

# The REPORTER

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

A community supported newspaper

Vol. 30, No.24

Wednesday, June 18, 2025

\$1



## TASTE OF ITALY

Tomato season is around the corner, and Maclure Cookbook Club member Elizabeth Simpson has you covered with a simple recipe for the classic Italian dish Pappardelle Pomodoro.

PG. 2



## SWIM LESSONS

The competition is heating up as contestants prepare for Brandon's Independence Day Duckie Race.

PG. 3

## GOOSE CHASE

Looking for something different to do this summer? Why not band some Canada geese with VT Fish & Wildlife at the Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area.

PG. 7



## DEVILISHLY GOOD

Brandon's Joey Scarborough won the Sunoco Sportsman Modified for the second time this season at the Devil's Bowl on Sunday.

PG. 9



## MEET YOUR NEIGHBOR

This week's Senior Spotlight introduces devoted family man and avid hunter Bruce Potter.

PG. 14



SEE PAGE 16 for more graduation coverage.

## CONGRATULATIONS, CLASS OF 2025!

## The Brandon Chamber Auction in its 37th year

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—Since 1989, the Brandon Area Chamber of Commerce (BACC) has offered up the beautiful and the bizarre at its annual fundraising auction. Just about to enter its 37th year, the auction has undergone major changes over its lifespan but has remained a cherished event on the Brandon calendar.

"The Chamber didn't have a big fundraiser back then," said Janet Mondlak, who was BACC's executive director from 1992 to 2013. "Nothing was being done to raise money. The auction was Warren Kimble's idea."

"Doug Bailey and I revived the Chamber," recalled Kimble. "There were only 25 members in the mid-80s. We needed to do something to raise money and stir things up. I'd been in the antiques business for years. I thought, let's have an auction."

The first auction, under the supervision of BACC's first exec director Jim Jasmin, was held in 1989 in the bandstand in Central Park.

"We had to have it in the middle of town, where it would be visible," said Kimble.

"People would be driving by on Route 7 and stop," said current BACC Exec Director Bernie Carr, who first got involved with the Chamber back (See Brandon Chamber Auction, Page 28)



FORMER BACC EXEC. Director Jim Jasmin's vintage truck sold for \$4,500 to Jim's own brother in the Brandon Chamber auction several years ago.



## Brandon says 'No Kings'

HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE gathered in Central Park in Brandon on Saturday for a "No Kings" protest against the Trump administration. The protestors object to policies and actions they claim are anti-democracy. Similar protests occurred throughout the United States. See page 8 for more photos.

## Pittsford SB continues push to clean up Fire Hill Road

BY STEVEN JUPITER

PITTSFORD—At its regular meeting on June 4, the Pittsford Selectboard continued its ongoing campaign to force the cleanup of three properties on

Fire Hill Road that have been frustrating the town and adjacent landowners for years.

The three properties are individually owned by three members (See Pittsford SB, Page 11)



# Cookbook Corner with the Maclure Cookbook Club

## An Italian vacation inspires a home cooked meal in Pittsford

BY ELIZABETH SIMPSON

In May, I was lucky enough to travel to the Umbria region of Italy. I hiked and ate some seriously delicious local food.

One evening, I was served what looked like a tomato bread pudding as a starter. It was topped with a local cheese and beautiful green pesto sauce. I'm sharing here a picture of what I ate. And, yes, it was as good as it looked!

The restaurant had reimagined a traditional recipe, Pappa al Pomodoro, which is usually prepared as a tomato-bread soup.

The history of this dish is interesting. Dating perhaps to the 18th century, pappa al pomodoro is an example of "cucina povera" (literally "poor kitchen" but better understood as "rustic cooking") and was a good way to use up stale bread and seasonal vegetables. The recipe was popularized in the novel "Il Giornalino di Gian Burrasca" by Luigi Bertelli.

A film adaptation of the book and a later TV series cemented its reputation as a popular regional offering. There's even a song about it called "Viva la pappa col pomodoro," which you can listen

to while you're cooking!

All pappa al pomodoro recipes include stale bread, tomatoes, and a variety of seasonings. I imagine this recipe could easily be made gluten-free. Use vegan cheese and it's dairy-free. I'm including a recipe from Jamie Oliver to get us all started.

*Pappa Al Pomodoro Soup*  
By Jamie Oliver 5 Ingredients  
(Serves 4)  
4 cloves garlic  
1 bunch of fresh basil (1 oz)  
2 x 14 oz cans of plum tomatoes  
8 1/2 oz stale ciabatta \* or bread of choice  
1 1/2 oz Parmesan cheese

Peel and finely slice the garlic, and place in a large pan on medium heat with 1 tablespoon of olive oil, stirring regularly. Pick the baby basil leaves into a bowl of cold water for later, then pick the rest of the leaves into the pan.

Before the garlic starts to color, add the tomatoes and 2 cans worth of water, season with sea salt and black pepper, and bring to a boil, gently mashing the tomatoes.

Tear in the stale bread, stir, then leave to simmer on a low heat for 5 minutes, or until thick and delicious. Finely grate and stir in the Parmesan, then taste and season to perfection. Dish up, sprinkle on the reserved baby basil leaves, and drizzle each bowlful with 1 tablespoon of good extra virgin olive oil.

Using this recipe as a base, I added more stale bread until the mixture was thick, spooned it into greased muffin tins and baked it at 350 for about 30 minutes, keeping a watchful eye on this first-time endeavor.

The result wasn't as stylish as the dish I encountered in Italy but it brought back memories of a delicious dinner.

*Buona cucina!*



ABOVE IS THE dish, Pappa al Pomodoro, as served in the restaurant in Italy. To the right is the dish as prepared at home by the author.

Photos by Elizabeth Simpson





# Mallory's Automotive saves a very 'lucky' kitten



A CLIENT BROUGHT her car to Mallory's Automotive in Forest Dale, concerned about a "meowing" sound she kept hearing. Chuck Havens was able to pinpoint the source: a kitten hiding in the engine pan, where it had apparently been for several days. Mr. Havens has adopted the cutie, whom he's aptly named Lucky. One lucky kitty indeed!

Photos by Eric Mallory



THOUGH THEY CLAIM to be top athletes, the duckies in the Nifty Thrifty swim class struggled with their lesson and lay exhausted by the pool at the Brandon Inn. Photos by Steven Jupiter

'Believe it or not, some of these ducks can barely swim.'

## Nifty Thrifty sponsors swim lessons for July 4th Duckies

BY STEVEN JUPITER  
AND LAURA PETERSON

BRANDON—Every July, hundreds of rubber duckies from all over the world descend upon Brandon for the Independence Day Duckie Race on the Neshobe River. One of the premier events on the duckie circuit, it draws top duckie athletes and quickly separates the wheat from the chaff.

The course is deceptively smooth at first glance, a lazy brook winding its way behind the Brandon Inn. But there's danger ahead for the duckies, as each contender must make it over the

notorious upper falls in order to reach the finish line.

And though these duckies are among the top avian athletes around, many of them struggle to navigate the falls. Instead, they often spin in circles at the top of the falls, seemingly disoriented by the precipice before them. Some of the duckies never make it over and never complete the course.

"We noticed that a lot of the duckies seem to have trouble getting over the falls," said Laura (See Duckies' swim lessons, Page 15)

## Spotlight On Business THE INN ON PARK STREET



The Inn on Park Street is a grand Victorian. It has been a woman owned/operated business for over 30 years. Barbara Scribner is continuing the tradition. She enjoys being involved with our community, which allows her to connect with new friends. She is a member of the Chamber of

Commerce, VT Covered Bridge Society, board member of The Brandon Artists Guild, and a Nifty Thrifty volunteer. Call for a tour of the Inn!

## Tuesdays Summer Concert Series

JUNE 17 - AUG. 12, 2025  
TUESDAYS @ 6PM  
42 Elm St., Pittsford, VT  
across from Kamuda's



Concerts are outside on the Village Farm grounds. For extreme weather, concert is canceled. Check [PittsfordVillageFarm.org](http://PittsfordVillageFarm.org). This event is free and open to the public. Donations appreciated.

## June 24 — Panhandlers

Vermont's largest steel drum band performs a mix of island favorites and upbeat tunes.

FOOD  
VENDOR  
ON SITE!

[PITTSFORDVILLAGEFARM.ORG](http://PITTSFORDVILLAGEFARM.ORG)



# Vermont's migratory game bird seasons are announced

MONTPELIER—The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department has announced the 2025-2026 migratory game bird hunting season dates and bag limits.

A printable copy of the Migratory Bird Syllabus can be downloaded from the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department's website under "Hunt" — "Waterfowl." A printed version also will be available from license agents and post offices in August.

A statewide Vermont open hunting season for resident Canada geese will occur September 1-25. The daily bag limit is five Canada geese in the Connecticut River Zone and eight in the rest of the state during this September season.

The purpose of the September season is to help control Vermont's resident Canada goose population prior to the arrival of Canada geese migrating south from Canada.

A second Canada goose hunting season for resident

and migrant geese will be held October 11-November 9 in the Lake Champlain and Interior Zones with a daily bag limit of one Canada goose.

In the Connecticut River Zone, the second Canada goose season will be October 13-November 11 and November 27-December 26 with a daily bag limit of two Canada geese.

A late Canada goose season will be held Dec. 1-Jan. 19 in the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones and Dec. 27-Jan. 15 in the Vermont land

of the Connecticut River Zone (does not include Connecticut River waters). The daily bag limit in all three zones will be five Canada geese.

Duck season this fall opens on October 11 in the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones and on October 13 in the Connecticut River Zone. The Lake Champlain Zone has a split season of Oct. 11-Nov. 2 and Nov. 22-Dec. 28. The Interior Vermont Zone has a straight season of Oct. 11 Dec. 9.

Scaup daily bag limits vary by season dates. The Lake Champlain (Oct. 11-Nov. 2 & Nov. 22-Dec. 8) and Interior (Oct. 11-Nov. 19) zones allow the harvest of one scaup daily. The remainder of the season

you are allowed two scaup daily. Within the Connecticut River Zone, you are allowed only one scaup daily for the entire season.

Vermont's youth waterfowl hunting weekend will be September

27 and 28. Resident and non-resident hunters 17 years of age or younger on those dates may hunt ducks and geese within the Lake Champlain and Interior Vermont Zones during this weekend while accompanied by an adult 18 or older. In the Connecticut River Zone, youth must be 15 years of age or younger on those dates. Both adult and youth must have Vermont hunting licenses. The adult may not hunt or carry a firearm. Youth ages 16 and 17 (See *Migratory game*, Page 14)

*In addition to a hunting license, a waterfowl hunter 16 or older must carry a current federal duck stamp and Vermont Migratory Waterfowl tag to hunt waterfowl in Vermont.*



## I might not have a neck, but my voice is mighty

THIS IS A Black-crowned Night Heron that spends daylight hours roosting after hunting during the evening hours. Ms. Wetmore's photos will be on display at the Brandon Free Public Library throughout the month of June.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

## Community Forums

# Enjoy rare access to the private garden of Gordon and Mary Hayward in Putney on Saturday, June 21

Exclusive 'Garden Rooms' educational event follows the day's garden visit.

Garden lovers in Vermont are in for a treat on Saturday, June 21 as Gordon and Mary Hay-

ward's Garden in Putney is open to the public for one day only.

Gordon and Mary have spent 38 years cultivating a distinctive 1.5-acre garden surrounding their 220-year-old farmhouse

in southeastern Vermont. This evolving landscape represents a hybrid of Old England and New England garden styles, drawing inspiration from Gordon's (See *Hayward garden*, Page 6)

# Rutland County Pride Festival will take place on Saturday, June 21

The Rutland County Pride Center is proud to announce its Third Annual Rutland County Pride Festival, taking place on Saturday, June 21, 2025, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Center Street and Merchant's Row in Downtown Rutland City, Vermont.

The festival kicks off with a Juneteenth Strut, co-hosted by

the Rutland Area Branch of the NAACP, in celebration of the intersecting identities of BIPOC and 2SLGBTQIA+ communities. Starting at 11 a.m. at the Rutland Free Library, the Strut proceeds down Center Street, launching the day's festivities.

**FESTIVAL THEME: "DIVERSITY IS RESILIENCE"**

Rooted in this year's pride festival theme, "Diversity is Resilience," the festival honors the strength that emerges from our diverse identities and experiences. It uplifts the vibrant voices and lived experiences of 2SLGBTQIA+ and BIPOC individuals whose presence and power con- (See *Rutland Pride*, Page 7)

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

Graphic design by Sepi Alavi; Kate Saunders, Operations coordinator

Periodicals Postage Paid at Brandon, Vt. 05733

Postmaster, send address change to The Reporter, 58 Maple St., Middlebury, VT 05753 • Phone: 802-388-4944 Email: news@brandonreporter.com, ads@brandonreporter.com

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# Letter to the Editor

## We are protesting this administration, not our neighbors

I had the affirming experience to gather with my fellow townspeople, as well as folks from over the mountain, in Brandon's Central Park on June 14th to protest peacefully that America does not have kings and all that means.

This letter is not to these people though, as much as I enjoyed their presence and kindness. This letter is to the few people who drove by during our two-hour protest of fascism who gave us the middle finger, shook their fists, yelled f\*ck you, and dusted the crowd with exhaust from their vehicles. I am not a writer, but I feel compelled to address this to those of you who expressed yourself on that morning in this way and I know no other way.

We are your neighbors, we the people who you stand in line with at Hannaford or Walgreens, we are the people who stop our cars to let you in a line of traffic, we are the people at the 4th of July parade with you, laughing and enjoying the celebration and cheering on the Swiss Roll Contest participants. We are with you celebrating the birth of our nation, our democracy. We are the

people at church with you, we are the people picking up our kids or grandkids at school. We are the people passing you on the sidewalk and saying "hi, beautiful day." We enjoy the good in this town with you and try to improve what needs improving, just like you. We are the people who you see at the post office, or the liquor store or getting gas or maybe we see one another at your place of business or where you work or where we work.

We are also the people who will assist you if you fall on the sidewalk or if your car gets stuck in the snow or breaks down or if your dog goes missing. We are the people you can come to if you need something, if your child needs something, if your mom needs something. We are your people and you are ours. You are there when I fall, when my car breaks down, we are there circling and intertwined in one another's lives every day in different ways, sharing this sweet town.

Donald Trump will not be there if you need help moving something heavy, or if you need to borrow a tool or if you and your family experience a

medical catastrophe, or if your house burns down. Donald Trump will not be there. We will be there though. We will come together as a community and help.

I want you to rely on me and I want to rely on you—you're part of my community and I am part of yours.

Looking at your neighbors with such hatred and rage isolates you—all in the name of a man who doesn't know you or care about you.

When he's gone, we will still be here. Remember that next time, for there will be a next time. We are not protesting YOU, we are protesting for you, for ourselves, for your children, for our children, for our daughters, for our shared nation. We are protesting for equal protection under the law, for you and me and for everyone. That's the promise of this country we both love.

We are protesting FOR that, not AGAINST you.

We'll still be here, when he's not.

Kate Schirmer-Smith  
Brandon

## Open Letter to Greg Smela

My understanding is that neither Senator Rebecca White (D-Windsor District) nor Mohsen Mahdawi filed a complaint alleging that ICE agents acted outside of their proper protocol (including using unmarked cars or wearing masks). All complaints were about longstanding ICE procedures. That sounds to me like it is political game with scare tactics and an attempt to stoke hatred toward President Donald Trump.

As I wrote before, Mahdawi was arrested because he was one of the leaders in antisemitic protests involving harassment, building occupation, encampments, and calls to wipe Israel off the face of the earth. Do you consider that an acceptable expression of free speech? I don't. The court will decide his role in these antisemitic demonstrations.

It is troubling that what now seems to be an acceptable form of "free speech"—even in the Vermont State House—is silencing others through disruption. That is exactly what happened, and was even supported by legislative majority leaders, on March 12 at the State House. The Vermont Family Alliance had reserved a room to discuss the topic of "de-transitioning."

However, transgender activists entered the space, danced, hollered, and made so much noise that the speaker was unable to present. Even Representative Jubilee McGill promoted the disruption on her Facebook page, posting:

"TRANS TAKEOVER: 3.12.25 TRANS JOY DANCE PARTY 12:30 @ VT STATE HOUSE."

It seems that some Democratic leaders are comfortable with such expressions of "free speech," even when they include throwing pieces of concrete or feces at ICE agents while they are performing their duties, burning cars, blocking traffic, and injuring police officers—as is currently happening in Los Angeles. ICE agents are simply doing their jobs, as they did under the Obama administration and every other administration.

Whether the Trump administration is right to deploy the National Guard is not for me to judge, as I do not know the legal specifics. But I certainly do not agree with these so-called "peaceful protests."

Aida Nielsen  
Brandon

## Democracy is for all of us, immigrants included, that's what our constitution stands for

Mohsen Mahdawi of White River Junction, Vermont, is a legal resident of the United States, entitled to due process under the law. Arresting a person as they walk into an immigration office for what they were told was to be the final step in his citizenship process should horrify anyone who's been saying, "If they want to be here, they need to go through the proper channels." When he did, he was arrested and removed in handcuffs by plainclothes, armed, individuals with their faces covered. (Perhaps this sounds familiar after the political assassination of government representatives in Minnesota this weekend...?) These individuals refused to provide any information about where he was being taken or what would happen to him. This is immoral, inhumane, and illegal.

Rep. Becca Balint herself wrote the following statement: "We need answers and accountability for the illegal kidnappings, disappearances

and intimidation carried out by Noem and the Trump administration. While not surprising, I'm deeply disturbed that Secretary Noem not only takes no responsibility for these illegal kidnappings, she continues to take pride in them. The fear of being ripped off the streets by masked agents when you show up to work or a citizenship appointment does not make our communities safer. I'm relieved that Mr. Mahdawi has been released and was able to graduate college, but his arrest should terrify us all. Under Trump, ICE and DHS have become a means to carry out political arrests and silence those who disagree with his authoritarian agenda. I'll continue to demand accountability and justice for everyone in this country, including Mahmoud Khalil and others still being held unjustly."

His arrest was clearly a violation of his fifth amendment rights as evidenced by the fact that U.S. District Judge Geoffrey Crawford said that

Mahdawi's detention for two weeks, "so far demonstrates great harm to a person who has been charged with no crime." He went on to write in his legal opinion "Legal residents not charged with crimes or misconduct are being arrested and threatened with deportation for stating their views on the political issues of the day." The judge likened this moment to the Red Scare and McCarthy Era.

The U.S. government has not directly accused Mohsen Mahdawi of antisemitism, and it has been unable to offer any evidence that he has engaged in antisemitic speech or behavior. To be clear, advocating for Palestinian human rights is not antisemitism, and frankly, the purposeful conflation of anti-zionism and antisemitism is deeply harmful to Jewish people across the world. Zionism is a settler colonial political ideology and movement that emerged in Europe at the end of the nineteenth century with the aim of establishing a Jew-

ish state in Palestine, at a time when over 90% of the population was not Jewish. It is spectrum of political ideologies that have in common the support for the continued existence of the present day State of Israel as a Jewish state at the expense of the native population of Palestinian. Judaism is a monotheistic religion developed among the ancient Hebrews who believe in one transcendent God who revealed himself to Abraham, and Moses. To conflate a religion with a violent settler colonial project is a method meant to confuse the rejection of a political system with that of a rejection of people who practice Judaism. In other words, an attempt to instill the fear of reasonable backlash of persecuting religious expression with the responsibility of rejecting state backed violence.

The rise of anti-Middle Eastern sentiment and Islamophobia (though let's remember that the first Christians in the world were in fact Palestinian) is incredibly disturbing to me. The

mere fact we need to say, "Hey, let's not fund the killing of civilians even if they are from the Middle East" is certainly chilling. Vermonters, including Mohsen Mahdawi want to fund caring, not killing. In (See *Democracy for all*, Page 26)

## 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





**PATRICK STAPLETON  
BURIAL AND CELEBRATION OF LIFE**

Friends and family are encouraged to attend a celebration of life/Pat-party at 12:30 p.m. on July 2 at 25 Fay Road in Goshen. The graveside committal service is to be held at 12 noon at the Goshen Cemetery.



# Obituaries

## Michael Jon Richardson, 59, Pittsford

Michael Jon Richardson, age 59, of Pittsford, VT, passed away on June 1, 2025. Born in Saugus, MA, February 8th, 1966, he was the youngest of three children. Due to his early health issues, primarily Cerebral Palsy, the family moved to Florida to take advantage of the warm climate and therapeutic ocean waters. The Easter Seal Society was immensely helpful with getting him the needed equipment and therapies that allowed him to attend public schools. He was always doted after for his big smile and red hair!

The family eventually returned to Middlebury, Vt where Michael attended and graduated from Middlebury High School, Class of 1984. While enrolled there he participated in woodworking classes that eventually landed him a job with Middlebury Resource Center where they built



**MICHAEL JON RICHARDSON**

and sold the Adirondack chairs that supported their mission. Michael is survived by his sister Wendy (James) Fortney and his brother Mark Richardson. Nephews Eric (Bre) Meador, Brian

Meador, and a niece Meghan Richardson. He was preceded in death by his parents Brenda (Galusha) Richardson Korpi and Russell Richardson.

The family would like to extend their heartfelt thanks to Patrick and Diane Eugair who provided Michael with a warm and nurturing home, and to his public guardian for her unwavering support and advocacy on Michael's behalf.

Services will be held privately by the family. Those who wish to remember him may consider a donation to the Easter Seal Society, the Special Olympics or another nonprofit dedicated to supporting individuals with disabilities. Also visit Cerebral-Palsy.org.

Arrangements by Miller & Ketcham of Brandon.

## Obituary Guidelines

The Reporter will publish paid obituaries and free notices of passing. Paid obituaries cost 25 cents per word and will be published, as submitted, on the date of the family's choosing. For those who do not wish to purchase an obituary, the Reporter offers a free notice of passing up to 100 words, subject to editing by our news department. Photos (optional) with either paid obituaries or free notices cost \$10 per photo. Obituaries may be emailed to [news@brandonreporter.com](mailto:news@brandonreporter.com). Submissions must be received by 11 a.m. on Monday for publication in the Wednesday paper.

## Hayward garden

*(Continued from Page 4)*  
upbringing on a Connecticut orchard and Mary's roots on a farm in England's Cotswold Hills.

The garden, which was the subject of their 2005 book *The Intimate Garden*, is composed of fourteen distinct garden rooms. Among its features are a pair of 90-foot perennial borders that lead to a post-and-beam gazebo, framing expansive views of 20 acres of meadows. Over 40 planted terra-cotta pots and numerous garden ornaments,

including several imported from England, contribute to the garden's unique atmosphere.

During Open Days, visitors can also explore additional offerings from local artisans. Vermont-based potter Steve Procter will display handcrafted ceramic vessels and sculptural garden art, while Scott Bolotin, a perennial grower, will offer a selection of high-quality perennials and choice shrubs for sale.


The garden will be open from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. for registered guests. Tickets are \$10 per person, or \$5 for members of the Garden Conservancy. Children 12 and under are admitted for free when accompanied by a parent or guardian. All registrations must be processed online through the Garden Conservancy's website. Visit [gardenconservancy.org/opendays](http://gardenconservancy.org/opendays).

After the garden visitations end, join Gordon and Mary Hayward once again for a special 'Digging Deeper' event called Garden Rooms from 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. Gordon and Mary will discuss the universal design principles that informed the creation of

their garden rooms of six varied sizes, designs, and moods, each separate from one another over their acre and a half garden. The goal of this two-hour walkabout is to enable participants to confidently design a garden room in their own gardens that gently fits into the overall garden. Many design principles will inevitably surface during this two-hour design stroll.


Tickets for the Garden Rooms event are \$40 per person, or \$30 for Garden Conservancy members. For more information and tickets, visit [gardenconservancy.org/events](http://gardenconservancy.org/events).

Fueling America's passion for gardens, the Garden Conservancy's Open Days™ program is the only nationwide garden visiting program. In 2025, Open Days marks its 30th year. Over three decades, Open Days has welcomed more than 1.4 million visitors into thousands of inspired private landscapes—from urban rooftops to organic farms, historic estates to suburban sanctuaries—in 41 states.




# BARNARD FUNERAL HOME INC.

3186 U.S. Route 7 Pittsford • [www.barnardfuneralhome.com](http://www.barnardfuneralhome.com)

(802) 483-2811  Christopher Book/Director

For five generations the Barnard family has assisted families in Pittsford, Proctor, Chittenden and the surrounding area getting through one of life's most difficult times.

Also operating the Birch Grove Crematory 



## Community Forums continued

## Tour de Slate: Bike Ride to End Addiction is on August 2nd

The numbers don't lie—Vermont is in the middle of an addiction crisis. These are not just statistics. They represent real people: sons, daughters, parents, friends, neighbors, co-workers. There are so many stories. Everyone knows someone whose life has been impacted. Every number is a cry for help.

In Middletown Springs and throughout the neighboring Slate Valley, we've heard that cry. We believe there is a better way forward: one filled with freedom, transformation, and joy. Our story is about riding bikes to raise money for the recovery of

these people caught in addiction. The eighth annual Tour de Slate, "riding to end addiction," will take place on Saturday, August 2, 2025.

"Tour de Slate changes lives," said event coordinator Stan Achey. "100% of the net proceeds go directly to cover the expenses of men, women and teens ready to turn their lives around and break the chains of addiction at Adult & Teen Challenge Vermont." Achey, an avid road cyclist, was inspired to combine his love for cycling with his desire to support Teen Challenge. Adult and Teen Challenge

Vermont (ATC VT), never turns away anyone due to their financial situation. Since they receive no government funding, fundraising is vital. "God put this on my heart, and I thought 'I've gotta do it,'" said Achey.

Travis Morehouse, a graduate of ATC VT, attests to the program's success. His life, once plagued by addiction, has been restored due to the program's skills and training. "Tour de Slate holds such a special place in my heart. I rode in the first year as a resident in the ATCVT program. I instantly felt like family because not only was the

money being raised to support my stay at ATCVT, but they also allowed me to ride in the event with other riders. I felt so included that I fell in love with every aspect of this event, what it was accomplishing, and the people involved. I have been a part of the ride ever since."

The event will feature six routes to accommodate various cycling levels, including two gravel rides and a family-friendly rails/trails ride. All routes start and end in Middletown Springs and are fully supported with rest stops and SAG (support and gear) vehicles. In its seven years,

the Tour de Slate bicycle ride to "end addiction" has raised an aggregate of almost \$250,000 to support the care, counseling, and educational services for residents at Adult and Teen Challenge Vermont.

Come ride with us. Add your story. Register online at <http://www.tourdeslate.org>, where donations can be made.

You can also mail your donation to Tour de Slate Inc., P.O. Box 1012, Middletown Springs, Vt. 05757. For more information, contact Stan Achey at [info@tourdeslate.org](mailto:info@tourdeslate.org) or call (802) 558-0934.

## Fish &amp; Wildlife seeks volunteers for goose banding

ADDISON—Here's a great opportunity to go on a wild goose chase that can make a difference.

The Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department is asking for volunteers to help in rounding up and placing identification bands on the legs of Canada geese at its Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area off Route 17

in Addison, starting at 8 a.m. on Wednesday, July 2.

"We are hoping to have between 30 and 70 individuals volunteer to help," said Andrew Bouton, state waterfowl biologist. "We request that children be accompanied by adults to help them work with the geese."

Please call the Fish and Wildlife office in Essex at 878-1564

to volunteer and leave your phone number in case the event must be rescheduled due to bad weather.

We will meet at 8 a.m. at the office at the end of the driveway, past the Visitor Center. Please be prompt as we will start on time.

Volunteers should wear appropriate clothes and hiking boots or rubber boots and use adequate

sun protection as there will be little shade. Bring plenty of water and be prepared to walk some in this effort to capture geese for our annual banding efforts that help us track the resident population within Vermont. All geese will be released back into the wild after we collect data.

The Canada geese nesting in Vermont today are the result

of work begun at Dead Creek Wildlife Management Area in the 1950s by the Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department. The geese banded this year will be monitored to gather biological information to help monitor their population.

## Rutland Pride

(Continued from Page 4)

tinue to shape and strengthen the Rutland County community and beyond.

This free, family-friendly celebration is open to all and is designed to be inclusive, affirming, and community-centered. The festival features:

- Engaging activities for all ages, including interactive art installations, hands-on crafts, and community games to encourage connection and creativity
- Live music and performances by local and regional artists, including drag, dance, spoken word, and more
- Guest speakers and community storytellers
- Vendor booths, food trucks, and local artisans
- ASL interpretation at all main stage events
- Accessible venue design, including a Quiet Space for attendees who need a break during the festival

## ABOUT RUTLAND COUNTY PRIDE

Rutland County Pride Inc. is dedicated to enhancing and sustaining the well-being of 2SLGBTQIA+ and allied communities through programs that cultivate community, advocate for justice, educate, and provide social support. The annual Pride Festival is a key part of our mission to increase visibility and foster belonging in Rutland County.

## JOIN US

Celebrate Pride Month, honor Juneteenth, and uplift the intersecting identities that shape our shared community. We invite everyone to show up, speak out, and celebrate with us.

More Info:  
[www.rcpride.org/pridefestival](http://www.rcpride.org/pridefestival)  
For further details, please contact:

William Fourney-Mills,  
Executive Director  
[director@rcpride.org](mailto:director@rcpride.org)  
802-767-7433  
106 West St., Suite 1,  
Rutland, Vt.

## Pittsford Village Farm breaking ground on June 19th and announcing capital campaign

Pittsford Village Farm is growing! Located in the town center at 42 Elm Street, the Pittsford Village Farm (PVF) sits on nearly 150 acres of the former Forrest Farm and contains an 18th century Farmhouse and 19th century barn. In 2018, Pittsford Village Farm formed as a non profit, 501(c)3 organization with a volunteer board of directors from the community. For the


past few years, the PVF Board of Directors has worked tirelessly to raise the necessary funds to renovate the nearly 8,000-square-foot Farmhouse. Once completed, the Farmhouse will be

home to a community center on the ground floor, an early childhood education center and cafe on the first floor and two affordable two-bedroom apartments on the second floor.

In these difficult times of rising costs of building materials and construction projects, the folks at Pittsford Village Farm worked together with Naylor & Breen Builders to devise a creative solution: to break the project into two phases. The two parties have signed a contract to complete the first phase, which includes an early childhood education center. (See Pittsford Village Farm, Page 11)

## Correction

In last week's issue, the article on Caitlin Lekberg mistakenly referred to Ms. Lekberg's "stepson." Ms. Lekberg has a stepdaughter. Our apologies to Ms. Lekberg, her family, and our readers for the error.



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[www.blueberryhillinn.com/pizza](http://www.blueberryhillinn.com/pizza) Thursday June 26, 5-8 PM

**Next concert:**  
**Bread & Bones**





# Brandon says 'No Kings'



*Color photos by David Roberts, Brian Green, and Alyssa Zollman*

*Black and White photos by Chloe Fuller*





## At Devil's Bowl

# Mat Williamson Wins Slate Valley 67 at Devil's Bowl; Scarborough claims second sportsman win

WEST HAVEN—Mat Williamson of St. Catharines, Ontario got the Behrent's No. 3 race team back on track this week with an impressive win in Sunday's "Slate Valley 67" at Devil's Bowl.

Williamson started 3rd by virtue of the redraw and immediately passed 2nd starting Daniel Morgiewicz and set his sights on pole sitter and leader Felix Roy. An early caution put Williamson outside Roy on

the front row and Williamson drove away on the top, setting a torrid pace towards the back of the field. Meanwhile, Stewart Friesen was on the move from 13th starting position chasing after Williamson.

As they got into lapped traffic, Williamson stayed one step ahead of Friesen and went on to score the win, his first in "Slate Valley" race history, joining Matt Sheppard (2022) Stewart Friesen (2023) and

Marc Johnson (2024) in the winners' column.

Friesen was 2nd with Roy 3rd, Alex Payne and Mike Mahaney completed the top-five.

In the Sunoco Sportsman Modified ranks it was Joey Scarborough, of Brandon, VT scoring his second win of the year in his No. 11VT entry. Scarborough entered the night as the points leader and climbed up from his 3rd starting position to go

by Brian Whittemore and score the win. Scarborough took the lead early and was not seriously challenged for the remainder of the race. Whittemore was 2nd with Siemons 3rd, Troy Audet 4th and Josh Sunn 5th. Shawn McPhee was the Elmo's Pit Stop Hard Charger, going from 30th to 12th.

In the O'Reilly Auto Parts Limited Sportsman, Adam Lafountain and Derrick Counter led the field to green for their 25-lap feature. Lafountain led until lap 9 when Katrina Leclaire took command of the field. From that point, the race became plagued with cautions, completing a few laps at a time. Leclaire was strong repeatedly on restarts, but Kamden Duffy seized the top spot with six laps to go and never relinquished it, earning his first win of the season. Leclaire was 2nd with Jason Quenneville 3rd, Alex Layn 4th and Fred Little 5th.

The Fisher Auto Parts Mini Stocks ran split 15-lap features at the end of the night. In the first feature, Jake Mallory and Gerry Jordan, Sr. put on a show, running side by side for the last several laps

with Mallory high and Jordan low. On the final lap, Mallory cleared Jordan exiting turn four and picked up the win.

In feature No. 2 for the mini stocks, Adam Stewart and Ryan Patch had the front row for the feature and Patch took the early lead. He showed the way until lap 7 when points leader Tyler Bell took over the top spot. A few laps later, Greenwich, NY's Jeremy Brownell powered around Bell to take the lead and hold it, picking up the win. Ron Alger was 2nd, and Bell continued his impressive season with a 3rd place run. Chris Charbonneau was 4th with Griff Mahoney 5th.

New England's Fastest Dirt Track is back in action next Saturday night, June 21 at 6PM with the 358 modifieds and kids rides! Plus, a special 55-lap, \$555-to-win feature for the O'Reilly Auto Parts Limited Sportsman, plus all regular divisions and the 9th State Cannabis Crown Vics! General admission is \$15, kids 12 and under are free! In-field tailgating is available for \$25. Pit passes are \$30 for members and \$40 for non-members.



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- Even if you don't qualify, you can still receive a **\$600 rebate** and low-interest financing through Efficiency Vermont's Home Energy Loan. Federal tax credits and additional electric utility incentives can help you save even more.

Act soon – this funding is available for a limited time only!

\*Incentives are subject to availability and eligibility.



Learn More



STUDENT: Arlo Martin  
GRADE: 1 (going into grade 2)  
SCHOOL: Neshobe  
MEDIUM: Watercolor  
TEACHER: John Brodowski

OUR CREATIVE KIDS





# Pittsford SB

(Continued from Page 1)

bers of a single family and have been the subject of numerous complaints because of the debris, vehicles, and livestock on them.

At the Selectboard's meeting on May 21, several landowners in the area around the properties had entreated the Board to compel the cleanup of the properties, as these neighbors have done in previous meetings over the past few years.

At that meeting, the Board had expressed its own frustration with the slow, ineffective process. The Board said it would ask the town's zoning administrator, Jeff Biasuzzi, to attend the June 4 meeting to answer questions regarding the situation.

On June 4, Mr. Biasuzzi reread a statement that he had submitted for the May 21 meeting. In that statement, he said that minimal progress had been made in compelling cleanup and that written warnings and even tickets had not had much impact.

"There are not a lot of options here," said Mr. Biasuzzi on June 4.

Mr. Biasuzzi recounted that a judge had asked for proof that the cars on the properties belonged to the landowners in question and dismissed the tickets when such proof was not provided.

Board Vice-chair David Mills suggested that the town focus its efforts on one property at a time in the hope that concerted pressure on one member of the family might compel compliance from the others as well. Mr. Mills also questioned whether one of the properties could be considered abandoned under the law.

Board member Dan Adams replied that he had driven past that property recently and seen the owner on the premises.

Interim Town Manager Ann Reed noted as well that property taxes for two of the three properties were completely up to date and that the third property was on a tax plan. None of the properties, therefore, was subject to tax sale.

Ms. Reed also noted that the town's attorney had requested to see all correspondence between the town and the proper-

ty owners in order to determine what legal remedies might be available. Mr. Biasuzzi stated that he had not yet fulfilled the request.

Mr. Adams asked whether warnings had been delivered by hand by Pittsford Police Chief Mike Warfle. Adams also wondered whether the town had adequate mechanisms to force compliance.

Pittsford Animal Control Officer Rich Bowman stated that a veterinarian had visited one of the properties to determine whether the livestock—mostly pigs—were being maintained in proper conditions. Accord-

ing to Officer Bowman, the veterinarian did not observe any conditions that could be considered neglectful under the law, though he did note that a pony needed a visit from a farrier.

One of the neighbors who have been most vocal in

the situation alerted the Board to the existence of several more abandoned cars than can be seen from the road. This neighbor also chastised Mr. Biasuzzi, reading him a list of his official duties and then stating that he had not carried them out. The neighbor also said that runoff containing waste from the pigs was entering adjacent natural waterways.

Mr. Biasuzzi acknowledged the frustration and said that nothing could have been done until the town had confirmation that the owners had received the written warnings. Such confirmation was received only in April, he added.

"It's a frustrating process," said Biasuzzi. "But the Board has to be willing to pay for the enforcement."

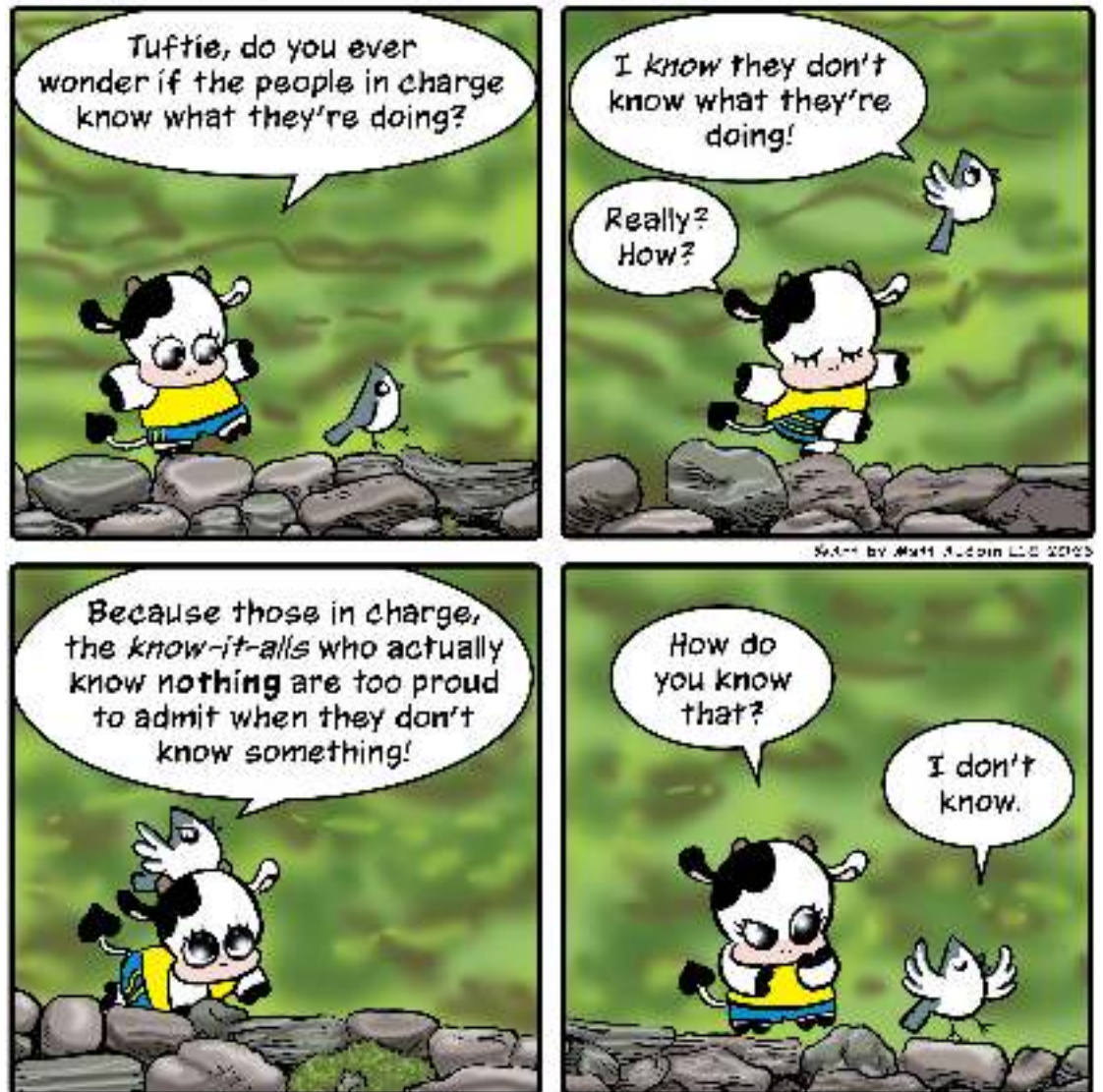
Biasuzzi went on to say that the methods that have worked with other landowners in the past did not seem to be working with this particular family.

Board Chair Alicia Malay said that the Board would work on closing loopholes in the town ordinances. Board member Mark Winslow said that he was eager to resolve the issue and recommended the involvement of the town's attorney.

The issue appears on the agenda for the May 18 Selectboard meeting as well.

*According to Officer Bowman, the veterinarian did not observe any conditions that could be considered neglectful under the law, though he did note that a pony needed a visit from a farrier.*

## MAPLE the COW by Matt Aucom



## Pittsford Village Farm

(Continued from Page 7)

ter serving 30 children operated by Rutland County Parent Child Center, two affordable two-bedroom apartments, and a cafe operated by a Pittsford resident. Having successfully secured \$2.5 million from Federal, State, and Local funding programs, as well as \$200,000 in in-kind professional expertise, labor and materials, PVF is able to complete the vast majority of the project in this first phase. This includes site work to allow for parking and safe pedestrian flow, the full building envelope, and preparing the ground floor for the completion of the community center during the next phase.

**Capital Campaign**

In addition to seeking grant funding over the last three years, the Pittsford Village Farm board and other volun-

teers have been engaged in a capital campaign. With a goal of raising \$1.2 million, the capital campaign will fill in where other funding left off while also serving as the necessary local match to grants already received. PVF has raised \$800,000, over 65% of this goal. The Groundbreaking Ceremony on June 19 marks the kickoff of the public phase of this Capital Campaign. Once PVF reaches its goal of \$1.2 million, we will begin the second phase of construction and complete the Community Center.

The Pittsford Village Farm is already a downtown and county-wide destination with many activities happening on site throughout the year. Summertime brings a summer concert series on the lawn. Hikers and outdoor enthusiasts enjoy

picnicking along the trails, with connections to a 16-mile network in the town. There are town-wide events, including a Touch-a-Truck fall event, a holiday Sap-Bucket Tree lighting, a Turkey Trot Fun Run for Pittsford Christmas for Kids and winter moonlight sledding parties.

The restoration of the Farmhouse will complete the Pittsford Village Farm, making it a true regional resource for individuals and families of Central Vermont.

The event will be held on Thursday, June 19, from 5-7pm, at the Farmhouse at 42 Elm Street, across from Kamuda's. There will be presentations, tours of the building and a wine tasting provided by Shelburne Vineyards.

All are welcome to join.

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# Calendar of events

## June

### Mondays

#### Brandon Rec offers Aikido classes

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

#### Maclure Library Yoga -

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



### Tuesdays

#### Maclure Library Story Time Playgroup

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

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

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

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

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

### Wednesdays

#### Ping Pong

The club has begun playing on Wednesday evenings starting at 7 p.m. It will meet nearly every Wednesday year-round in the gym at the Rutland Area Christian School in Rutland, located at the corner of Melrose Ave. and Lincoln Ave. in Rutland, a block from the intersection of Route 7 and Melrose Ave. (110 Lincoln Ave., Rutland, VT 05701).

Being a part of this unique and exciting club offers a variety of activities, including regular practice, a challenge board, clinics for beginner and advanced play, singles and doubles, inter-club events with other table tennis clubs, and even tournaments.

If you are interested in table tennis as a recreational or athletic activity, we're interested in you! There is a modest membership fee of only \$30, although you can come twice free as our guest. Bring your sneakers and paddle (or use ours) and have some fun playing a great game of "Pong!" For further information about the Green Mountain Table Tennis Club, visit our club's website at [www.gmttc.com](http://www.gmttc.com).

#### Friends Zone

Need a safe space to socialize? Come join us at the Friends Zone. Open Wednesdays 2–5 p.m. at the Brandon United Methodist Church, 1 Franklin Street, Brandon. Meet with old friends and make new ones. Play cards, cribbage, or Yahtzee. Put a puzzle together or bring your arts, crafts, and hobbies to work on. Snacks and beverages provided. All are welcome to attend. For more information contact pastor Vicki Disorda at [vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com](mailto:vqueenoftheearth@gmail.com) or 802 345-4125.

#### Crafternoons

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

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

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

From 10:30–11:30 am at 155 Woodstock Avenue in Rutland, Lina Cloffe Hanson (Parvati) offers an Earth Conscious, Spiritual, Gentle Physical Yoga Practice. We meet on Mondays via zoom. Contact for Zoom link. (There is also a Monday Zoom only class)

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

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

once you start. Looking forward to seeing you in class!

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

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

### Thursdays

#### Ukulele Group

Free at the Chaffee Art Center

## Music at the River Bend Behind the Brandon Inn

July 2: Jenni Johnson

Old & new school; jazzy, swinging & funky

July 9: TinyusSmallus

A high energy 90s nostalgia band with tight grooves

July 16: Bloodroot Gap

Locally sourced free-range bluegrass

July 23: Twangtown Paramours

Soulful Americana duo and retro blues band

July 30: Blues Without Borders

Champlain Valley's premier blues band

Aug 6: Breanna & the Boys

Local folk rock power quartet

Aug 13: Cold Chocolate

Genre-bending Americana band fusing folk, funk & bluegrass

Aug 20: Enerjazz

Vermont's high energy big-band

Aug 27: Ten Rod Road

Classic Brandon band reunites for one show!

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!

## Rutland County Audubon Society

**June 21, 2025 (Saturday), 9 a.m. - Whipple Hollow Trail** with Liz Thompson. Join us on the first full day of Summer as we explore the natural communities along the Whipple Hollow Trail with Liz Thomp-

son, Conservation Ecologist and co-author of *Wetland, Woodland, Wildland: A Guide to the Natural Communities of Vermont*. The trailhead is at 1468 Whipple Hollow Road in West Rutland.



## Picnic at Green (beside Bloom)

SUNDAY, JUNE 22ND

To celebrate the beginning of summer, the Downtown Brandon Alliance will host a Picnic in the Park on Sunday, June 22nd. Bring your own picnic lunch or pre-order a picnic from a participating local restaurant (Cafe Provence, 22 Park, Morningside Mae's) who will give 10% of proceeds to the DBA. Bring a blanket or sit at a table under a DBA canopy. While

## Shout out to





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!



Green Park (Painting Bungalow)  
12:00, 12:30 - 3:30

you enjoy your fabulous picnic in Green Park, listen to acoustic guitarist Patrick Fitzsimmons who will be performing. Dessert boxes will be available on-site from Ms. van der Bakes. Make it fun with a fancy hat, a wicker basket, a bunch of flowers, and a parasol. Free will donations appreciated.

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

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 19th

Adult Pour Painting — Chaffee Art Center  
Learn the pour painting technique (coral reef) with instructor Lorrie Amerio Manieri. Follow along and leave with a finished painting. \$40 per person, includes all supplies. Must pre-register. 6-8 p.m.

Friday 20th

Vermont Comedy All Stars Stand-up Showcase! — Next Stage Arts  
Gordon Clark and his Vermont Comedy All Stars return to Putney for another unforgettable night of stand-up comedy at Next Stage Arts—part of the venue's ongoing 15th Anniversary Celebration! This special evening will also honor two "Next Stage Champions"—Lyssa Papazian and Barry Stockwell—who have helped shape and support Next Stage into the vibrant community hub it is today. The show features an electric mix of performers, from regional favorites to nationally recognized comedians:

ANG BUXTON is a wild comedian and tiny-handed DJ who brought the house down at Next Stage in 2024—so we're bringing them back!  
MADDIE CROSS is a Burlington-based stand-up comedian who was a finalist in the 2023 Vermont's Funniest Comedian competition. She has opened for nationally touring headliners such as Phil Hanley, Jackie Kashian, and Laurie Kilmartin, and is a frequent performer on comedy shows around Burlington and northern Vermont.

NEIL GOLDBERG grew up in Vermont, so he knows a lot about maple syrup, cheese, and the importance of snow tires. He started writing comedy during COVID because, well, there wasn't much else to do. Once the world re-opened, he began performing stand-up regionally, including shows at the Vermont Comedy Club in Burlington and the Gotham Comedy Club in NYC.

PIERRE VACHON is just your average stand-up comic, actor, professional wrestler, and hypnotist based in Middlebury, Vermont. His high-energy style of comedy has taken him to stages across the U.S. and Canada.

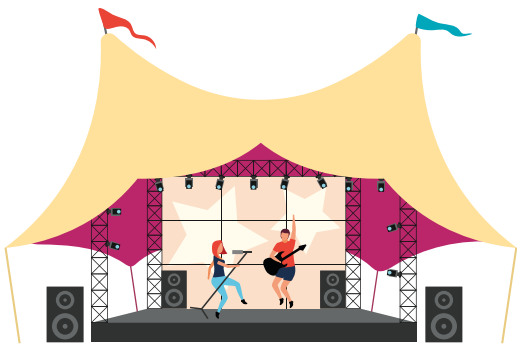
MATT VITA is a New York City-based comedian who regularly performs at top clubs such as New York Comedy Club. He also manages the Woolen Mill Comedy Club in Bridgewater, Vermont, and co-founded the Vermont Comedy Festival. Matt is an award-winning freestyle rapper who has shared the stage with hip-hop legends such as Rahzel.

GORDON CLARK (The Host!) is proof that you can teach an old dog new tricks. A lifelong organizer and activist, he took up comedy near the age of 60—and never looked back. (Mostly because it hurts his neck to turn that way.)

46th Annual Middlebury Summer Festival on-the-Green— Village Green, Middlebury

July 13-19

Join us for a delightful week of free, family-friendly performances at the 46th Annual Middlebury Summer Festival on-the-Green, July 13-19.  
The Festival offers a unique blend of music and community spirit under the big white tent on the Middlebury, Vermont, Village Green. Enjoy "Brown Bag" programs weekdays from 12-1 p.m., perfect for families and lunch-break entertainment.  
In the evenings, live musical performances light up the night from 7-9:45 p.m., Sunday through Saturday culminating in a Street Dance with the Vermont Jazz Ensemble. Free admission; donations welcomed.



Events take place rain or shine. Info: <https://www.festivalonthegreen.org/>



Gordon is the director of the nonprofit Vermont Comedy All Stars, through which he produces and hosts monthly stand-up showcase specials in Burlington and Montpelier, as well as the quarterly showcase at Next Stage Arts.

"Using the Alchemy of Natural Materials to create . . . Emotion through Art"—Chaffee Art Center  
Join us at the Chaffee Art Center on June 20 for a "stimulating" evening! This is a free talk

titled "Using the Alchemy of Natural Materials to create . . . Emotion through Art" with speaker Jason Bemis. Doors open at 5 p.m., speaker 5:30-7:30 p.m. Stimulate your creativity. Dive into the processes & transformation of ordinary to extraordinary!

\*Color \*Form \*Patterns \*Pigments \*Organic Materials. Free, but donation appreciated.

Light refreshments. Limited seats available. Reserve yours today! 802-775-0356 or [info@chaffeeartcenter.org](mailto:info@chaffeeartcenter.org)

Saturday 21st

Proctor Town-wide Sales  
9 a.m.-2 p.m. Maps available at the Proctor Free Library or on our Facebook

Sunday 22nd

Swedish Midsommar and Kitten Shower  
St. Paul Lutheran Church will celebrate the start of summer with a Swedish Midsommar at One Gibbs Street in Proctor on Sunday, June 22 at 9 a.m. After a brief service, the festivities, including maypole dances and traditional refreshments, will take place either outside the church or in the parish hall, depending on the weather.  
The church will also host its fourth annual kitten shower for Rutland County Humane Society that day, so it will accept donations of kitten food for the shelter. All are welcome. St. Paul Lutheran Church, One Gibbs Street, Proctor.

Sudbury friends and neighbors!

June 18th, 6 p.m.

Potluck June 18th, 6 p.m. at the Sudbury Meeting House. Brought to you by Sudhub. Bring your pot! Bring your friends!



time. A great way to pass a Saturday afternoon. Please direct any questions to Kathy Mathis at 247-3121.

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

Sundays

Brandon Town Hall Painting with Crystal  
Crystal Ketcham leads an all ages painting event!  
Yes, you CAN paint! More info, contact Crystal at [ceastman88@gmail.com](mailto: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

June Events





## Senior spotlight A chat with Bruce Potter

Mr. Bruce Potter was born in November, 1943 in Albany, Vt. His father, Hugh Potter, was a farmer in Albany, while his mother, Mary Farr Potter was a housewife and mom. Bruce grew up with one brother, Waldo, and one sister, Collene, both of whom sadly are deceased. Bruce attended Albany Elementary School, Craftsbury High School, and Champlain College. After graduation, he enlisted in the US Air Force for 4 years, spending one year in Korea. When discharged, he worked for 41 years at a Trust and Investment Banking firm. He married Patricia Nagy who was a nurse for many years. They have been married 61 years! They had three children: Shawn, who works at a transit company in Barre, Vt.; Lania, who works at LL Bean; and Jonathan, who works at a dry cleaning company. When asked what was the best thing that ever happened to him, his response was “marrying my wife after dating her all through high school.” He could not recall anything embarrassing that had ever happened to him. He said, “But the picture attached makes me look older than I really am!” His hobbies and interests include stock trading online, but hunting is his passion

in all seasons. His favorite thing to do is hunting, rifle, crossbow, etc.—doesn’t matter. He is also an elder in the Whiting Church. The most exciting experience that he was willing to share? “We are pretty low key and spend time with family a lot,” was his response.

*Profile and photo courtesy of the Brandon Senior Center in Forest Dale.*



**Brandon Senior Center’s “Spotlighted Senior”  
Bruce Potter**

## Pittsford Town Manager's report

Interim Town Manager Ann Reed reported the following:

- Attended a meeting with Beth Brown from the Vermont Covered Bridge Society and Liz Alvarado from the Rec Department to work on plans to incorporate Covered Bridge Week with Pittsford Day on August 2, 2025.
- Attended the Chittenden Reservoir Emergency Action Plan meeting where the May 13, 2025 siren testing was discussed. It was necessary to change the listing of contacts for Pittsford.
- Worked with Anne Pelkey to finalize and advertise the Memorial Day Parade and Ceremony.
- Worked on a new advertisement for the position of Bookkeeper, that is now open again.
- Met with Rick Conway and Kevin Blow prior to the Planning Commission hearing to ensure that everything was set for the hearing and provided them copies of the Enhanced Energy Plan and the hearing template.
- Otter Valley students were at the rec area on Friday, May 16, 2025 and assisted in the preparation for summer activities. Thank you for their help!
- Met with landowners on Fire Hill about their concerns.
- Learned that Jeremy Gilman will be leaving the Rutland Regional Planning Commission.
- Contacted Hunter Excavating regarding the damage to Kendall Hill Road and this damage will be repaired. Worked with Bret from Hunter Excavating to make sure it will be done the way the Town would like it repaired.
- Found a new company with options for cameras for the Municipal Offices and the covered bridges. There will be a 30 day free trial coming soon.



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## SCHOOL VACATION SALE!



**2010 TOYOTA TACOMA**  
Crew Cab 4x4, Longbox, V6, auto, 196k miles  
**\$13,995**



**2015 SUBARU FORESTER**  
Touring AWD, Auto, Loaded, 113k miles  
**\$13,995**



**2018 HONDA CRV**  
EX AWD, 4cyl, Auto, Loaded, 100k miles  
**\$18,995**



**2016 SUBARU CROSSTREK**  
Premium AWD, 5 speed, 109k miles  
**\$14,995**



**2018 TOYOTA HIGHLANDER**  
XLE AWD, Third row seat, Loaded, 91k miles  
**\$24,995**

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## Migratory game

(Continued from Page 4)

must have a Vermont Migratory Waterfowl tag and federal duck stamp.

Woodcock hunting season is September 27- November 10 statewide with a three-bird bag limit.

In addition to a hunting license, a waterfowl hunter 16 or older must carry a current federal duck stamp and Vermont Migratory Waterfowl tag to hunt waterfowl in Vermont. Federal stamps are sold at post offices, federal refuges, or online from the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. State Migratory Waterfowl tags are available on Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department’s website and from license agents. The hunter must sign the federal duck stamp.

All migratory game bird (woodcock, ducks and geese) hunters must also be registered

with the Harvest Information Program (H.I.P.) in each state they hunt. You can register on Vermont Fish and Wildlife Department’s website or call toll-free 1-877-306-7091. After providing some basic information, you will receive your annual H.I.P. registration number, which is then recorded on your hunting license.

The hunting season dates, bag limits and related regulations for all migratory birds are set annually within a framework established by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, and in coordination with New York and New Hampshire.

Waterfowl season dates and bag limits are set in three zones: Lake Champlain, Interior Vermont, and Connecticut River. The New Hampshire Fish and Game Department sets the season dates and bag limits for the Connecticut River Zone.



# Duckies' swim lessons

(Continued from Page 3)

Peterson of Brandon's Nifty Thrifty Thrift Shop. "It seemed to dampen the excitement and cut into the competition to have so many duckies collect at the top of the falls. We felt like we needed to do something to help."

So, Nifty engaged Cosima Quackersham to teach advanced swim techniques to interested duckies. Miss

Quackersham is a former duckie race champion herself, having dominated the field in the late aughts. Among her major trophies are the Halifax Open (twice), the Philadelphia Invitational, and the Long Island Cup (three times). A freak accident tragically ended her career in 2010.

"I was racing in the Nantucket Games," Miss Quackersham recalled during a recent conversation before one of her swim classes at the pool at the Brandon Inn. "I was a full duck length ahead of the rest of the pack and I felt a stabbing pain in my left foot. It was an errant fishing hook. It tore through the webbing and I could barely get to the finish line. By the time I made it to the medical tent, the webbing was completely destroyed and my career was effectively over."

Never one to wallow in self-pity, Quackersham immediately transitioned to coaching.

"Just because my career as an athlete was over didn't mean I was done with athletics," she said. "Swimming is my life. If I can't compete, I have an obligation to help those who still can. The next generations of duckies will benefit a lot from my wisdom and experience."

"Duckies today are distracted by so many things I didn't have to worry about when I was coming up through the ranks," Quackersham added. "Climate change has really altered our natural waterways and young duckies are having to come to terms with a vastly different landscape than I had at their age. Flooding is so much more prevalent now. It's turned normally calm streams into raging rivers. I think a lot of duckies just don't know how to handle all that moving water. I suspect that's what's at the root of the problem on the Neshobe.

They're simply afraid of the power of the falls."

The Brandon race is unique; it's the only major circuit event with a waterfall. Miss Quackersham believes she can teach young duckies to overcome their fear of it. "They're not entirely wrong to be worried," she said. "You can easily get trapped in the undercurrent at the bottom of the falls. I've seen it happen numerous times. They take the plunge and never escape the swirling maelstrom at the base. The key is to launch yourself over the falls with enough momentum to land clear of the froth below. You want to aim for the clear water just beyond. It takes skill, strength, and stamina."

*Quackersham tries to get in a lesson every morning, before the Brandon Rec begins their kids' swim lessons at the pool. Nifty Thrifty is covering half the cost of those lessons as well.*

To that end, Quackersham has emphasized "The Launch" in her lessons. The Launch is her trademarked technique of propelling oneself over a ledge with force and precision.

"If you can manage The Launch, the game is yours," she said. Judging by her students' poor performances at the pool last weekend, she's got a lot more work ahead of her before the big race on Saturday, July 5. Her students tried in earnest to launch themselves off the edge of the pool, but most of them ended up falling in random and embarrassing positions in the water.

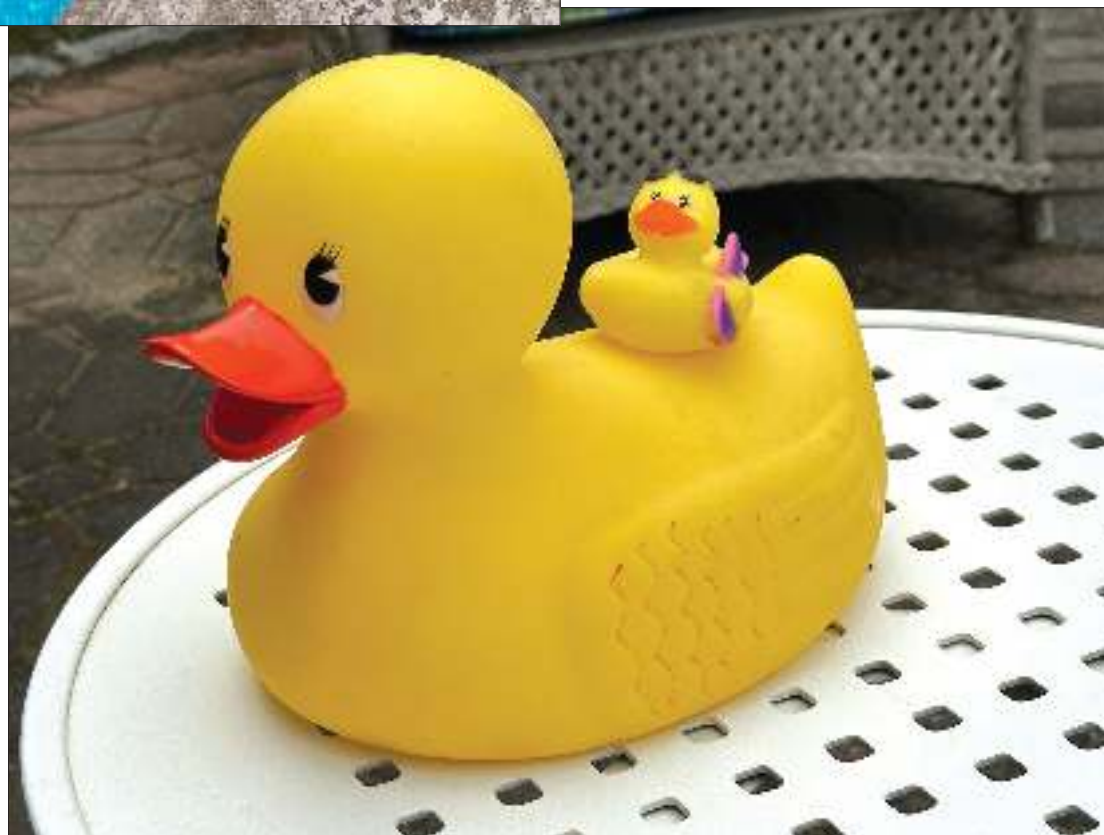
"They're not quite there yet, but there's potential," she said with confidence. "Sometimes if you don't launch well, you can correct yourself on the other side. I might have to focus on those skills instead. We still have a

couple of weeks."

Quackersham hasn't competed in years, but she follows the sport assiduously and was dismayed by the malign actions of Canyon over the last few years. Readers will remember that



**ABOVE AND LEFT:** Miss Quackersham tries valiantly to teach her students how to navigate the Neshobe Falls by having them jump off the edge of the pool at the Brandon Inn. "They still have work to do," said Quackersham. Below: Quackersham and her star pupil, Daisy.



couple of weeks."

Quackersham hasn't competed in years, but she follows the sport assiduously and was dismayed by the malign actions of Canyon over the last few years. Readers will remember that

Canyon kneecapped race-favorite Winky last year. Winky rallied to regain his form and ended up coming in second, while Canyon improbably came in third.

"I thought it was all very disap-

pointing," Quackersham said. "You'd hope good sportsmanship would prevail."

Canyon's son, Canyon Jr., is competing for the first time this year and participated in (See Duckies' swim lessons, Page 27)



# Our Otter Valley Seniors, 2025



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TANNER DEREPENGTINGY



ANDREW EASTER



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WYATT FALLON



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ALEX FRARY



MAKENNA GATCHET



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RILEY HANFIELD



ROBERT HUTCHINS



LAYLA INGHAM



--- JACKSON\*  
(\*first name not provided)



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ELYSE SINGH



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ROWEN STEEN



MADISIN STEVENS



CLAYTON STICKNEY



HAYLO SWAHN



JACOB TRIPP



KORREY VITALE



RYAN WALKER



MAXWELL WELCH



ISAAC WHITNEY



LINCOLN WILCOX



JOSELYN WRIGHT



# Valedictorian Savanna Cook reveals that her recipe for success comes from the Tao of Spongebob

Good morning, everyone.

I would like to start by thanking all of the parents, teachers, coaches, and everyone else that has helped me become who I am today. I would also encourage everyone to think of a person who has helped you get where you are today because without them you all would not be who you are at this moment. Each and every one of you has had a person that has influenced who you have become and this has especially played a major part in what has got me and my fellow graduates to today. My fellow graduates and I would not be on this stage without the community of people that have volunteered to help at school functions, coach sports, and so much more.

I used to watch Spongebob a lot as a kid and I still watch some of the older episodes from time to time. One quote that Spongebob said is “if you believe in yourself with a tiny pinch of magic all your dreams can come true.” I like this quote not only because I can see and hear Spongebob saying it but also because believing in ourselves is why we are here today. Every single one of us has had times when we or someone else did not believe in us. In order to swim we must believe in ourselves especially when others will not because life gives us challenges and we can either sink, swim, or float. Believing in yourself is one of the first steps to making your dreams come true and truly being able to swim in life.

With this being said we all must be ourselves. When I was writing this speech I honestly had no idea what to write about but the one thing I wanted in my speech was a Spongebob quote.

As silly as that is, this quote is how I could be myself while giving this speech. Once we leave graduation today we are all going on our own paths—some of us are going to college, some taking a gap year, and others going straight into work—however we all might

not end up where we plan for as life happens and throws its own curveballs at us making it all the more important to be yourselves when times are tough. Up until this moment we have all faced our own challenges and we will continue to do so, however, what will make us as a class different from everybody else is we will not just overcome the challenges but rather go above and beyond

to leave your own mark and that can begin with something as simple as being yourself. I encourage each and every one of you to be yourselves, take risks, and be the best version of you because we only have one life and why not live it being ourselves.

One last quote I would like to say is, “No one can change a person, but someone can be a reason for that person to

I found important and what I have learned thus far.

- We cannot change others
- Each and every one of us can be the reason why someone changes.
- Change can come from the smallest actions

Change can start with actions like smiling to a stranger, being the person to help someone in need, or just being nice to a new student—all of these

than you will ever know for some people. Making change does not have to stop there. One day you can be leaders in your community, you can run for government officials or even just be a part of the process to one day make change to the world.

Now to the class of 2025 I would like to congratulate each of you on making it to graduation and what you have done



OV '25 VALEDICTORIAN Savanna Cook addressed the assembly at Otter Valley Commencement on Saturday, June 14.

Photo by Steven Jupiter

what was thought possible. Each and every one of you has the capability to not only float along the water but swim faster and farther than everyone else. We are the future of this world and all of you have the chance

change,” this is also said by Spongebob. I do not expect everyone to take away anything from the speech I am giving—in fact some of you may have drifted off—however, I can stand here and tell you things

actions can have impacts on people whether it’s brightening their day or being the influence that helps them spread change to others.

At the end of the day one small action can change more

up till now. I wish everyone the best of luck with their futures. I would also like to thank you all again and congratulate the class of 2025 because we made it!

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# As Salutatorian, Sara Loyzelle encouraged her fellow graduates to take lessons from people they look up to

Good morning, everyone. I am beyond grateful to have this opportunity to be up here today. I want to start by sharing a memory, when I was in elementary school I met a teacher that I looked up to right from the first day I met her. I always looked at how she handled issues with a calm approach and how she made every room better just by being in it. I truly admired her and everyday since 6th grade I have attempted to be a better person because she inspired me to be one. I have thought of her in the times when I was struggling and in the times where I needed guidance. I bet many of you here today can think of at least one important person in your life that you have looked up to in a way and think about why you look up to them. Looking up to someone

who we are today.

When trying to think back to a certain memory that defines our class, I had a difficult time. Even with Mr. Praamsma's help in having everyone write down a certain memory. I sat there on the last day of high school in

so many.

We as a class have shared so many jokes, laughs, and ideas. Every one of us may keep a certain memory closer to us than others but all that matters is that we experienced these things together. Each one of us

memory cannot describe us, instead we reflect on the many memories we created. We look back on these past years and remember all of the fun we have shared and all of the positive memories we can carry with us in the future.

own to make these memories special and enjoyable. The next part of the song goes like this "drench yourself with words unspoken, today is where your book begins, the rest is still unwritten." We are such a talented class and we are filled with

great potential. I know that every one of us here today has the potential to be very successful. Yes, highschool was a huge part of our lives but we still have so far to go and so much to look forward to. In order to be successful you need to put in the hardwork and effort. If you want something bad enough, it is possible, especially for the class of 2025. We have overcome many obstacles as a class and now we are able to look back on highschool and recognize all of the positive things that have come out of shared kindness and positive memories.

I want to end by thanking all of my family, friends, teachers, and fellow classmates. All of these people have been there



**OV '25 SALUTATORIAN Sara Loyzelle addressed the assembly at Otter Valley Commencement on Saturday, June 14.**

Photo by Steven Jupiter

doesn't mean trying to be just like them but admiring their best traits and striving to possess similar qualities in your everyday life. Wanting to better yourself for the future is an important feature that can help you with many things in the future such as your career, relationships and success. I believe that by looking up to someone, it has helped shape some of

class and I enjoyed hearing everyone's stories. I realized that we have shared so many positive memories together.

Such as many fun activities especially in AP biology, senior sunset and many other things we have shared as a class. I realized that there is not one moment where I can say this was the best moment of our years in high school because there are

has experienced these things differently and that is the great thing about life. Each day all of us wake up, do our own thing and experience the day differently. Some may have had a positive outlook on the past 4 years while others may have looked at it differently. In the end we as a class have connected with each other on so many different levels, that just one

When speaking on individuality that represents us as a class, a particular song comes to mind called Unwritten. It goes "feel the rain on your skin, no one else can feel it for you... No one else can speak the words on your lips." I believe that these lines speak to each of us here today. We all have been involved with these memories and added something of our

for me when I needed help with something, they have been there for me when I needed guidance, they have been there to celebrate me and have supported me. I wish all of my classmates the absolute best in all that they decide to pursue. Thank you and congratulations.



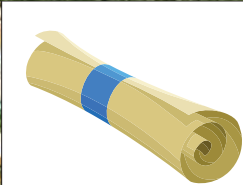
## SPREAD THE WORD!

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

LET US KNOW BY EMAIL AT [NEWS@BRANDONREPORTER.COM](mailto:NEWS@BRANDONREPORTER.COM)



# SNAPSHOTS OF GRADUATION 2025! *Congrats to all!*







***Photos by Steven Jupiter***





# Mim's Photos

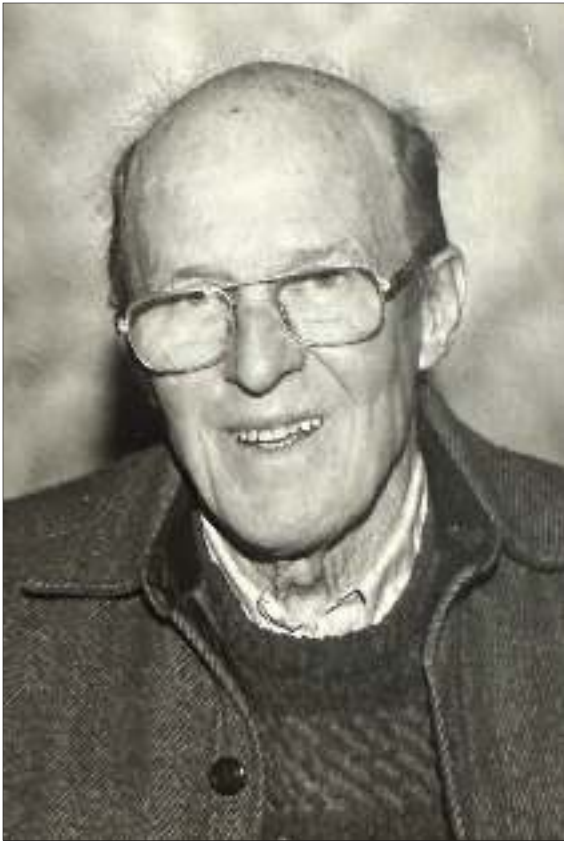
Can you identify any of the people in these vintage photos from Mim Welton's Dateline Brandon newspaper archives? Let us know!

## Recognized



Luanne Merkert recognized Tom Olsen on the left in this photo. Ms. Merkert explained that Mr. Olsen was part of a local acting group that performed in the barn behind the Brandon Inn. She thinks the photo is likely from the mid 70s. She noted that Mr. Olsen is the son of Marie Olsen, who still lives in town.

Meanwhile, Terry Ferson and Sue Wetmore recognized Sally Ferson Bell on the right in this photo. Ms. Bell is Mr. Ferson's older sister. Mr. Ferson agreed that this photo was likely taken in the mid 70s, when Ms. Bell took part in a couple of local plays, including "Mary, Mary" and "Barefoot in the Park."



Deb Miner recognized Dr. Charles Stewart in this photo from our 3/26/25 issue. Ms. Miner explained that Dr. Stewart "was a general surgeon at Rutland Hospital during the 60s-80s. He lived in Goshen with his wife, Peg, and three children."



Paul Borkman, Terry Ferson and Sue Wetmore recognized this photo of Joseph Borkman. Mr. Borkman is Paul's father. He worked for many years with the Town of Brandon's water department.





# Crossword

### CLUES ACROSS

- 1. Type of bread
- 5. Range of mountains
- 10. Ended
- 12. Musical forms with a recurring theme
- 14. On the nature of being
- 16. Law enforcement agency
- 18. Australian flightless bird
- 19. Subway rodent
- 20. More dried-up
- 22. A beaver might build one
- 23. Suggestive of the supernatural
- 25. Art \_\_\_, around 1920
- 26. American rocker Snider
- 27. Not or
- 28. Earliest human: \_\_\_-Magnon Man
- 30. Firearm
- 31. Tough outer skin of fruit
- 33. Alternative form of a gene
- 35. Low shrub some call "fat pork"
- 37. Plants in the chamomile tribe
- 38. Revolutionary War era spy
- 40. Portion of a book
- 41. Hoover's office
- 42. Title of respect
- 44. Tax collector
- 45. Cool!
- 48. Real estate
- 50. Boy's name
- 52. Airborne (abbr.)
- 53. Strongly recommends
- 55. Hit lightly
- 56. Bar bill
- 57. Atomic #54
- 58. Devotes again
- 63. Fish sauce
- 65. French stock market
- 66. Things that consist of two elements or parts
- 67. Tense

### CLUES DOWN

- 1. Retired game show host Sajak
- 2. Equal (prefix)
- 3. Israeli city \_\_\_ Aviv
- 4. Loved
- 5. A type of analyst
- 6. Ad \_\_\_
- 7. Gasteyer and de Armas are two
- 8. Ran without moving
- 9. Opposite of yes
- 10. Diffuse clouds of gas
- 11. Mentioning one by one
- 13. Instruments used to dilate
- 15. Freshwater fish
- 17. Remotely-manned flying objects
- 18. Doctor of Education
- 21. Renews
- 23. Not the start
- 24. Pitching stat
- 27. Small water buffaloes
- 29. Ceramic jars
- 32. I (German)
- 34. Something to toss on a fire
- 35. The process of flowing in
- 36. A series of acts at a night club
- 39. Egg of a louse
- 40. Inquire too closely
- 43. Travelers
- 44. Drink
- 46. Behave in a way that degrades
- 47. Electronic music style
- 49. Northern Ireland city
- 51. Upset
- 54. Stiff structure resembling a hair
- 59. Father
- 60. North Atlantic fish
- 61. 8th month (abbr.)
- 62. Make an effort
- 64. Commercial

			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						

# Sudoku

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

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

Level: Intermediate

### PUZZLE SOLUTIONS

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

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

## It's Tick Season: Protect Your Pets!

The Rutland County Humane Society wants to remind pet owners that tick season is in full swing across Vermont. Ticks can carry dangerous diseases like Lyme, anaplasmosis, and ehrlichiosis, and pets are especially vulnerable during the warmer months. Protect your pets with these simple steps: Use vet-recommended flea and tick prevention year-round, check your pets daily, especially after walks or outdoor play. Don't forget under the collar, between toes, and inside ears. Keep grass and brush trimmed to reduce tick habitats in your yard, remove ticks safely with tweezers, and disinfect the area. Always watch for symptoms such as limping, lethargy, fever, or loss of appetite. If you have questions about tick safety or pet care, call us at 802-483-6700. Let's keep our pets healthy and comfortable all season long.

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



#### MEET GHOST \*SPECIAL NEEDS - 3-YEAR-OLD. NEUTERED MALE. DOMESTIC

**SHORTHAIR. WHITE.** Meet Ghost, the dashing gentleman with a coat as white as freshly fallen snow! His name suits him perfectly, but don't let it fool you; this sweet boy is anything but elusive. Despite being deaf, Ghost has a heart full of love and a playful spirit that's truly endearing. He adores lounging in sunny spots, chasing cat toys, and, oh boy, he absolutely lives for catnip! Ghost is a social butterfly who thrives on affection and has so much love to give. He's proven to get along wonderfully with children, making him a great fit for a family home. While he's had some experience with dogs, his play style with them can be a bit exuberant, so careful introductions will be key. Ghost is patiently waiting for his third, and hopefully final, forever home. Through no fault of his own, this resilient and charming boy has found himself in need of a family once again. Despite the changes he's faced, Ghost's heart remains full of love, and he's ready to share it with someone who will cherish him as he deserves.

#### MEET ZARA - 2-YEAR-OLD. MIXED BREED. FEMALE. BRINDLE.

Zara may be shy at first, but once she opens up, she is a ball of energy and joy. She will make an amazing best friend! She is good with kids who are willing to give her the time to warm up. She has no history with cats and is dog-selective. If you have a dog at home, it will be important for them to meet to make sure they get along. She is currently on a special diet, so please ensure that you are able to continue that. Zara will be available as a Foster-To-Adopt until her spay appointment. Come give this beautiful girl a chance to show off her sassy self! The Adoption Center is open Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.



### RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY

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





## Notes from the library

Sue Wetmore has nature photography on display through the month of June—including beautiful bird captures and other creatures.

## Upcoming events

### Fun Reads Book Talk

June 25th, Tom Lake by Anne Patchett. 6-7 p.m. Copies available! In Tom Lake, at the insistence of her daughters, a mother recounts her days and a romance at a theater company in her youth.

### Cliff Kenyon

joins us June 26th from 6-7 p.m. with his book Slater. A gunslinger receives an urgent message to return home after 16 years away. Copies will be available for purchase.

### Plant Swap and Sale!

June 28th, bring your cuttings, propagations or perennials (no invasives, please). Swap from 1-2 p.m., plants for sale by donation 2-3 p.m.

### Summer reading

kicks off July 1st with Ethan Nelson bringing his guitar and fun tunes. Plus, we'll have a few activities! Scan the QR code below or visit our website Events page for the calendar.



### Pizza by the Pond

returns Monday July 14th from 5-8 p.m. at Blueberry Hill in Goshen. Tickets available on our website or stop in.

### Our E-bikes

are back for check out. Two bikes are available for day use.

## DID YOU KNOW?

We now have screen-free audiobook players for kids—YOTOs! Each comes with several books to listen to.



## Have you seen our Tool Ship?

EGO battery-powered lawn tools are available to check out for 12 hours including a lawn mower, string trimmer, hedge trimmer, and leaf blower.

# 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.*

### June 9

- Conducted a welfare check on an individual on Conant Square. Officers contacted the individual and observed that she was in good health.

- Responded to a threatening/harassment complaint on McConnell Road.

### June 10

- Dispatched to a two-car crash at the intersection of Franklin Street and McConnell Road with injuries reported.

- Received a 911 call regarding a woman in a vehicle that was sitting at the intersection of Mulcahy Drive and Arnold District Road and wasn't moving. The vehicle left a short time later heading south on Grove Street. All Brandon officers were tied up with a vehicle crash and could not respond to check the area. A Be On Look-out was put out for the vehicle to surrounding law enforcement agencies.

- Responded to a vandalism complaint on McConnell Road.

### June 11

- Responded to a residence on Conant Square for a 911 hang-up call. Officers determined that the residence was vacant and that there was no emergency.

- Vehicle stop on Carver Street for failure to obey traffic control signals. Warning is-

sued.

- Received a report of a minor hit and run vehicle collision at OVUHS. Case generated for insurance purposes.

### June 12

- Received a complaint of a theft of several fruit trees from Virgil & Constance Home and Garden on Franklin Street.

- Conducted traffic enforcement on Town Farm Road. No violations were observed.

- Located graffiti on a building owned by Green Earth Energy while on patrol in the area of Jones Drive. The damage was documented for informational purposes.

### June 13

- Received a call from the property owner of an apartment building on Carver Street about having a trespass notice issued to an individual. The paperwork was completed for the trespass notice and attempts are being made to locate the individual in-question so that he can be served.

- Received a complaint from a concerned citizen who observed a man leave an infant in a locked car in front of Walgreens on Union Street and go into the store for a couple of minutes before returning.

- Took possession of a cell phone that was found on Park Street and turned into the Brandon Police. The identity of the phone's owner was discovered and the phone was later returned to him.

### June 15

- Received an alert about a burglary alarm activation at OVUHS. The alarm was determined to be false according to the alarm company. No police response was required.

# Vermont Legislature passes landmark education reform bill after a messy final day

BY ETHAN WEINSTEIN

MONTPELIER—The Vermont Legislature on Monday passed the year's landmark education reform package, setting in motion years of transformation to the state's public school and property tax systems.

H.454 would radically alter Vermont's education funding and governance landscape over several years, consolidating school districts and shifting the balance of power over district budgets from the local to the state level.

Despite months of contentious

debates and moments when the entire package looked bound for failure, the final vote was anticlimactic. House Speaker Jill Krowinski, D-Burlington, announced the vote the chamber was considering, and when no one immediately stood up to begin debate, she called the vote by voice. That meant individual members did not have their position tallied, and no rank-and-file members spoke for or against the legislation on the floor before the vote.

After the 'yeas' and 'nays' rang

out, representatives appeared surprised by what they'd just done.

Rep. Troy Headrick, I-Burlington, stood up in disappointment.

"I'm a little shocked actually at the speed that that vote was called," he said.

Though the legislation proposes generational change, the bill is replete with caveats and contingencies, requiring years of further work until the biggest transitions begin in 2028. Among the most significant moves, H.454 would start to create a new education funding formula, impose class-size minimums and reimagine income-sensitive property tax relief.

While Gov. Phil Scott has said the bill will save "hundreds of millions," the exact financial implications are impossible to predict without knowing what future school districts will look like. The bill's supporters insist it will bring stability to districts and bend the cost curve that's caused property taxes (See Education reform, Page 32)

*Despite the bill's sweeping reforms, it leaves many tasks undone for future years, including figuring out the contours of future consolidated school districts.*

# Democracy for all

(Continued from Page 5)

2024 alone, \$27,647,196 of Vermonters' tax money went to funding Israel's weapons when it could have instead funded flood relief, affordable housing, school teacher salaries, healthcare, and more.

As Americans, we are guaranteed the right to protest, and I sincerely hope that the people of this country do not allow themselves to be scared out

their rights in the fight against state sponsored violence, both at home and abroad.

As Mohsen Mahdawi said when he exited the courthouse "And I am saying it, clear and loud. To President Trump and his cabinet, I'm not afraid of you."

Sepi Alavi

Weybridge,

Brandon Reporter employee



# Duckies' swim lessons

(Continued from Page 15)

the swim lesson, though Miss Quackersham could barely contain her disdain for the Canyon family.

“They’re a bunch of ne’er-do-wells,” she stated. “But I’ll do my best to steer Junior in a better direction.”

So far, the duckie with the most promise in Quackersham’s eyes is a newbie called Daisy who hails from Maine.

“She’s definitely got star potential,” she said.

Quackersham tries to get in a lesson every morning, before the Brandon Rec begins their kids’ swim lessons at the pool. Nifty Thrifty is covering half the cost of those lessons as well.


“It’s important for kids and ducks alike to know how to swim,” said Laura Peterson. “Nifty Thrifty is happy to help make these lessons accessible to all.”

The Duckie Race will take place behind the Brandon Inn on Saturday, July 5 after the Parade. Come early and stake out a good vantage point along the Neshobe and keep an eye on the falls!





Sharpen your mind with our puzzles. See page 25



## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

ily members into your circle. Partner with someone who shares your energy.

**LEO** July 23-Aug. 23  
Leo, if things aren’t going smoothly at work, be careful about blaming yourself. You need to look at the bigger picture and figure out who all the players are in this situation.

**VIRGO** Aug. 24-Sept. 22  
Virgo, even when others may count you out, you can be full of surprises. Do not let a recent success go entirely to your head, however. You still have a lot of work to do.

**LIBRA** Sept. 23-Oct. 23  
Libra, even though you may like to plan ahead and take things slowly, sometimes you need to throw caution to the wind. When an opportunity all but falls in your lap, run with it.

**SCORPIO** Oct. 24-Nov. 22  
Scorpio, recent conflicts may ignite some mixed feelings, which could prove confusing. Think about solutions that potentially benefit all around you, including yourself.

**SAGITTARIUS** Nov. 23-Dec. 21  
You might not be having the best luck right now, Sagittarius, but things can change quickly. Keep your chin up and your eyes

set on your goal. Networking may help you move forward.

**CAPRICORN** Dec. 22-Jan. 20  
Capricorn, if you have any health questions, make an appointment to talk to someone right away. It is important to stay ahead of things.


**AQUARIUS** Jan. 21-Feb. 18  
Something that has been taking up a bulk of your time is finally coming to a close, Aquarius. This will be a big relief and a lot of stress will be lifted in the process.

**PISCES** Feb. 19-March 20  
People keep coming up to you expecting all of the answers, Pisces. Don’t feel pressured to please everyone. Right now you may be content to enjoy some alone time.

### FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

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June 21	Jean-Paul Sartre, novelist, playwright & philosopher (d)
June 22	Octavia Butler, novelist (d)
June 23	Anna Akhmatova, poet (d)
June 24	Lionel Messi, soccer player (38)
June 25	Eric Carle, childrens’ book author (d)
June 26	Pearl S. Buck, novelist (d)


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# Brandon Chamber Auction

(Continued from Page 1)

in the early 90s. “Governor Dean was driving by once and stopped to check out a sailboat we had for sale.”

The auctions were held as live events from that first year until COVID forced a change to silent auctions in 2020. But those early years were known for their boisterousness and friendly competition for prized lots.

“Husbands and wives would bid against each other,” laughed Kimble. “It had to be fun to get people involved. It wasn’t a quiet auction.”

Tom Whittaker, Sr. and Barb Watters led the auctions in the early years. Both were licensed, experi-

enced auctioneers. Whittaker was involved with the Ayrshire Association and had run cattle auctions behind the Brandon Inn. Barb had organized tailgate auctions every Friday night at the Smoke Rise Restaurant (which became Cattails and is now Lucky Sevens Dispensary).

“Barb was fun,” said Kimble. “And we had fun listening to her. An auctioneer has to know how to keep the momentum going. Their job is to keep bidders engaged and bring in the highest prices possible.”

“People used to come just for the interactions,” said Mondlak. “We’d still be setting up and there’d be a line of people waiting to get the

best seats.”

The objects for sale came mostly from BACC members, who were all expected to donate. Over the years, donations have ranged from inexpensive household goods to the aforementioned sailboat, Jim Jasmin’s own vintage pickup truck, and some very desirable artwork by Kimble and other local artists such as Liza Myers and Dolores Furnari. In fact, some of the highest prices ever realized at the auction were for Kimble’s artwork, which could fetch over \$10,000 for a single piece.

“Once, someone donated a 1949 Plymouth to the Brandon Village Partnership, which was the precursor to the Downtown Brandon Alliance, and the Partnership had no way to sell it,” recalled Mondlak. “So, they gave

used to be at the corner of Route 7 and Nickerson Road,” said Mondlak. “There was an upside-down baby doll hanging in there that



**AL LEAVITT HELPS out with an unusual donation: urinals said to have come from the Brandon Town Hall.**

The items had to be appraised, catalogued, and displayed on the day of. Chairs had to be set up.

“People like Joel Mondlak, Joan Rowe, and Nancy Spaulding-Ness were there from the beginning,” said Carr.

“Everyone looked forward to this community event,” said Rowe. “It’s amazing that this little town was able to keep it going all these years.”

Nancy Leary sold 50/50 raffle tickets at every auction. One year she managed to sell \$1,500 worth of tickets. The winner of the raffle would get 50% of the pot and the opportunity to come up to the podium to act as auctioneer for an item.

“The crowd was always into that,” said Carr, noting that the auction routinely drew 300 to 500 people.

The event remained at Central Park until the Segment 6 construction project forced a move to Estabrook Park for 2018 and 2019. And then COVID hit in 2020 and BACC couldn’t hold a live event.

“Barb was with us until COVID,” said Carr. But in 2020, the auction became a silent event, with people leaving written bids instead of raising paddles. The silent auction was initially held in the space now occupied by the National Bank of Middlebury but is now held in the main room of the Town Hall. And instead of displaying the items for only the day of the auction, the new format allows people ample time to browse and deliberate.

Photos provided

Though some folks miss the fun of the live event, the expanded timeframe and buy-it-now option have resulted in more sales.

“It was time for a change anyway,” said Kimble. “Everything needs to be revived at some point. Because of how everything gets set up at Town Hall—it looks terrific in there—there’s excitement about the auction again.”

“A good auction would net (See Brandon Chamber Auction, Page 31)



**BERNIE CARR, JOEL Mondlak, and Ben Jerome at the Chamber Auction in 2008.**

it to us and we sold it for \$1,500.” Jasmin’s vintage pickup ended up selling for \$4,500...to Jasmin’s own brother.

“We had giant porcelain urinals for sale one year,” laughed Carr.

“I think those may have come out of the Town Hall when it was being renovated,” said Kimble.

“The auction has a history of creepy dolls too,” added Carr.

“We used to store stuff for the auction in the old chicken coop that

freaked everyone out.”

“The doll was dirty and we used to joke that everyone who came into the coop had to kiss the baby,” laughed Carr.

Even though the crew had a lot of laughs getting the auctions together every year, it was hard work. There were donations to pick up, many of which required strong, young backs.

“Stuff sometimes fell out of our truck,” laughed Mondlak.

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Photos by Kate McKay



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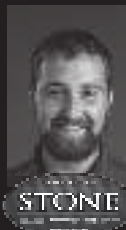
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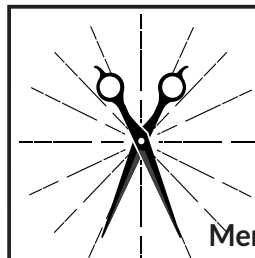
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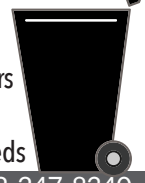
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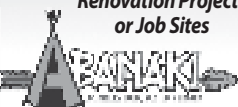
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# Brandon Chamber Auction

(Continued from Page 28)  
BACC between \$13,000 and \$15,000 when it was in the park,” said Carr. “Last year, we netted \$24,000.”  
Mondlak estimated that the auc-

Brandon,” said Mondlak. A short list of those projects includes rebuilding the bandstand in Central Park, helping with the renovation of the Town Hall and the establishment of the Brandon Museum to help run it.  
“We couldn’t do this without all our



LEFT TO RIGHT: Mickey Carr, Bernie Carr, Barb Watters, Paul Gladding, and Gene Pagano in 2007.

tion has raised more than \$350,000 over the years.  
The proceeds from the auction go toward BACC’s projects and initiatives, all of which are designed to make Brandon an attractive place to live and run a business.  
“The Chamber has used that money for a lot of projects around

and Visitor Center, the establishment of Green Park, the purchase and installation of trash cans and benches, and even the implementation of a small-loan program for local businesses.  
Mondlak emphasizes that anyone can be part of the auction by donating, buying, or volunteering

info@brandon.org. Donations are accepted throughout the entire auction, as “buy-it-now” items need to be replaced on the floor as they’re purchased.  
“We have new items every day,” said Carr.  
Newcomers to Brandon might not have had the chance to expe-



BACC EXEC DIRECTOR Bernie Carr tries out a vintage hair-salon dryer that was donated to the auction.

amazing volunteers,” said Carr. “We get a couple dozen people signing up every year.”  
Anyone who wants to donate to the event can send an email to

info@brandon.org. Donations are accepted throughout the entire auction, as “buy-it-now” items need to be replaced on the floor as they’re purchased.  
“We have new items every day,” said Carr.  
Newcomers to Brandon might not have had the chance to expe-

rience the heyday of the live auctions, but the tradition carries on in new form at Town Hall. So, plan to stop by and pick something up. You never know what you might find—maybe even a vintage urinal!

The 37th annual Chamber Auction will be held in the main room of the Brandon Town Hall from Thursday, July 3rd to Saturday, July 12th.

## Classifieds

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# Education reform

(Continued from Page 26)  
to rise rapidly in recent years.

Earlier in the day, the Senate had passed H.454 despite most of the chamber's Democratic caucus voting in opposition. In the Senate — and later in the House — the bill survived attempts to kill it on procedural grounds.

After the House's voice vote, Krowinski allowed representatives to stand and discuss the bill after the fact.

For his district in Barre, Rep. Teddy Waszazak, D-Barre City, said H.454 would transform public schools for the better by bringing the district's funding more in line with the state's average.

"The status quo is killing us," he said.

Rep. Leanne Harple, D-Glover, a teacher, stood to express her "unapologetic" opposition to the bill she said would lead to the closure of small rural schools.

"I've heard the word equity to justify this bill, but I believe that word is being misused," she said. "There is nothing equitable about putting a child on the bus for two hours a day."

The bill drew ire from the associations representing Vermont's education community, and over

the weekend, superintendents and school board members went public with their opposition.

In an interview, Don Tinney, president of the state teacher union VT-NEA, criticized how H.454 consolidated power in Montpelier.

"I think that we know that the best decisions for students are made by people who know their students," the union leader said. "Our local school boards currently make those budget decisions, policy decisions for kids within their community, and so the centralization of power within the education system to Montpelier gives real cause for concern."

Tinney argued the state doesn't need to change how much it pays for education, but rather how it levies taxes. To that effect, the teachers union has called for funding schools with an income tax rather than a property tax, an idea that received little air time this year.

"I would ask any policymaker, any legislator to spend a week in the school, to substitute in classes, to work in the cafeteria, to ride the school buses for a week, and at the end of the week, decide where all the fat is in the budget," he said.

Before Monday, H.454 had unusual backing for such a controver-

sial bill.

The Democrats leading the House and Senate had voiced support, as had Scott, a Republican. Yet a majority in either chamber was far from certain, with a slice of both Democrats and Republicans opposed, though perhaps for different reasons. Some have argued the bill spends too much. Others say it underfunds schools. Some fear it will gut rural school districts and shutter small schools. Still others argue it shifts too much power out of local hands and into Montpelier.

What's in the bill?

Lawmakers describe H.454 as working toward two broad goals: expanding educational opportunity across the state, and making public education more affordable for taxpayers.

To that end, the bill would consolidate Vermont's 119 school districts into larger, regional bodies, and move the state to a new education funding formula.

The state would gradually pivot to funding its education using a foundation formula beginning in fiscal year 2029. The method — used in most states across the country — moves primary authority over how much school districts can spend from the local to the state level. That's a huge change from the current system, which gives the vast majority of authority to local officials.

Under the foundation formula, districts would receive money based on the number of students enrolled, with additional dollars for students who are more expensive to educate, such as English learners and students from economically disadvantaged backgrounds. Districts could choose to spend more — but not less — than the formula provides.

To ease the transition to the new formula, lawmakers proposed phasing in the new system. As intended, that process would slowly pull back funding from districts that spend well above average now, and ramp up spending in historically low-spending areas.

Lawmakers, with the help of Scott's team, devised a new income-sensitized property tax discount. The framework would allow Vermonters making \$115,000 or less to exempt a portion of their house value from property taxes, with the possibility of increasing the income threshold in the future. The exemption creates a sliding scale, with lower-income homeowners eligible for bigger exemptions. Up to \$425,000 in home value is eligible for the discount.

The bill would put into effect average class-size minimums in first grade through high school for certain subject classes. But school districts would only face the possibility of repercussions for being

out of compliance after three years of not meeting the minimums. Plus, a waiver process would allow schools to petition for an exemption.

Despite the sweeping changes outlined, almost as many details need to be hashed out. The bill's biggest unknown is what future consolidated school districts could look like. A task force will hash out not more than three possible configurations this summer that the Legislature would need to vote on as soon as next session. In rough terms, that group might bring back plans with anywhere from 10 to 25 future districts.

Those maps, as well as the new funding formula, would take effect in July 2028.

Other key, outstanding details include how to handle existing district debt and different teachers contracts in new, consolidated districts. Lawmakers also need to figure out how to pay for — and bring down the cost of — special education, and how money would be allocated to career and technical education and pre-kindergarten.

The bill is structured so that if certain future requirements are not fulfilled, the transformation falls apart. The foundation formula is contingent on creating consolidated school districts. Several aspects rely on future studies and the outcomes of those analyses.

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