular crowd at Rutland Bowlerama isn't what it used to be, the business had no trouble filling out its lanes for the Green Mountain Open Tournament, which participants traveled hours across New England to attend.

"We have a lot of leagues, we have a lot of competition, we have a lot of fun," Wilbur said.

He is a coach for a local youth league and often helps out with Addison County Special Olympics events.

The varsity bowling team at Fair Haven Union High School plays and practices at Bowlerama as well. The school has been in something of a friendly interstate (See *Vermont bowling*, Page 28)

Brandon Town Manager's report, May 12–23

**FOR AWARENESS
OF THE COMMUNITY**

There are now two vacancies on the trustees of public funds. Due to this change in situation, the Selectboard will keep open its window for applications through 4PM on Thursday, June 5th (submit to town manager via email or in person). Those interested in serving as a trustee of public funds should plan to make themselves available at 6PM on Monday, June 9th to meet individually with the Selectboard. The board may make one or both appointments as early as that evening's Selectboard meeting.

PUBLIC WORKS

Sbardella Slate has begun replacement of the roof on the Town Hall. We have activated the option to re-deck the roof concurrent with the reslating. Sbardella will also rebuild the NW chimney and repoint all four chimneys. This will well and truly button up the Town Hall and will be our generation's contribution to this permanent monument to the value of civic and cultural life in Brandon. We have had a fire extinguisher inspection which revealed that we had insufficient extinguishers in the main auditorium, and that has now been remedied.

Work on the Sanderson Covered Bridge on Pearl Street has been delayed as the contractor awaits delivery of a large beam.

I met with Mr Wade Masure, our loss control consultant from our insurer (PACIF / VLCT) and Chief Kachajian and Officer Kelleher at the Sanderson Covered Bridge on Tuesday. We are on the right track with acceptable protective measures for this structure. I will be working with our State wetland ecologist, our highway department, our insurer, and our police department to bring a workable plan to the Selectboard, with a goal of implementation this warm weather season.

Our Wastewater team met with Adam Gamelin from the Department of Homeland Security on Friday to survey any vulnerabilities we may have in a possible cyber attack.

TOWN FINANCES

Delinquent tax collection update: The Town Treasurer has provided me the FY25 delinquent tax warrant showing \$340,633 in taxes newly delinquent. This represents what remained unpaid on May 15th when the FY25 final tax payment was due. The Town bills about \$9.6M in taxes every year, with most of that paid to the school district and a small part to the fire

district and for appropriations. The portion retained by the Town is \$2.8M (as voted at Town Meeting). The number of taxpayers going to tax sale has been reduced from more than 70 to about 25.

Since July 1, 2024, the Town has collected delinquent taxes (including penalties and interest) amounting to \$1 81,961. Receipts since the attorney's letter of April 3rd are now \$51,676.

STAFFING

Police Chief David Kachajian will be making a conditional offer of employment to a Level 2 certified officer on Tuesday. This officer would be coming to us in a part-time capacity at first.

Highway Chief Jeremy Disorda has a verbal commitment from a well-qualified individual who may be able to start work in our highway department as early as Tuesday.

FOLLOW-UP

Our local emergency management plan updated was approved by the Vermont Department of Emergency Management.

I took part in the planning commission meeting with RRPC on May 13 and the trustees of public funds meeting of May 15. Lisa Peluso will be the planning commissioner on the workgroup that is revising the 2002 Brandon Workbook.

and Jeremy Disorda completed the first of three seasonal Goshen road gradings under our new agreement. The next obligation we have up there is a road grading and a roadside mowing sometime after July 1st.

The 2015 police cruiser that is uninspectable due to rust did well on Municibid, with a leading bid at the time of this writing considerably more than we would have realized by scrapping. I will update the board as to the winning bid figure verbally on Monday night.

Rep. Todd Nielsen paid a visit to the town office and updated Bill and me about current Legislative action. In response to his interest in the topic, I provided him information regarding the State's municipal ethics requirements and the new problem with the state ethics commission unexpectedly suspending municipal services (both advisory opinions and receiving complaints).

Vermont's two health insurers have requested rate increases for 2026 of 1 3.7% for BlueCross and 7.5% for MVP. Needless to say, we will be sticking with MVP.

I had many meetings with residents, town officials, staff, a journalist, and filled a number of requests for information. Queries regarding the Shirley Farr bequest took considerable attention.

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT	
Unrestricted / Unassigned Fund Balance	\$482,043
1% (Local Option) Tax Fund Available / Undesignated	\$487,734
Known Grant Matches Not Yet Designated	UNION STREET (~\$200,000)
Delinquent property taxes	\$741,836 (was \$440,065)
Delinquent wastewater (over 120 days)	\$237,879 (was \$205,465)

The trustees provided me Shirley Farr's will; Sue Gage digitized it, and I placed the page relevant to her bequest to the Town on the Trustees' page of the Town website.

Brian Kilpeck completed Goshen street sweeping

Seth M. Hopkins

Vermont bowling

(Continued from Page 27)

rivalry with Randolph Union High School, and the two teams have duked it out at Bowlerama and elsewhere in recent years.

Randolph is home to Valley Bowl, which holds a similar spirit to Bowlerama—the open game rate is \$5 per hour with \$3 shoe rentals and has been since the place opened in 2006.

The year prior, the town's only bowling center, Rose Bowl, closed after being sold to a New York developer who wanted to open a Family Dollar. Couple Karen and Wayne Warner, avid bowlers, had made a bid to buy the property but

lost out.

So they bought all the bowling alley's lanes and equipment off the old owner, built Valley Bowl on Prince Street and opened in January 2006.

Karen Warner also runs the area's Special Olympics program and has been coaching the Randolph Union bowling team for the past 10 years.

Valley Bowl recently started up a kids-bowl-free promotion, which offers two free games a day to minors all the way through the summer.

"What we try to do is grow a love of the sport," said Warner.

"We certainly see a lot of that come to fruition."

Warner drills balls at the Valley Bowl pro shop, one of the few in-house pro shops in that part of Vermont, and helps with many of the other needs of local bowlers. She's familiar with the folks at Rutland Bowlerama and has crossed paths with them many times while coaching.

"Fair Haven and us were in the finals this year," Warner said. "They ended up coming out on top. They wanted it, and sometimes it's about that want. They're a fun group of kids."

Wilbur and Warner have also

banded together to coach for the regional Senior Classic, a competition where the top 10 Vermont high school seniors go up against the top 10 seniors from New Hampshire.

"We all came together to coach these kids. It was a lot of fun," Warner said.

The two haunts preserve a sense of retro family fun in Vermont. Still, business continues to decline as bowling becomes a less fashionable form of recreation.

"When one of these VT bowling houses closes, it's not good for any of us," said Warner. "It's always good to see those guys, to

talk to them as a resource. Maybe that doesn't happen in other places, but it happens in this town."

Said Wilbur, "Seems like every three months, everything changes."

A retired police officer, Wilbur doesn't let the slump get him down. He still bowls in a league every year from August to April, coming in recreationally with family and friends during the off season. It's even a family tradition to bowl on Christmas Eve.

"It's just fun," Wilbur said. "I think I was put here for this reason."

Brandon SB

(Continued from Page 21)

a personal conflict between Mr. Romano's position on TPF and his role in an organization to which TPF awarded funds. However, the report did not find that Mr. Romano had a financial conflict because of the award. The report did not find any conflicts for Ms. Miner.

Mr. Buehler addressed the Board and objected to any implication that he had alleged financial impropriety. Though Mr. Buehler's original complaints did not specifically allege financial conflict, such accusations were made by others over the course of several public meetings on the topic.

The full report and appended statement are available under News & Notices on the town

website.

The Board did not allow any public comment on the statement, with Board Chair Doug Bailey stating that the Board did not oversee the Trustees and that its role in the situation had come to an end with the release of the report.

All three Trustees (Tanner Romano, Courtney Satz, and Laura Miner) have resigned within the last month in response to harsh criticisms of their approach to the trust that they oversee on behalf of the citizens of Brandon. The Selectboard will now appoint replacements to hold the seats until Town Meeting in March of 2026.

PAVING

The Board unanimously approved a plan to commit

\$160,000 in 1% funds for the resurfacing of Town Farm Road this summer.

Mr. Hopkins had submitted a letter to the Board outlining two proposals for paving for the fiscal year beginning on July 1.

One proposal was for Wheeler Road and would cost \$230,000. The other proposal was for Town Farm Road and would cost \$160,000.

The Board had already committed \$100,000 in 1% funds for paving for the coming fiscal year. The Board committed an additional \$60K from the fund on Monday evening.

Mr. Hopkins stated that there was enough in the 1% fund to cover the \$160K plus the other expenses that the town had already determined would come

from the fund, including \$25K for a truck payment and approximately \$30K for the roof of the Town Hall.

The Town Hall project is currently underway. Mr. Hopkins said that the total cost of the roof would require all of the ARPA funds that had been allocated to it, the ARPA funds that had been returned after the failed solar project last year, the insurance settlement from the roof damage two summers ago,

and the additional money from the 1% fund.

WARRANTS

The Board unanimously approved a warrant in the amount of \$1,590,770.24 to cover its expenses and obligations. This particular warrant included funds to be disbursed as appropriations and an amount to be paid to the school district, making the total significantly higher than usual.

Community Development Report

Bill Moore provided the following Community Development Report:

"The summer programming is heating up with some new and not-new offerings:

- Summer Sojiball will be offered again this year. With a 7-week season that starts in June, girls entering grades 7 - 9 will play home games at Otter Valley. This is a partnership with Pittsford Rec.
- Thanks to another partnership a weekly summer wrestling clinic featuring instructors from the nationally ranked Vermont State University- Castleton program will be on tap at Otter Valley. This is a partnership with the Parents of Wrestling Booster Club. Starts June 17th.
- An outdoor camp with adventure photographer, Josh Hummel, is a first-year offering being held at Estabrook Park July 28 - August 1.
- Still to be announced (Lego Robotics, Branbury Arts Camps, Basketball Camp, Football Camp)

The Brandon Vermont Coed Softball League started their league schedule on May 11th. 8 teams of adults will be playing at Estabrook Park on Sundays through August 24th. This past week was their first week. It had moved to Addison County and has now come back to Brandon. We are excited that adults will be using the field.

On May 25th. in partnership with The Brandon Museum at the Stephen A Douglas Birthplace, we will host a free showing of "Death in the Wilderness: A Love Story" with a Q&A session with filmmaker/historian/professor Dr. Kevin Thornton. Brandon's beautiful flower girl ceremony began at least as early as 1902 and has been an unbroken annual tradition since. The history of the flower girl tradition is told in this award-winning documentary1. May

26th with be the AJemorial Day parade and the flower girl ceremony will be part of that.

The folks at Ex Mortis Management had to cancel their May 31st metal concert BUT Red Clover Ale Co. will be sponsoring Central NY outfit Randy Miritello and the Hop City Hellcats who are an Americana, bluegrass, honkytonk, cosmic country act with excellent songwriting, killer instrumentation, and an energetic drive. Suggested donation of \$10 at the door to benefit the Town Hall. Doors open at 6:30pm."

Mr. Moore advised Mr. Hopkins and he met with VTrans and discovered that the match for the Union Street project would be an 80/20 match that would provide the Town with more funds.

Matt Drake, a resident of Union Street, questioned what the Union Street project consist of. It was noted this would be sidewalk replacement where Segment 6 ended to the railroad tracks and connection to the storm water on both sides of the street. Mr. Drake stated the speeding is bad on Union Street, urged the Board to consider some kind of reminder like the sign that tells how fast they are going and add a camera that could be taken to the Police with photo evidence. In terms of the sidewalk, Brandon is a walkable town if you are in the center. He would suggest a loop that would continue what has been proposed to go to the bottom of the hill. A walking path could be created from Union Street to Maple Street, which would be a benefit to the entire community.

Brent Buehler asked how many participants were in the Witches Walk. Bill Moore thought there were 20 participants. Mr. Buehler also agreed with Mr. Drake about the speed.

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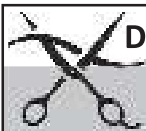
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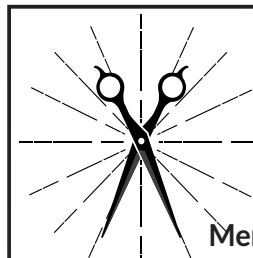
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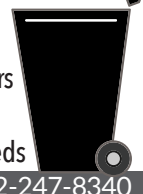
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'Underworld'

(Continued from Page 20)

Bancroft's performance in 'Underworld' set the stage for memorable characterizations of gangster protagonists by Jimmy Cagney ('Public Enemy,' 1931), Paul Muni ('Scarface,' 1932), and Edward G. Robinson ('Little Caesar,' 1930), which all follow directly on from the model created by 'Underworld.'

The film's script, by Chicago newspaperman Ben Hecht, earned an Oscar for Best Screenwriting at the first-ever Academy Awards. The film is also noted for director von Sternberg's innovative use of black-and-white photography, which presaged many film noir techniques in following decades.

Director Von Sternberg was obsessed by light, and developed methods of "painting" his compositions with the arrangements of lamps, scrims, and reflectors on the set. Today he is remembered most for having used that skill in a series of films he made with Marlene Dietrich, starting with 'The Blue Angel' (1930) and continuing in six more star vehicles made

in Hollywood, including 'Morocco' (1930) and 'Shanghai Express' (1932).

'Underworld' will be accompanied by live music by Jeff Rapsis, a New Hampshire-based silent film accompanist.

Using a digital synthesizer to reproduce the texture of the full orchestra, Rapsis will improvise the score on the spot during the screening.

"Films such as 'Underworld' were created to be shown on the big screen and in a theater as a shared experience," Rapsis said. "With an audience and live music, they still come to life in the way their makers intended them to."

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

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

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

Over the years, silent film donations have helped support projects including handicapped access to the 19th century building; renovating the bathrooms; and restoring the structure's original slate roof.

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

- Saturday, July 19, 2025, 7 p.m.: "Grandma's Boy" (1922) starring Harold Lloyd, Mildred Davis. A cowardly young man must learn to conquer his fears before dealing with a larger menace to his community. Riotous small town comedy that helped propel Harold Lloyd into the most popular movie comedian of the 1920s.
- Saturday, Aug. 16, 2025,

7 p.m.: "Manhandled" (1924) starring Gloria Swanson. Up-roarious comedy from silent screen legend Swanson tells the story of a down-on-her-luck salesgirl who climbs the social ladder by pretending to be a Russian countess.

- Saturday, Sept. 20, 2025, 7 p.m.: "Spies" (1928) directed by Fritz Lang. Director Fritz Lang's tale of espionage was the forerunner of all movie spy sagas, packed with double agents, hi-tech gadgets, beautiful (and dangerous) women, and an evil genius with a plan to take over the world, mwah-ha-ha-ha!
- Saturday, Oct. 18, 2025, 7 p.m.: "The Magician" (1926) starring Paul Wegener, Alice Terry, directed by Rex Ingram. Just in time for Halloween: a scientist uses an ancient spell to reanimate a dead body. The secret missing ingredient is, of course, the blood of a virgin,

making it a good bet for all kinds of creepy goings-on.

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

See 'Underworld' (1927) with live music on Saturday, June 7 at 7 p.m. at the Brandon Town Hall and Community Center, Route 7, in Brandon, Vt. All are welcome to this family-friendly event. Admission is free, with free will donations accepted to defray expenses.

For more about the music, visit www.jeffrapsis.com.



Teaching the next generation of gardeners

MILLER HILL FARM in Sudbury ran a workshop called "Cultivating gardening enthusiasm in young sprouts!" for kids at the Brandon Free Public Library. It's never too early to teach children respect for the Earth and the skills to keep a garden healthy.

Photo by Nan Jenks-Jay

Taiko Drummers spend the week at Neshobe!



Photos by Mitchell Pearl and Ethan Nelson

Taiko Drummers of Burlington came to Neshobe School last week for a week-long residency. Students were able to explore the art form of taiko, play the drums, investigate Japanese culture, and learn taiko pieces themselves. Pictures are from the music room at

Neshobe and the closing assembly last Friday, where students performed with taiko sensei Stuart Paton and music teacher Julia Murach. The residency was sponsored by the Brandon Children's Music Fund.



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