

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

A community supported newspaper

Vol. 30, No.29

Wednesday, July 23, 2025

\$1

Watch for next week's Reporter on Thursday, July 31 due to a scheduling conflict. We apologize for any inconvenience.



#### COMING TO AMERICA

Michael F. Dwyer follows the journey of John and Alice Brutkowski from Poland in 1912 to West Rutland.

PG. 2



#### CONGRATULATIONS

Bar Harbor Bank & Trust has awarded scholarships to new high school grads, including Otter Valley's own Makenna Gatchet.

PG. 4



PG. 10



#### TRAVEL MEMORIES

Lyla Fuller recounts a treasured trip to Copper Canyon, Mexico with her dear friend.

PG. 14



## Let's get physical: Fit Factory Fitness Center to open in Brandon this fall

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—For years, the closest gyms to the Brandon/Pittsford area were in either Rutland or Middlebury, making it inconvenient to fit weight training and other gym-based exercise into a weekly schedule.

But that's going to change this fall when Fit Factory Fitness Center opens in the space formerly occupied by Upscale Resale on Route 7 south of Brandon Village.

The entrepreneur behind the new gym is Andy Doaner, a Brandon resident who's



(See Fit Factory, Page 8)



BLUE BUCKETS OF big blueberries at Mother's Meadow blueberry farm on McConnell Road in Brandon. After several years of careful prep work, the farm is now open for berry-picking. Photos by Steven Jupiter

## Mother's Meadow pick-your-own blueberry farm opens in Brandon

BY STEVEN JUPITER

BRANDON—Everyone has a favorite way to enjoy fresh summer blueberries: pies, pancakes, muffins, jams, jellies, or just by the handful. The flavor is one of the most beloved hallmarks of a Vermont summer. And picking the berries yourself is one of the most beloved activities of the season in Vermont as well.

And now there's a new arrival on Brandon's blueberry scene: Mother's Meadow

pick-your-own blueberry farm on McConnell Road. It's four acres of some of the sweetest, plumpest, juiciest blueberries around.

These are not the tiny fruits of wild bushes. Instead, these are the roly-poly fatboys of specially cultivated varieties, expressly chosen by proprietor Kitt Plummer, who's made a career of fruit farming and who first planted these bushes in 2022 and had to let them mature until this summer to offer the public a

(See Mother's Meadow, Page 3)

## Neshobe Golf Club is no longer a 'Hidden Gem'

BY GEORGE FJELD

BRANDON—Neshobe Golf Club hosted the 96th New England Amateur Championship with the best golfers in New England competing over three days. Eli Spaulding of Brunswick Golf Club in Maine was the winner at 14 under par, with Neshobe members and locals Lucas Politano in fourth at 11 under and Walker Allen in tenth at 6 under. Spaulding won the Maine Amateur earlier this month and will play in the US Amateur in August.

Politano made a charge on the last 9 holes of the tournament with 5 birdies, including 3 in a row at 14, 15, and 16, before stumbling with a bogey at 17. It was an impressive showing for the 18-year-old Brandonite. Lucas's father, Paul Politano, is the professional at Ralph Myhre Golf course and



ELI SPAULDING WITH the New England Amateur cup.

Photo credit New England Golf Association

a former pro at Neshobe. Lucas is planning to attend Rutgers University this fall and will play collegiate golf. But before that,

he is headed to the USGA Junior Championship in Texas this week. Good Luck, Lucas! Walker Allen is a top mid-amateur and former

collegiate golfer who finished second to Politano in the Vermont Amateur last year.

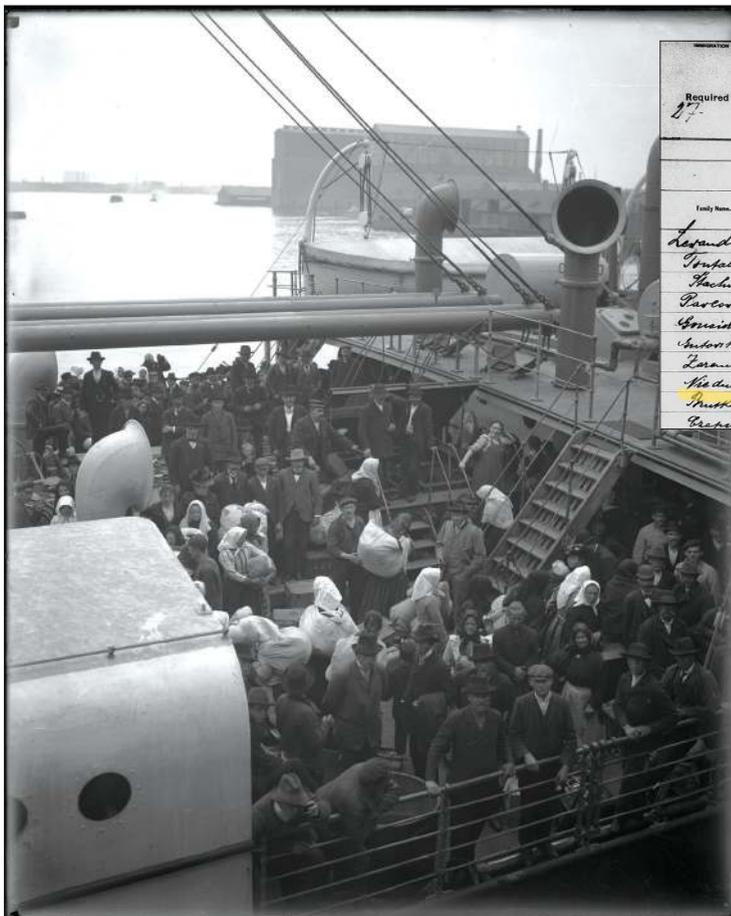
The real winner of the event was Neshobe Golf Club. Neshobe is only the second public golf course to host the NE Amateur in its 96-year history. For years, Neshobe has been called "A Hidden Gem" because it is an excellent golf course in a rural area, and not many outside of Vermont have played it. Those days are over, and the secret is out after 144 top golfers, their caddies, and family and friends rounded the Neshobe track 3 times in the tournament. These players are top amateurs and collegiate golfers in the nation. They will spread the word.

Neshobe Golf Club owner and Director of Golf Jon Milne said, "the layout, the condition, and the (See Neshobe Golf, Page 19)

# Coming to America, No.4: John and Alice (Libuda) Brutkowski of West Rutland

BY MICHAEL F. DWYER

These next two episodes focus on the grandparents of my late friend and colleague John H. Brutkoski (1943–2010), who taught Social Studies at Otter Valley Union High School for 37 years. John’s time there extended well beyond the school days as the ticket-taker at games and all the summers he and Pattie Candon spent painting. We had snippets of conversation over the years about his grandfather John [Jan, in Polish], after whom he was named. One detail I recall is that John remembered his grandfather came from a place in Poland that had no trees. A point here on pronunciation: most people who knew John would have said his last name as Brutowski, forgetting a K followed the T. Donna Brutkoski, John’s daughter, always enunciated her last name clearly, giving voice to the T the K and the S rather than a W. [John’s father, Herman chose to spell the name as Brutkoski, claiming the S sound was closer to the Polish pronunciation].



IMMIGRANTS ABOARD NECKAR in 1905.

LIST OR MANIFEST OF ALIEN PASSENGERS FOR THE UNITED STATES  
Required by the regulations of the Secretary of Commerce and Labor of the United States, under Act of Congress approved February 20, 1907, to be delivered to the Collector of Customs at the port of arrival of the vessel.

S. S. Neckar sailing from Bremen March 25<sup>th</sup> 1912

NAME IN FULL	Age	Sex	Calling or Occupation	Place of Birth	Nativity	Country of which (last or subject)	Rank or People	Country	City or Town	Final Destination
Brutowski Jan	30	M	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City
Brutowski Alice	25	F	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City
Brutowski Herman	55	M	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City
Brutowski John	15	M	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City
Brutowski Janina	18	F	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City
Brutowski Helena	12	F	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City
Brutowski Stanislaw	8	M	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City
Brutowski Janina	6	F	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City
Brutowski Janina	4	F	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City
Brutowski Janina	2	F	laborer	Sumova Poland	Polish	Poland				New York City

SS NECKAR MANIFEST with Jan's name highlighted. Steerage held 2600 passengers.

Before unfolding the story of twenty-five-year-old Jan Brutkowski, a Polish farm laborer, who sailed in the steerage of the SS Neckar from Bremen, arriving in New York City, on April 7, 1912, let me share some broad brushstrokes of Polish history. The Kingdom of Poland was completely swallowed up by Russia, Austria, and Prussia by 1795. Russia held the largest portion of territory, where conditions for peasants amounted to virtual slav-

ery. Almost nothing is known about Jan’s life in the village of Sumova, located in the northeast of present-day Poland near the border of Lithuania. He possessed a rudimentary education, equivalent to three years of elementary school.

With his country of origin listed as Russia on the ship manifest, he left behind his bride, Aleksandra [known as Alice in American records] Libuda and joined at least six (See Coming to America, Page 7)

See some of our newest Inventory all week at Field Days



See you at the  
Demolition Derby  
July 29-30-31!



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# Mother's Meadow

(Continued from Page 1)

chance to come pick.

"I chose these bushes for both size and flavor," said Plummer at his "plantation," as he calls it.

Plummer worked on a similar plantation in Londonderry, New Hampshire, in addition to the work he put in at an apple orchard there. He's no backyard amateur. After he purchased the acreage on McConnell Road, he took the time to prepare the soil specifically for blueberries.

"Blueberries like acidic, well-drained soil," he said. The property had been a hay field and required some remediation.

"I had to get the pH levels right before I even put any of the bushes in the ground," he added.

The 4,200 plants are arranged in neat rows, their roots protected by mulch and served by a computer-run, solar-powered, well-based irrigation system that delivers water to them only when the soil monitors indicate that moisture levels have dropped off.

Plummer has worked with agriculture specialists from UVM to get the conditions just right and to develop flower gardens to attract the pollinators that are necessary to sustainable fruit production.

Though not an organic farm, Plummer is careful about the compounds he uses.

"My own grandkids eat right off the bushes," he said. "You just have to use your head and do the research."

The results speak for themselves. Plummer is getting 10,000 pounds of fruit per acre. The berries are fat and flavorful and taste like summer. And this past weekend, people showed up to get their fix. They filled the buckets that Plummer provided and then brought their haul to be weighed.

Plummer is charging \$5.49/lb., with a 10% discount for more than 10 pounds.

"A lot of people who've been watching me get everything ready for the last four years have stopped by," said Plummer. "They've been ex-

cited to finally get to pick these berries they've been watching grow."

Plummer isn't just offering his berries to DIY pickers; he's also working with other local outlets to get his delectable fruit out to the public, so keep a look-out for the Mother's Meadow logo around the area.

The farm is open Tuesday, Wednesday, Friday, and Saturday. Picking buckets are provided and the berries are placed in cardboard trays for the trip home.

Plummer has years invested in this plantation and will have to wait several years more to recoup the investment, but it's clear that he enjoys what he does and wants to provide the best quality product he can.

Visit [pickyourownberries.com](http://pickyourownberries.com) to find out more about Mother's Meadow.



**MOTHER'S MEADOW PROPRIETOR** Kitt Plummer came to Brandon from New Hampshire, where he had years of experience managing fruit farms.



**BRANDON RESIDENTS** SUSAN Johnson (left) and Lisa Weber (right) after a berry-picking session at Mother's Meadow last weekend.



**THE 4-ACRE PROPERTY** on McConnell Road hosts 4,200 blueberry bushes and had to be specially prepared to provide ideal growing conditions.

## Spotlight On Business SHIELDS CONSTRUCTION



BRANDON AREA  
**CHAMBER**  
of Commerce

[Brandon.org](http://Brandon.org) for more info



Shields construction is a small residential company that has been in business for over 40 years. We handle all aspects of building and remodeling, but have gravitated towards renovation of older homes. Our Passion and goal is to

preserve as much of the original historical design of the home, while upgrading its function to modern standards and appeal.  
—Tim Shields and David Butterfield

## 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.

## July 29-Aaron Audet Band

This talented band plays a popular mix of acoustic and electric music.

FOOD BY  
ROLLIN'  
ROOSTER

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



**MAKENNA GACHET OF Brandon** was awarded a scholarship by Bar Harbor Bank & Trust.

## Bar Harbor Bank & Trust awards scholarship to OV grad

Bar Harbor Bank & Trust has awarded the Bank's 2025 Career & Technical Education Scholarship to 14 recent high school graduates from Northern New England, including a graduate of Otter Valley Union High School in Brandon. The \$1,000 scholarship is awarded to graduates who attended a technical career program as part of their high school curriculum and are planning to attend a college or technical school in the academic year immediately following graduation.

This year's scholarship recipients will be eligible to apply for an additional \$1,000 in 2026 to be used toward a second year of college or technical school.

The 2025 scholarship recipi-

ents are:

- Brennan Beattie of Birch Harbor, Maine, is a graduate of Sumner Memorial High School and attended Hancock County Technical Center. He plans to study biology on a pre-med track at the University of Maine.

- Anastase Bourgeois of Bradford, Vermont, is a graduate of Oxbow High School and attended River Bend Career & Technical Center. She plans to study nursing at West Virginia State University.

- Natasha Dos Santos of Nashua, New Hampshire, is a graduate of Nashua High School South and attended Nashua Technology Center. She plans to study nursing at Rivier (See Bar Harbor Awards, Page 5)



### Who needs a squeaky toy when you have me?

**THIS TINY AVIAN** is a Brown-headed Nuthatch. It's squeaky calls can be heard as it forages in the southern pine forests. This one was in the Tosohatchee WMA in Christmas, Florida.

Photo by Sue Wetmore

## Community Forums

### Talk about new work of Revolutionary War historic fiction at Mount Independence

**ORWELL**—On Sunday, July 27, 2025, at the Mount Independence State Historic Site in Orwell, Vermont, long-time site interpreter Paul Andrisein will talk about his new work of historic fiction, *The Memoirs of Isaac Kendall, Soldier of the Revolution, 1776-1777*. The book follows the daily activities of a soldier serving with the Northern Army from his enlistment to being stationed at Mt. Independence and involvement

in the 1777 battles of Saratoga. The program begins at 1 p.m. and is included in regular admission. Copies of the book will be available for purchase.

The Mount Independence State Historic Site is a National Historic Landmark and is one of the nation's best-preserved Revolutionary War archeological sites. Admission to the site, including the museum and trails, is \$8.00 for adults, \$1.00 for ages 6-14, and under 6 free.

Also free are Green Mountain Passport holders and Mount Independence Coalition members. The site is located at 497 Mount Independence Road, six miles west of the intersections of Vermont Routes 22A and 73 near Orwell village. Carefully follow the signs. Any questions—call 802-948-2000.

For more information about the Vermont State-owned Historic Sites, visit: [www.historic-sites.vermont.gov](http://www.historic-sites.vermont.gov).

### History hike at Mount Independence, Aug. 3

**ORWELL**—Enjoy a guided hike into history at the Mount Independence State Historic Site in Orwell, Vermont, on Sunday, August 3, 2025, from 1 to 3 pm. Stephen Zeoli is your guide. Zeoli, president of the Mount Independence Coalition, the site friends group, will share his wealth of knowledge about the Revolutionary War at Mount Independence and what you can see on the grounds.

Wear sturdy shoes or walking boots and bring water.

The hike is included in the price of site admission: \$8.00 for ages 15 and up, \$1.00 for children 6 – 14, and under 6 free. Call 802-948-2000 for more information.

The Mount Independence State Historic Site is one of the best-preserved Revolutionary War archeological sites. It is located at 497 Mount Inde-

pendence Road, six miles west of the intersections of Vermont Routes 22A and 73 near Orwell village. Carefully follow the signs. Hours are 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. daily through October 19.

For more information about the Vermont State-owned Historic Sites, visit: [www.historic-sites.vermont.gov](http://www.historic-sites.vermont.gov).

## The REPORTER

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

A community supported newspaper

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

Graphic design by Sepi Alavi; Kate Saunders, Operations coordinator

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# Letters to the Editor

## Brandon's new Postmaster introduces herself

I'm honored to introduce myself to the community as your new Postmaster. My name is Victoria Hunter and I'm excited to begin this journey serving the residents and businesses of Brandon.

The U.S. Postal Service has a long-standing tradition of connecting people—through letters, packages, and reliable service. Under our ambitious Delivering for America plan, I'm committed to upholding that tradition while working to enhance the customer experience in every way possible.

Whether it's ensuring timely deliveries, improving our retail services, or listening to your feedback, my goal is to make our post office a place of trust and support for everyone.

To this role, I bring over six and a half years in the postal service—including four as a clerk—I've built a strong foundation in customer service and leadership. My time as an acting supervisor exposed me to diverse environments and deepened my operational insight. In 2023, I became Supervisor of Customer Service and O.I.C. in

Massachusetts and now Postmaster of Brandon, Vermont, continuing a well-rounded path in postal leadership.

I encourage you to stop by the Post Office, say hello, and share any questions or ideas you may have. Thank you for the opportunity to serve. I'm proud to be here and look forward to working together to keep our community connected.

*Victoria Hunter  
Postmaster, Brandon*

## Help Brandon establish a new laundromat

Can you help solve a problem? Brandon has been without a laundromat for several years now. People without their own machine at home are driving or finding a ride to Middlebury or Rutland to accomplish a basic household chore. A new group is forming with the goal of securing grant funding and community contributions to site and operate a not-for-profit laundromat in Brandon.

I'm spearheading this because I want to meet a need, but it is not political and certainly not a partisan effort. We need participation from community-minded folks who have achieved success in grant writing, with skills and experience in business development, legal and real estate, and plumbing/electrical/carpentry.

If you are such a person, please reach out to me by email [tnielsen@leg.state.vt.us](mailto:tnielsen@leg.state.vt.us), and we will look to set up an initial meeting this summer to explore possibilities, identify our team, and outline our timeline.

Thank you for being part of helping improve our neighbors' daily living.

*Rep. Todd Nielsen  
Brandon*

## More municipalities should pass resolutions affirming constitutional rights

Recent federal immigration enforcement actions have raised concerns about due process protections in our communities. Reports include detention without legal representation, use of detainers without sufficient evidence, and arrests without criminal charges. Additionally, incidents of criminals impersonating federal officials have created public safety concerns.

The City of Rutland responded to these concerns last April by unanimously passing "A Resolution Condemning Attacks on Due Process and Affirming

the Constitutional Rights of All People in Rutland." Since then, fifteen other municipalities—Burlington, Wallingford, Rockingham/Bellows Falls, Brandon, Jericho, Pittsfield, Bennington, Shaftsbury, Pomfret, Middletown Springs, Rutland Town, Vergennes, East Montpelier, Manchester, and Pownal—have adopted similar resolutions. Those resolutions are available at <https://tinyurl.com/mxu-w6uyr>.

However, the elected officials of many Vermont municipalities have dismissed the idea of

adopting such resolutions, often without even informing their constituents that these issues were brought to their attention. Common reasons include viewing this effort as partisan politics rather than constitutional protection; believing the resolution is unnecessary since officials have already sworn to uphold constitutional rights; or fearing federal retaliation.

Respectfully, these concerns miss the point. First, constitutional protections are not partisan—they protect all Vermonters regardless of political affiliation.

Second, the resolution asks local officials to publicly reaffirm their commitment to constitutional principles at a time when these principles are being challenged. Third, silence in the face of federal lawlessness has not protected Vermont.

Our communities deserve leaders that will uphold our constitutional rights, and Vermonters have a right to know where their local officials stand. I encourage you to contact your local board members and ask them to consider adopting a resolution for your municipality. Attend

board meetings, organize with neighbors, and demand transparency about why your local officials support or oppose such measures.

Resolutions adopted by other municipalities can be adapted for yours. The time to act is now, before our constitutional protections erode further. Use your voice to protect your rights.

*Peter Franzoni  
Rutland*

## Bar Harbor Awards

*(Continued from Page 4)*  
University.

• **Makenna Gatchet of Brandon, Vermont**, is a graduate of Otter Valley Union High School and attended Stafford Technical Center. She plans to study nursing at Vermont State University.

• **Ann Gosselin of Addison, Maine**, is a graduate of Naraguagus High School and attended the Coastal Washington County Institute of Technology. She plans to study criminal justice at Eastern Maine Community College.

• **Lexi Harris of Washington, New Hampshire**, is a graduate of Hillsboro-Deering High School and attended Concord Regional Technical Center. She plans to study nursing at Plymouth State University.

• **Cameron Hornyak of Le-**

**vant, Maine**, is a graduate of Hermon High School and attended United Technologies Center. He plans to study electrical and automation technology at Eastern Maine Community College.

• **Abigail Huff of Goshen, New Hampshire**, is a graduate of Newport High School and attended Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center. She plans to study elementary education, psychology, and business at New England College.

• **Aja Marzilli of Orono, Maine**, is a graduate of Orono High School and attended United Technologies Center. She plans to study marketing and political science at the University of Southern Maine.

• **Quynh Pham of Newport, New Hampshire**, is a gradu-

ate of Newport High School and attended Sugar River Valley Regional Technical Center. She plans to study finance at the University of Maryland.

• **Makenzie Ramos of Orono, Maine**, is a graduate of Brewer High School and attended United Technologies Center. She plans to study business management at the University of Maine.

• **Jonathan Reyes Santos of Hillsborough, New Hampshire**, is a graduate of Manchester School of Technology. He plans to study architectural engineering at Worcester Polytechnic Institute.

• **Zoe Richardson of Rockland, Maine**, is a graduate of Oceanside High School and attended Mid-Coast School of  
*(See Bar Harbor Awards, Page 6)*

**"Chronic venous insufficiency is a condition where the veins in the legs have difficulty drawing attention from the fact that the Epstein Files still haven't been released."**

Learn more at:

[indivisiblebrandon.org/StreisandEffect](http://indivisiblebrandon.org/StreisandEffect)

# Obituaries

## Marsha Alice (Miner) Hesse, 70, Brandon

It is with heavy hearts and deep sadness that we announce the passing of our Mom, Marsha Alice (Miner) Hesse, 70, of Brandon, Vt., on July 11, 2025.

Marsha was born in Middlebury, Vt. on March 11, 1955 and was raised on the Thelee Farm on Arnold District Road in Brandon. Marsha was the daughter of the late Thelma (Hathaway) and Leo Miner. She attended Otter Valley Union High School and graduated with the Class of 1973. In 2016, she was predeceased by her beloved husband, David Hesse, and carried his memory with her always.

Marsha is survived by her two daughters, Sarah Pelkey (Adam Pelkey) of West Rutland and Melissa Lynch (Shaun Tully) of Brandon, and her four treasured grandchildren—Max, Dylan, and Emma Derby, and Elaina Pelkey—who knew her simply and lovingly as “Granny.” To them, she was everything. Her presence in their lives was constant, grounding, and full of joy. The bond they shared was deep and unmatched. She is also survived by her sister, Marie Perry of South Burlington, Vt.; three brothers, Ernie Miner (Debbie) of Leicester, Vt., James Miner (Kim) and Edward Miner



**MARSHA ALICE HESSE**

(Lynn), both of Brandon, Vt.; her Aunt Gertrude Hathway of Benson, Vt.; and the many nieces, nephews, cousins, and extended family who knew her love and generosity. In recent years, she’d developed a special loving bond with her niece, Emily Rose Miner.

Marsha wore many hats throughout her life—daughter, sister, mother, wife, grandmother, friend, confidante—but above all, she was a caregiver and protector. She raised her daughters faithfully with fierce devotion and grace, earn-

ing them the shared nickname “Marsha and the girls.” Her daughters mourn the loss of their mother, their rock, and their greatest cheerleader.

She had an undeniable sense of style—designing her own clothes as a teenager—and a sharp wit paired with a warm heart. She was beautiful, cool, maternal, funny, and generous with what she had.

Marsha was also a dedicated member of the Order of the Eastern Star, Marble Chapter No. 80 in Brandon, for over 30 years. Her commitment to community and tradition was a quiet but steady part of her life.

A memorial service will be held on Saturday, July 26, 2025, at 1 p.m. at the Brandon Congregational Church. All who loved her are welcome.

Marsha lived a life defined by care, laughter, and strength. She leaves behind a family knit tightly with her love, and a legacy that will live on through every memory, every story, and every heart she touched.

The family asks that donations in her memory be made to Shriner’s Hospital for Children, St. Jude Children’s Hospital, or similar charitable organizations supporting children in need or charities benefitting homeless dogs.

## Erica Lea Bovey, 41, Pittsford

It is with great sorrow we announce the passing of Erica Lea Bovey.

Erica passed away at her home in Florence on the morning of Wednesday, July 9.

She was born in Rutland, Vermont, on December 7, 1983, to Danny and Cheryl Owens.

She was a beloved daughter, sister, mother, wife, and great friend to many.

She is survived by her husband, Travis Bovey; her children, Bradley, Breanna, Isabella, and Bria; her mother, Cheryl, and her mother’s husband, Linwood Bovey; and her brother, Dylan Owens; many aunts and cousins; and her previous husband and longtime friend, Zachary Manieri.

She is predeceased by her beloved father.

Erica was an avid sports Mom. Always a camera in hand at any of her kids’ games of ice hockey, field hockey, basketball, baseball, and football.

Erica was an amazing cook and loved a full house of company during the holidays and birthday celebrations.

The ocean was her happy place, taking many vacations with family and friends to her favorite spots. If not the ocean, their lake house in Maine was always a good escape.



**ERICA LEA BOVEY**

Erica’s memory will live in our hearts for eternity, and her legacy will forever be remembered within her children.

A memorial service with calling hours will be held at Clifford Funeral Home in Rutland on Friday, July 25th from 4 p.m. to 7 p.m.

A private graveside service will be held the following day.

Arrangements are under the direction of the Clifford Funeral Home. Online condolences at [www.cliffordfuneralhome.com](http://www.cliffordfuneralhome.com).

## 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.

## Bar Harbor awards

*(Continued from Page 5)*

Technology. She plans to study communications and new media at Southern Maine Community College.

• Makayla Vincent of Hillsborough, New Hampshire, is a graduate of Hillsboro-Deering High School and attended Concord Regional Technical Center. She plans to study criminal justice and homeland security at Plymouth State University.

The Bank established the Career & Technical Education Scholarship in 2018 and has awarded 108 scholarships to date.

Bar Harbor Bankshares (NYSE American: BHB) is the parent company of its wholly

owned subsidiary, Bar Harbor Bank & Trust. Operating more than 50 locations across Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont, Bar Harbor Bank & Trust is headquartered in Bar Harbor, Maine, and has more than \$4 billion in assets. As a leading Northern New England community bank, Bar Harbor Bank & Trust offers a full range of personal and business banking services, as well as wealth management services through its subsidiary Bar Harbor Wealth Management. For more information about Bar Harbor Bank & Trust, visit [www.barharbor.bank](http://www.barharbor.bank) or call 888-853-7100. Member FDIC.

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**WE NEED U**

**Sharpen your mind with our puzzles.**  
 Crossword & Sudoku on page 17

# Coming to America

(Continued from Page 2)

other men aboard the ship who were destined for West Rutland, Vermont,—his sponsor Adam Libuda, undoubtedly a relative of his wife. Family lore, supported by many other oral histories, claimed he was recruited right on the docks to work for the Vermont Marble Company. Indeed, he would labor in the quarries there until months before his death in 1955.

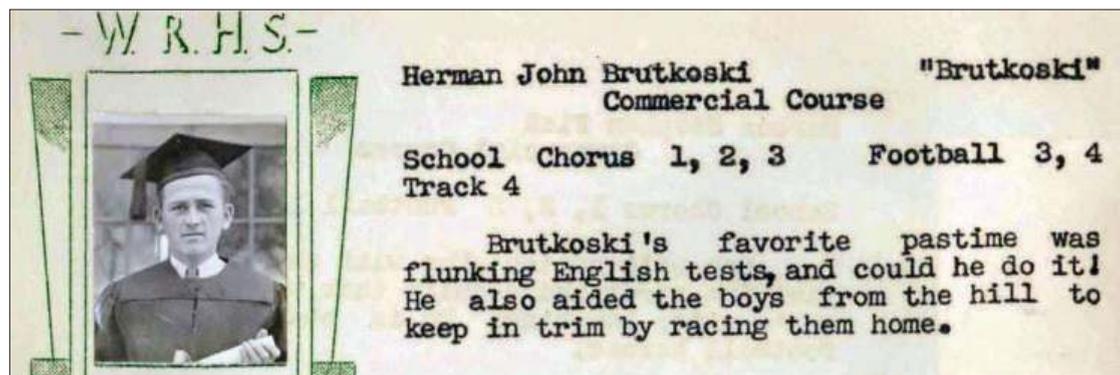
A year later, on 30 September 1913, Aleksandra Brutkowska [inflection in Polish surnames with the final consonant ending in A for women] arrived aboard the ship Koln arriving in Boston. Their first child Julia was born in West Rutland on July 18, 1914. She would

dren learned English at school. It would have been typical for Julia and Genevieve to graduate from West Rutland High School, it was more the exception for Herman, a first generation Polish American, to graduate from high school in 1937 while the country was caught in the throes of the Depression. Most of his peers were already working in the quarries during their teens.

Census records attest to John Brutkoski as a diligent worker: in 1940, it stated he worked 52 weeks in the year. Having lived in rental housing on Baxter Street for three decades, the Brutkowskis were able to purchase a duplex, the other half inhabited by family, on Highland Avenue in West Rutland.



**BRUTKOWSKI FAMILY. CA. 1923: John, Alice, Julia, Genevieve, and Herman.**



**SNIPPET FROM WEST Rutland High School, 1937, for Herman Brutkowski.**

be followed by Genovefa [Genevieve] on November 12, 1915, Czeslaw [remembered as Charles] in January 1918, who died at eight months during the influenza pandemic, and Hieronomi, born on June 15, 1919. Hieronomi would have translated as Jerome, but the West Rutland Town Clerk could not get the hang of it and wrote the name as Herman as he henceforth would be known.

By the time the Brutkowskis landed in West Rutland, they joined a tightly knit Polish immigrant community united by language, customs, and staunch allegiance to the Roman Catholic Church. Polish native Rev. Valentin Michulka (1878–1969) loomed largely in the lives of the immigrants. Ordained a priest in 1904 in Rome, he soon accepted a call to found a church, St. Stanislas Koska in West Rutland. He oversaw the building of a school and invited nuns of the Order of St. Felix [known as the Felician Sisters.] to staff the school. While families may have been poor, they donned their Sunday best for Mass and holy days of obligation. With Polish spoken exclusively at home, the chil-



**REV. VALENTIN MICHULKA, ca. 1905.**

Granddaughter Lorraine Nicolini recalls they raised chickens and had a huge garden with winter stores of potatoes and winter sauerkraut.

Typical of first-born American children of Polish immigrants, eldest daughter Julia married within her own ethnic group. She married Stanley Jankoski and remained in West Rutland. They lived to celebrate their 65th wedding anniversary. Herman married Mary Kamuda just a month before the bombing of Pearl

Harbor. [The Kamuda family will be the focus of the next installment] He soon enlisted in the U.S. Army Air Corps and was in California when son John was born. Herman and his family moved to Brandon in 1951. They ran the Union Street Market from 1951 until 1962. Daughter Genevieve was the exception; she moved to New York City, where she met her husband, Ernest Nicolini. Nonetheless, she like her siblings were married by Monsi- (See *Coming to America*, Page 9)

## BRANDON YARD SALE DAY SATURDAY, AUGUST 2, 2025 REGISTRATION FORM

Name and address listing: \$10 OR

Enhanced listing: \$15

\$15 buys you 25 words to describe your yard sale's "special" items plus your name and address in a boxed ad.

**For ALL LISTINGS:**

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

EMAIL: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

**For ENHANCED LISTING:**

**ADD 25 WORDS:**

(separate sheet of paper)

MAIL TO: BACC, PO BOX 267,

BRANDON, VT 05733

OR DROP OFF AT CARR'S GIFTS.

DEADLINE FOR REGISTRATION:

July 30, 2025

Go to [Brandon.org](http://Brandon.org) for more info!



# Fit Factory

(Continued from Page 1)  
 also the proprietor of the Hilltop Tavern in Pittsford. His wife, Erynn, is the owner of Mae's Place in Brandon. After months of grapevine speculation, Doaner is now ready to go public with his plans.

"I've been into weightlifting since I was 16," said Doaner. "This is a good business oppor-

in the area that they wanted a local gym. He was able to purchase equipment from a gym in Rutland that was going out of business, but he still needed to find a suitable location in Brandon.

"I needed to find someplace that was easy to get to and had enough parking," he said. When the former Upscale Resale space

from all around the area."

Though the location on Route 7 offers great visibility and ample parking, Doaner has had to wait for the state to approve the design for an expanded septic system to be able to announce a firm opening date, though he anticipates cutting the ribbon in November.

The facility will have the usual weights and equipment and will also offer classes and personal training.

"I want everyone to feel welcome," he said. "We want to accommodate all ages and genders. There will be something for everybody. We plan to have classes like yoga and pilates. And there's going to be a learning curve to this, so we'll change it up as we learn what works and what doesn't."

Doaner envisions a gym where everyone in the community can meet their fitness goals, whether it's muscle mass, weight control, or just staying healthy.

"It's not going to be an intimidating disco gym with music blaring," he explained. "It'll be the kind of place where people can feel comfortable wherever they are in their fitness journey."

And if you're not sure how to get started, his staff will be there to answer basic questions and give pointers.

A range of membership options will be available once the website is up and running, with monthly and even day passes on the menu. The gym will be open 7 days a week and with extended hours to accommodate those who can come only

If interested, please contact him at [fitfactoryfitnesscenter2024@gmail.com](mailto:fitfactoryfitnesscenter2024@gmail.com). Please don't send inquiries about memberships or any other non-employment-related topics at this time.

Once Doaner has the septic permit and website in place, he can set a specific opening date and begin selling memberships.

The inclusion of a gym in Brandon's wide range of amenities will further cement the town's status as the main hub between Rutland and Middlebury and give local residents the convenience and accessibility to maintain their fitness plans.

So, keep your eyes on the building for additional an-



ANDY DOANER IS addressing an unmet demand for a gym facility in the Brandon area with Fit Factory Fitness Center.

tunity but it's also something Brandon needs. It's not all about making money."

Doaner said he'd been hearing more and more from people

became available, he jumped at it.

"I'd had my eye on this building for a long time," he added. "We'll be able to reach people

*"I want everyone to feel welcome," he said. "We want to accommodate all ages and genders. There will be something for everybody."*

— Andy Doaner, Owner



FIT FACTORY FITNESS Center will occupy the building that was formerly home to Upscale Resale on Route 7 south of Brandon Village.

in the evenings. Workout gear, branded merchandise, and some food items will also be available on the premises.

Doaner is currently looking for fitness pros who'd like to teach classes or work as personal trainers—as independent contractors.

nouncements regarding opening dates. As winter rolls in, there will be no more using long travel or bad weather as excuses not to exercise. Fit Factory Fitness Center will help you stay healthy all year round.

## RARE FINDS AT WIMETT'S!



**2020 CHEVROLET SILVERADO**  
 2500HD, Xtd Cab, 4X4, 6.6V8, 97k miles  
**\$34,995**



**2017 HONDA CRV**  
 EX, AWD, Auto, Sunroof, 129k miles  
**\$14,995**



**2016 FORD F350**  
 XTD Cab Superduty 4X4, 6.7 Diesel, 95k miles  
**\$36,995**



**2018 TOYOTA TACOMA**  
 Crew Cab 4X4, V6, Longbox, 125k miles  
**\$25,995**



**2020 SUBARU OUTBACK**  
 Limited, AWD, Leather, Loaded, 116k miles  
**\$20,995**

**AFFORDABLE, SAFE & RELIABLE  
 USED CARS AND TRUCKS**

We also buy cars,  
 locate specialty orders  
 & consider consignments  
 Call Dave for an appointment

**Wimett Trading Company**  
 at the Big White Barn in Leicester

Michael Jackman, 53 Years Experience  
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**802-465-4688**

2668 Route 7 • Leicester, VT 05733 • [wimetttradingco@gmail.com](mailto:wimetttradingco@gmail.com)



**Blueberry Hill** Next concert:  
**Footworks**

**PIZZA BY THE POND**  
 Wood-fired pizza from our  
 outside hearth in the  
 quintessential summer setting!

WALK-INS WELCOME BUT  
 RESERVATIONS STRONGLY SUGGESTED

[www.blueberryhillinn.com/pizza](http://www.blueberryhillinn.com/pizza) Thursday July 31, 5-8 PM

**Blueberry Hill** Next concert:  
**Traveling Middleburys**

**PIZZA BY THE POND**  
 Wood-fired pizza from our  
 outside hearth in the  
 quintessential summer setting!

WALK-INS WELCOME BUT  
 RESERVATIONS STRONGLY SUGGESTED

[www.blueberryhillinn.com/pizza](http://www.blueberryhillinn.com/pizza) Friday August 1st, 5-8 PM

# Coming to America

*(Continued from Page 7)*

gnor Michulka at St. Stanislas. The beloved pastor lived long enough to celebrate the funeral Masses of Jan and Aleksandra whose gravestone reflects their Polish names.

Looking back on Jan/John Brutkowski's life, one wonders, did he realize the American dream? He had a labor-intensive job, never lived to retire or gain a pension. He died at the age of 68. Did Jan regret leaving family whom he would never see again? Had he remained in Sumowa, he likely would have been conscripted to fight in the Tsar's army during World War I, during which Russian soldiers suffered catastrophic losses. His village and surrounding area were occupied by the Germans. With the creation of Poland as a sovereign state in 1918, the fighting continued between the Soviet Union, Lithuania, and Poland until 1922, with some villages occupied and reoccupied. Jan's Polish family certainly would have suffered in World War II, with the invasions first of the Soviet Union and then the Nazi army. His Jewish neighbors as well as Polish citizens were slaughtered by the Einsatzgruppen. All members of West Rutland's Polish community would have known someone who perished. Here Jan and Alexandra Brutkowski would live out their lives unmolested by war and derive the satisfaction of seeing their children educated and gradually attain higher standards of living than the intrepid immigrants who braved an ocean to settle in West Rutland.

Acknowledgments: The Brutkoski family: Sandy, Donna, Sharron, Joe and Joanne Scarborough; Lorraine Nicolini, and Olivia Boughton of St. Stanislas Parish.



**ABOVE: FIRST COMMUNION** photo of Herman Brutkowski; **Above right: John and Alice Brutkowski with the newborn grandson John in 1943;** **Right: Wedding of Genevieve Nicolini, with her father, May 1950.**



**FAR LEFT: GRAVESTONE, St. Stanislas Cemetery of Jan and Aleksandra. Note her date of birth is off by ten years!** **Left: Polish gravestone in West Rutland on infant Czeslaw Brutkowski;** **Above: OV History teachers in 2003: Rita Rinehart, John Brutkoski, Michael Dwyer.**

# OUR CREATIVE KIDS

STUDENT: Noah Beaulieu

GRADE: 1 (going into grade 2)

SCHOOL: Neshobe

TITLE: Untitled

TEACHER: John Brodowski



More than \$18 million in federal funds remains withheld, state officials said, including money for English language learning programs and adult learning centers.

## Trump administration partially lifts funding freeze, sends \$6.5 million to Vermont schools for afterschool programs

BY COREY MCDONALD/  
VTDIGGER

The Trump administration last week announced it was releasing a portion of federal funding for local school districts' afterschool programs that had been withheld earlier this month.

Roughly \$6.5 million was made available to local school districts Monday, according to Toren Ballard, a spokesperson for the Vermont's Agency of Education.

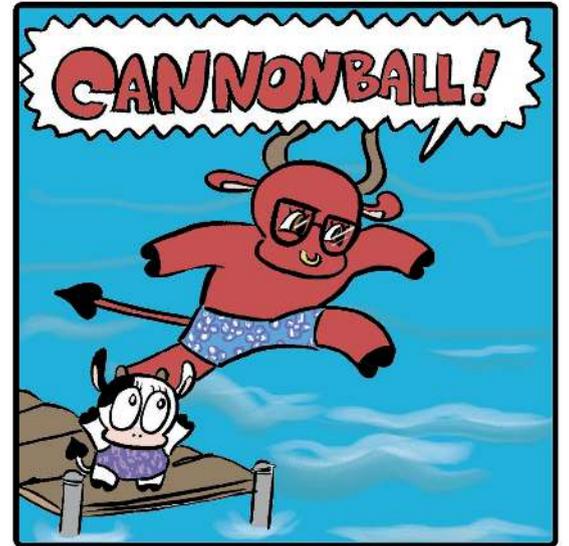
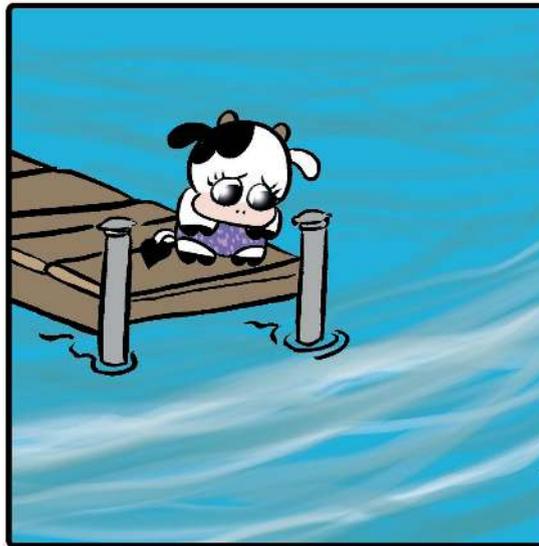
These funds, Ballard said, will provide "integral summer and afterschool programming, and enables students across Vermont to receive engaging, structured support to ensure that they return to school in the fall ready to learn."

The resumed flow of money offers some relief for both state education officials and local school districts who rely on the funding for staffing and programming.

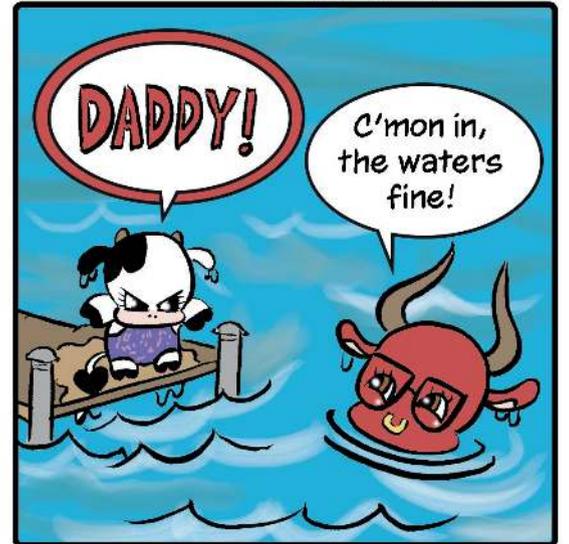
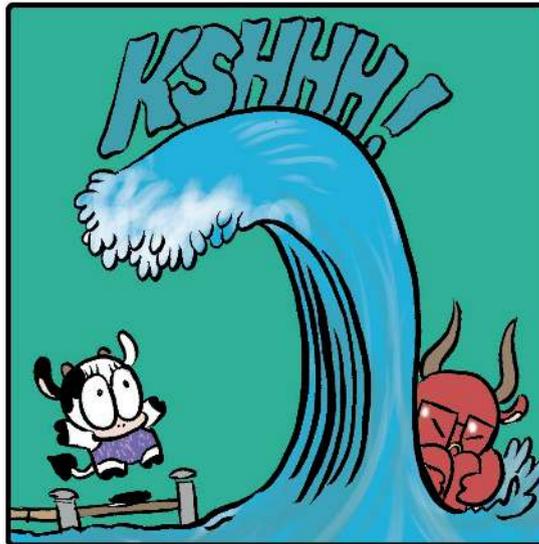
School districts were left in limbo this month after more than \$26 million from six federal grant programs were withheld, including Title IIA and Title IIIA grants, which fund, respectfully, professional development for teachers and staff, and support services for English language learners.

The U.S. Department of Education informed state education officials June 30 it would be conducting a review of several federal grant programs but provided no timeline (See *Afterschool funding*, Page 20)

### MAPLE the COW® by Matt Aucoin



©Art by Matt Aucoin LLC 2025



# Mother's Meadow Blueberry Farm

## Pick Your Own Blueberries

Open Tuesday, Wednesday,  
Friday, Saturday  
7 a.m. to 2 p.m.  
*Rain or shine*

2075 McConnell Road, Brandon  
[pickyourownberries.com](http://pickyourownberries.com)



# Calendar of events

## July

### 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**  
5–7pm

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

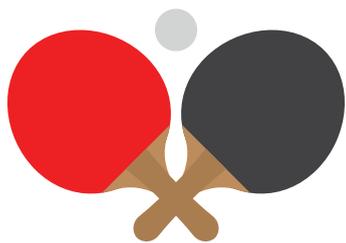
**Free Drop-In Tech Support at the Brandon Free Public Library**  
5–6 pm

### Wednesdays

#### Ping Pong

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

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



clubs, and even tournaments.

If you are interested in table tennis as a recreational or athletic activity, we're interested in you! There is a modest membership fee of only \$30, although you can come twice free as our guest. Bring your sneakers and paddle (or use ours) and have some fun playing a great game of "Pong!"

For further information about the Green Mountain Table Tennis Club, visit our club's website at [www.gmttc.com](http://www.gmttc.com).

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

A free walk-in healthcare clinic for uninsured or underinsured adults in Rutland County will be offered by the Rutland County Health Partners (formerly Rutland Free Clinic) every Wednesday in July from 10 a.m.-12 p.m. at our offices at 204 North Main Street, Rutland, Vt. No appointment is necessary. Clinics (with recommended appointments) will also be held 7/1 (9-12), 7/7 (3-6), 7/15 (1-4) and 7/21 (3-6). For appointments or any questions, call 802-774-1082.

#### 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

Rutland, Lina Cloffe Hanson (Parvati) offers an Earth Conscientious, Spiritual, Gentle Physical Yoga Practice. We meet on Mondays via zoom. Contact for Zoom link. (There is also a Monday Zoom only class) Not everyone can get up and down off of the floor easily, making traditional yoga classes difficult. If you have physical limitation or a health issue this might be the ideal class for you. With the help of a chair most people can practice yoga and reap the benefits of increased circulation, balance, flexibility, mobility, strength and more.

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

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

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

### Thursdays

#### Ukulele Group

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

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

#### Open Mic at Red Clover in Brandon

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

#### Storytime at the Brandon Free Public Library

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

### Fridays

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

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

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

Instructor: Lori Sullivan; Minimum 3.

#### Brandon Senior Center Game Day

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

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

### Vermont The Duke Is

When Duke Didi is found suspects abound in this p family- friendly mystery: "Dead!" A one-hour Vermo production.

When Duke Didi is found unresponsive the morning before the national gallery exhibition, accusations start flying. Was it his suspicious



### Live Satu July 26 Mark Van

**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!

The Rutland Area Shepherds invites interested people to attend our July 24 meeting where we will be talking about temporary portable fencing. It will be held at 7 p.m. at the Gilbert Hart Library at the corner of Rt 140 and Rt 7 in Wallingford, Vt. After adding up the years that our members have been using flexinet, it is well over 193. Our shepherds will give tips on setting up, tak-

**Mont Suitcase Company: The Duke Is Dead — Next Stage Arts**

Friday the 25th, 7-8 p.m.

unresponsive, puppet-filled, The Duke Is Mont Suitcase niece and only heir? The butler? The incompetent constable? Or the national curator herself?

Come untangle the mystery yourself with this family-friendly, puppet-heavy, hour-long Vermont Suitcase production: The Duke Is Dead!



**Music at the River Bend**  
Behind the Brandon Inn, 6-8 p.m.

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!

Rain location: Town Hall

ing fences down, cornering, getting over uneven terrain, and using chargers.

**Music at Kennedy Park**  
Fridays from 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Al Nostrand, folk/rock covers

**Saturdays**

**Bingo at the Brandon Senior Center**

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

**Storytime at the Brandon Free Public Library**

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

**Sundays**

**Brandon Town Hall Painting with Crystal**  
Crystal Ketcham leads an all ages painting event!

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

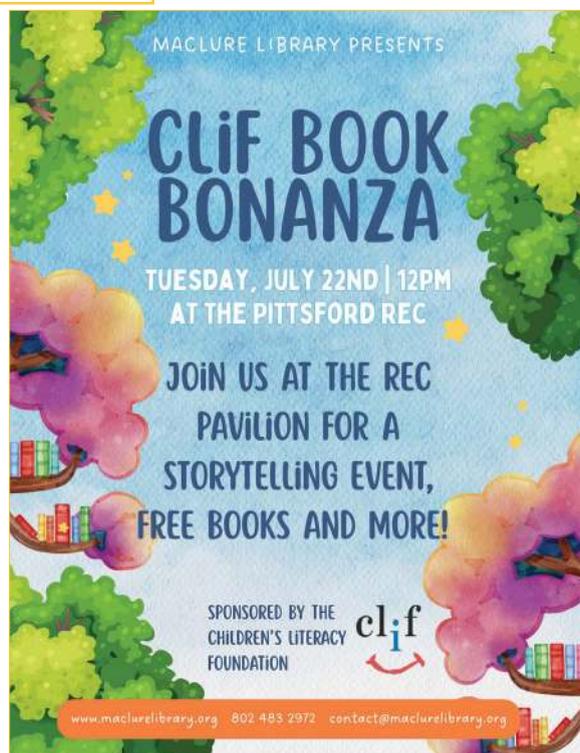
"The study of art is the most important study a garden designer can pursue."

**Chess**

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

**Thursday 24th**

193 Years of Flexinet Fencing — Gilbert Hart Library, Wallingford



**Friday 25th**

**Food & Art Fridays: Scrolling Stories — Sable Arts Projects, Inc.**

Crankie Storytelling on the beautiful Sable Land. Featuring Sable alumni Storm Welch & Maia Gilmour, and the founders of Sandglass Theater, Eric & Ines Bass. Crankies are a mystical and low-tech form of performance that pairs song & story with scrolling illustrations. Fat Dragon Farm will serve delicious made-to-order wood-fired pizza!

BYOB & blanket. Rain or shine. Fun for the whole family! From 5:30-8:30 p.m. at Sable

Arts Projects, Inc., 588 North Taggart Hill Road, Stockbridge.

**Saturday 26th**

**The Rutland High School Class of 2000 25 Year Reunion**

The Rutland High School Class of 2000 will be gathering for food, drinks, music, and more! Let's come together to reminisce, catch up, and create new memories at our 25th Reunion. Get ready for an evening of laughter, amazing food and drinks by Southside Steakhouse, and reconnecting with old friends. Don't miss out on this special occasion to celebrate our shared history and accomplishments. See you there!

From 6 p.m.-12 a.m. at Southside Steakhouse, 170 South Main Street, Rutland.

**Otter Creek Music Festival Concert at the Chaffee Art Center**

As part of Otter Creek Music Festival 2025, GRAMMY-

winning mezzo-soprano Maren Montalbano and composer/guitarist Thomas Schuttenhelm make their OCMF debuts at the Chaffee Art Center on Saturday, July 26, at 7:30 p.m. Join us for a wonderful night that marks OCMF's first concert in Rutland!

Their program, Songs of the Quiet Hours, explores night as a time of deep emotion, reflection, and transformation. Music and poetry merge to evoke the stillness, mystery, and intimacy that appear under the cover of darkness. Featuring works by Frank Wallace, Tom Johnson, and originals by Montalbano and Schuttenhelm, the evening offers a contemplative journey through love, loss, and renewal.

Tickets are choose-what-you-pay: Community Ticket \$15; Standard Ticket \$25; Pay-It-Forward Ticket \$35. Ticket link: <https://www.ottercreekmusicfestival.com/>

**Sunday 27th**

**Twilight On The Tavern Lawn: Silverback Swing — Putney Tavern**

Silverback Swing performs music reminiscent of French cafés from a bygone era—jazz known as Gypsy Jazz, Jazz Manouche, or Hot Club music—in the style of the legendary French Gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt.

Silverback Swing began as a weekly session at The Gleanery in Putney eight years ago and has since performed at festivals, clubs, breweries, and other venues throughout Vermont, New Hampshire, and Massachusetts. The current lineup features Alton Lathrop (lead guitar), Gus Hollingsworth (accordion, vocals), Steve Frankel (bass), and Mark Anagnostopoulos (guitar, vocals).

The Twilight On The Tavern Lawn Series is a series of bluegrass, Americana, world, swing, and pop music summer concerts running every other Sunday from June 1 through August 24. All concerts begin at 6 p.m. in downtown Putney on the Putney Tavern lawn (bring a lawn chair or blanket) or at Next Stage at 15 Kimball Hill in case of rain. The concerts are free to the public (donations are accepted) and food will be available.



**August**

**Saturday 9th**

**4th Annual Great North American Maple Pie Contest—Baird Farm**

Join us at 2 p.m. (rain date 8/10), sit back and picnic while you watch the 4th Annual Great North American Maple Pie Contest go down! Activities will include: pie contest with local celebrity judges, pie throwing, and of course eating pie and ice cream!

The winner of the pie contest will receive a year's supply of maple syrup and other pie themed prizes! Lawn games and fun for the whole family!

Added bonus this year:

Catherine Bruns, USA Today bestselling author, will be selling and signing copies of "In the Blink of a Pie" (murder mystery book inspired by our farm and the maple pie contest).

Free to attend but please bring cash to participate in the delicious activities! A portion of proceeds will go toward the Vermont Farmers Food Center.

For pie competition registration and details, visit: <https://docs.google.com/.../1FAIpQLScstGMd11dawX.../viewform>

(pie entries must be in by 1:30)

Baird Farm, 59 West Rd., North Chittenden, Vt. 05763.

# A Brandonite visits Copper Canyon in Mexico

BY LYLA FULLER

Copper Canyon is in the state of Chihuahua in northern Mexico. It is not as well-known as the Grand Canyon but it's deeper and just as spectacular. The Spanish and Mexicans mined at the bottom of the canyon and there is still a small village, Batopilis, at the bottom.

My friend Nancy and I joined a group who spent a week there.

We flew to Chihuahua, where we were met by our guides for the several-hour drive to the town on the rim of the canyon. Our first night was in a basic cabin with no amenities: no electricity, no heat, no running water, etc. (Outhouse... remember those?) Nancy tried to add fuel to the wood burning stove and ended up filling the cabin with smoke! In the morning, about 6:30, a server arrived with 2 cups of coffee and an invitation to breakfast in the lodge. After a hearty breakfast of eggs, bacon, pancakes, juice, and coffee, the group of 6 started our journey down into the canyon.

It was a 35-minute drive on paved road to the rim, where we started down a narrow one-lane winding gravel road with a sheer 2,000-ft. drop-off on

one side—not for the weak of heart. We were followed by another carload of people in our group staying at the lodge. Views were spectacular and terrain changed as we descended from 8,000 feet to the floor of the canyon, about 500 feet. Pine trees then cactus and cotton trees. At a wide spot in the trail we stopped for lunch, fajitas, and beer. A local Tarahumara Indian joined us for part of the ride.

The river was just a creek when we were there in December, so it was easy to ford.

The lodge is a beautiful Spanish-style building with red tile roof, maybe a hundred years old, much like those you would see in an old

John Wayne movie. Victorian light fixtures, paintings, and furniture, including an old

nude painting over the fireplace. Very quaint and clean. Our room was spacious with

two beds and beautiful chandelier and indoor plumbing. The  
*(See Copper Canyon, Page 23)*



A VIEW OF a church near Copper Canyon in Mexico.

Photos by Lyla Fuller

## Brandon Rec is proud to present: LC Jazz at the Town Hall! Saturday, July 26th



A 17 piece classic big band, has been supporting Addison County youth as they pursue the study of music in college with scholarships. In this concert/dance, Brandon Rec is beginning their own scholarship fund for Otter Valley Union High School and LC is happy to support the cause!  
Bring your dancing shoes as we play great jazz spanning nearly 100 years!

Brandonrec.com  
Doors open at 6:30,  
show at 7:00

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# CARNIVAL

Estabrook Park, Brandon, Vt

**FREE**  
admission!

**JULY**  
**24-27**

**FREE**  
parking!

**Thursday July 24, 6-8pm** Red Clover Takeover

**Friday July 25, 7pm** PAC Wrestling

**Saturday July 26, 1pm** Vermont State Trivia Championship  
\*registrations begin at noon

**Saturday July 26, 7pm** Atom and the Orbits

**Sunday July 27, 1pm** Performance Arts 4H Show

**Sunday July 27, 2:30 pm** Author Phil Hall reads "The Day the Children Saved the World"

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# Mim's Photos



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



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



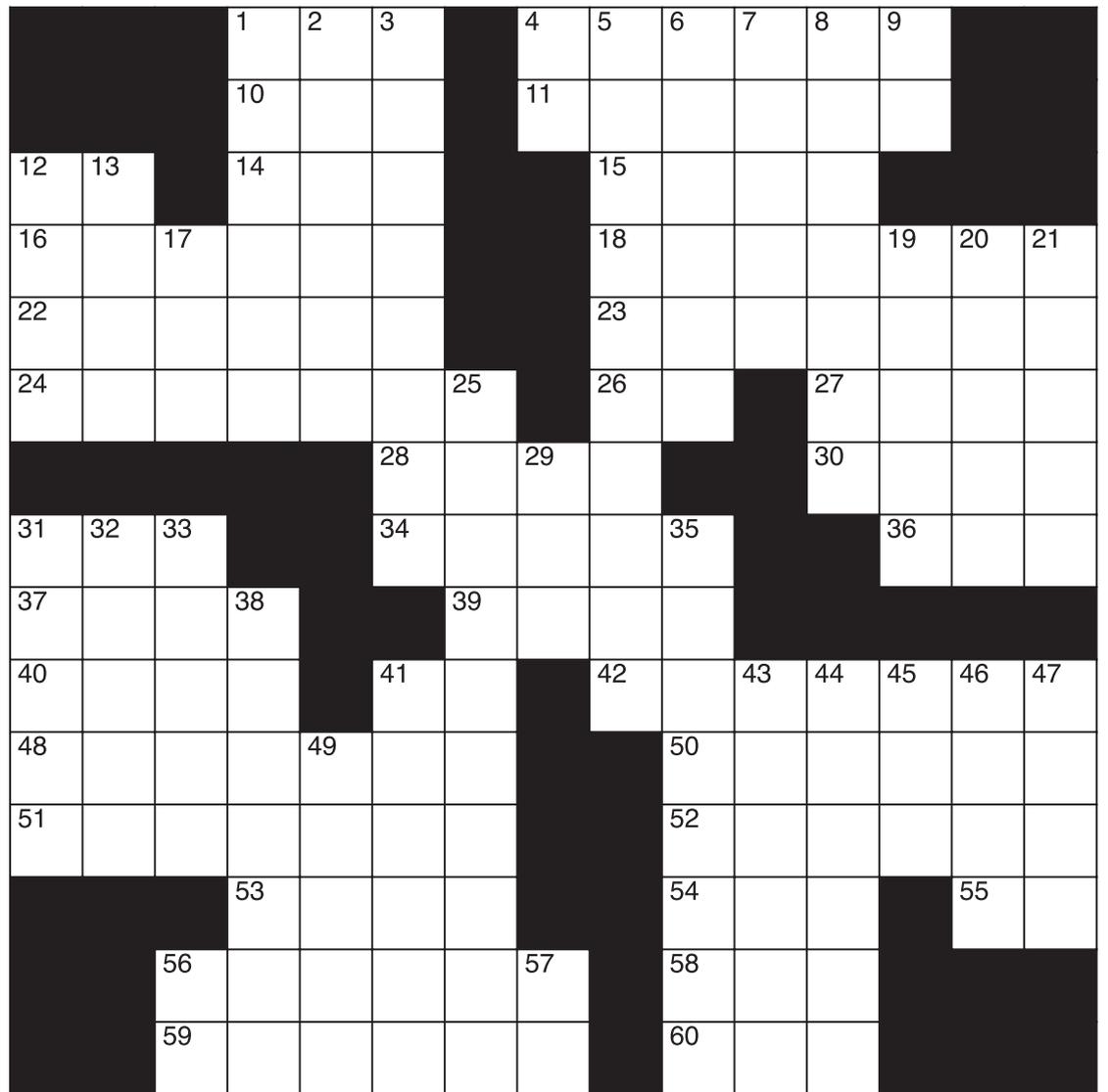
# Crossword

## CLUES ACROSS

1. Pacific Standard Time
4. Extracts through heating and melting
10. Express delight
11. More curvy
12. Expression of uncertainty
14. Indicates before
15. Daughter of Hera and Zeus
16. Southwestern CA city
18. Unified
22. Less attractive
23. Base of jellies
24. A large and noisy party
26. He was traded for Luka
27. Wolverine genus
28. "Happy Days" actress Moran
30. Root of taro plant
31. Student environmental group (abbr.)
34. Silk garments
36. Unique power
37. Ray Liotta cop film
39. Leak slowly through
40. Notion
41. Atomic #55
42. Fixed in one place
48. About heat
50. Type of baseball pitch
51. Seedless raisin
52. Large wading birds
53. Similar
54. Time zone
55. Atomic #34
56. Program
58. Old world, new
59. Contrary belief
60. "To the \_\_ degree"

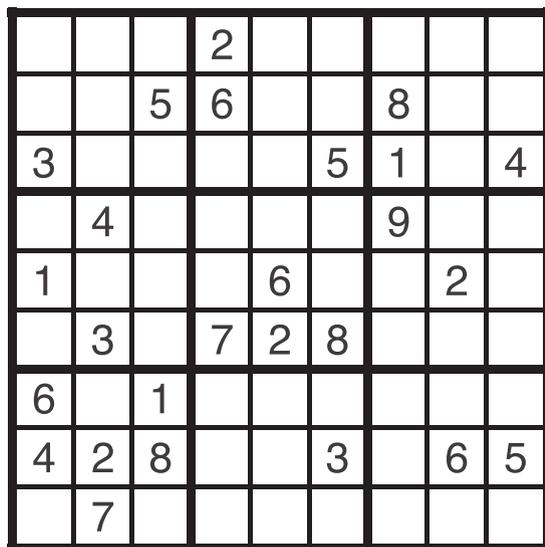
## CLUES DOWN

1. Plain-woven fabric
2. Classed
3. Suppositions
4. Midway between south and west
5. Tropical American trees
6. Leveled
7. Published false statement
8. Adolescent
9. Junior's father
12. Aurochs
13. Not low
17. Boxing's GOAT
19. Short musical composition
20. Small immature herrings
21. Eavesdropper
25. Parcels of land
29. Anger
31. Irritations
32. Hindu holy man
33. Wicker basket for fish
35. Natural object
38. Transporting in a vehicle
41. A dog is one
43. Smaller portion
44. Sew
45. Belonging to a thing
46. Horsley and Greenwood are two
47. Scottish language
49. Producer
56. Exclamation of surprise
57. Russian river



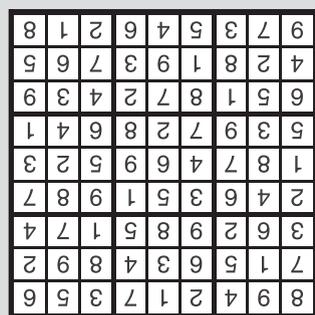
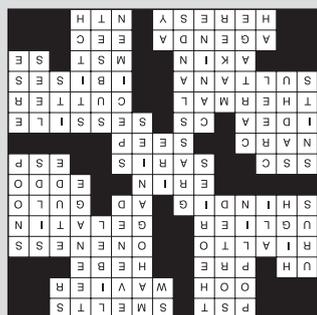
# Sudoku

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.



Level: Intermediate

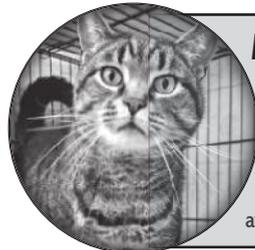
## PUZZLE SOLUTIONS



# The Rutland County Humane Society Needs Dog Foster Homes!

The Rutland County Humane Society (RCHS) is currently in need of foster homes for dogs. As the shelter works to provide the best possible care for every animal, foster homes play a vital role in helping dogs thrive outside the kennel environment. Fostering is a short-term, rewarding way to make a big difference. RCHS provides all necessary supplies, including food, bedding, and veterinary care, so fosters can focus on providing love and a safe, temporary home. If you've ever considered fostering, now is the time. By opening your home, you're helping dogs decompress, build trust, and get one step closer to finding a forever family. To learn more about fostering or to sign up, please call RCHS at 802-483-6700 or stop by the Adoption Center Tuesday-Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m. Help give a dog the fresh start they deserve and become a foster today.

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



### MEET JONI - 3 1/2-YEAR-OLD. SPAYED FEMALE. DOMESTIC SHORTHAIR. TIGER.

Joni is a lovable giant with a big personality packed into an even bigger body. This gentle giant has traded in her hissing fits for snuggles, and she can't get enough pets from her favorite humans. Despite her substantial size, her paws are adorably tiny, a cute contradiction that'll melt your heart. Joni would benefit from some weight loss, so a healthy diet and plenty of love would be purr-fect for her. As a solo cat kind of gal, she's looking for a quiet home without other cats, and her ideal match would need to be patient and understanding. Her past as a stray has made her appreciate human affection, and she's looking for someone to return the love. Will you be her forever home?

### MEET GEMMA - 8-MONTH-OLD. SPAYED FEMALE. BELGIAN MALINOIS. BLACK/TAN.

Gemma is a stunning Belgian Malinois bursting with intelligence, energy, and potential. Like most Malinois, she's incredibly smart, driven, and athletic, traits that make the breed ideal for experienced dog owners who are ready to keep both body and mind busy! Gemma is looking for a dedicated person who understands the needs of high-energy working breeds. She will thrive with someone who can provide structured training, consistent mental stimulation, and daily exercise. She may be a handful for the average home, but in the right hands, she'll be a loyal and hardworking best friend. She needs a patient and confident handler who's willing to put in the time to help her shine. She also needs a cat-free, dog-free and child-free home. We know that with love, boundaries and commitment, Gemma has all the makings of a truly amazing companion. If you know the breed and are looking for a girl who is ready to learn, give us a call at 802-483-6700.



**RUTLAND COUNTY HUMANE SOCIETY**

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765 STEVENS RD. • PITTSFORD



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

# OFF THE SHELF



## The following large-print book was donated by Brenda Whittaker

### Rage by Linda Castillo, donated in memory of "Tish" Holmes Washburn Morris

Summer has arrived with a vengeance in Painters Mill, and a macabre discovery by three Amish children brings the quiet to a grinding halt. Chief of Police Kate Burkholder arrives on scene to find the dismembered body of 21-year-old Samuel Yutzy, a local Amish man who owned a successful landscaping business. What twisted individual murdered him in such a sadistic way?

## Adult fiction

### The Secret Market of the Dead by Giovanni De Feo

Just beyond the waking edges of Luceria, an 18th-century town in the kingdom of Naples, lies the Night: an enigmatic fiefdom governed by seven immortals and fueled by Moira, the power to reshape one's destiny. On this porous border separating Day from Night, Oriana spends her

time fantasizing about becoming a smith in her father's forge and eavesdropping on whispered tales of beasts and men who roam the nocturnal realm. Years later, when her father chooses her twin brother to succeed him, Oriana challenges her sibling to a series of trials to determine the forge's true heir. But as the twins' fierce competition escalates, Oriana realizes that to break free from the stifling confines of Day, she must once again embrace the Night—and, as always, everything comes with a cost.

### Daikon by Samuel Hawley

A sweeping and suspenseful novel of love and war set in Japan during the final days of World War II, with a shocking historical premise: three atomic bombs were actually delivered to the Pacific—not two—and when one of them falls into the hands of the Japanese, the fate of a couple that has been separated from one another becomes entangled with the fate of this strange new device.

### The Bewitching by Silvia Moreno-Garcia

Graduate student Minerva has focused her college studies on the history of horror literature.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Summer reading programming continues! Check out <https://brandonpubliclibrary.org/> events for our full schedule. This Saturday, July 26 at 2 p.m., come learn how to silk screen print with Eric! Bring items of your own to print on or create a tote bag.

While researching the life of Beatrice Tremblay, an obscure author of macabre tales, Minerva uncovers information that reveals that Tremblay's most famous novel, *The Vanishing*, was inspired by a true story. Decades earlier, during the Great Depression, Tremblay attended the same university where Minerva is now studying and became obsessed with her roommate, who then disappeared under mysterious circumstances. As Minerva descends ever deeper into Tremblay's manuscript, she begins to sense that the malign force that stalked Tremblay and the missing girl might still walk the halls of the campus.

(See *Off the Shelf*, Page 23)

# 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.*

tempts at serving the order have been unsuccessful as the defendant has been avoiding service.

## July 15

- Received a call from a resident of West Seminary Street regarding an issue he was having with bees coming onto his property from his neighbor's yard.
- Assisted a motorist who was stuck on Fay Road in Brandon.
- Received a call from Fisher Electric regarding an ongoing issue with a woman trespassing on their property on Franklin Street. Police assistance was requested in issuing her a trespass notice.
- Assisted the Brandon Water Department with blocking traffic during a water main break on West Seminary Street.
- Received a complaint of home improvement fraud from a resident on Conant Square. Incident under investigation.
- Served a temporary relief from abuse order on an individual on Duval Road.
- Dispatched to a building alarm at Neshobe Elementary School. It was later determined that the alarm was accidentally activated by an employee.

## July 16

- Dispatched to a building (See Police report, Page 20)

## July 14

- Took possession of a wallet that was found on Center Street. An officer contacted the owner and returned it.
- Responded to a building alarm at the Neshobe Elementary School. It was determined that the alarm was accidental and there was no emergency.
- Conducted a welfare check on an elderly woman on Conant Square at the request of Bayada Home Health. The individual was found to be in good health.
- Responded to a residence on McConnell Road for a report of a mailbox that was struck by a vehicle.
- Received a report of a larceny from a residence on Grove Street. The matter is under investigation.
- Attempted to serve a Relief From Abuse order on an individual on Carver Street. At-

## Charlie Murphy - 3 to 7 Weekdays

101.5 FM

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**RADIO**

The Roots of American Music



FROM LEFT TO right: Mandy Milne (PGA pro), Matt Wilson (Manager), Jon Milne (owner and Director of Golf), Cody Larson (Superintendent), and Steve Merrill (assistant superintendent)

Photo Credit Rod Bicknell

# Neshobe Golf

(Continued from Page 1)

people” are the three things that make Neshobe a great place to play golf. Milne continued, “This [tournament] was truly a great experience. I’ve known Neshobe for 29 years, and I’ve only heard positive things about the club.” Milne’s daughter, Mandy Milne, a PGA Golf professional at Neshobe, said, “People here are so passionate about the course. When you’re good at something,

it should be celebrated.”

Players were ubiquitous in their praise for the course and its fine conditions: “the greens are great, the fairways immaculate,” they were heard to say. Most had never heard of the course, and few had played it.

The New England Amateur is a 54-hole Championship, played 18 holes a day over 3 days. In the tournament, every stroke counts, and the total score after 54 holes

wins. If you’ve ever played golf, you know how hard this is. The field was cut to the top 66 players after the second round. To play in the tournament, a player must have a handicap not exceeding 6.4 at a member club and gain an exemption or qualify at one of four qualifying locations in New England. A total of 336 players attempted to qualify for the tournament, with only 144 succeeding.



## WEEKLY HOROSCOPE

### ARIES March 21-April 20

You’re on fire this week, Aries. Ideas are sparking left and right. Don’t forget to slow down before you burn out. You want to showcase energy without creating chaos.

### TAURUS April 21-May 21

This week is ideal for treating yourself to something great, Taurus. Money and love are both flowing in a way that is to your liking. The universe delivers for you right now.

### GEMINI May 22-June 21

Gemini, your words have power this week, so use them wisely or go wild. It’s a great time to network, flirt or finally send that romantic text you’ve been thinking about.

### CANCER June 22-July 22

It’s not a bad thing to have so many emotions flowing right now, Cancer. This week is ideal for reconnecting with your intuition or redecorating your space.

### LEO July 23-Aug. 23

Get ready to shine again, Leo. You could be the center of attention and those around you love the show. You may also enjoy some career wins this week.

### VIRGO Aug. 24-Sept. 22

Virgo, you’re crushing your to-do list this week while others seem to be snoozing. Midweek brings you a curveball, but you can handle it with signature grace and organization.

### LIBRA Sept. 23-Oct. 23

Your charm is turned up to 100 percent right now, Libra. A chance encounter could ignite something sweet this week. Weigh your options regarding which path to pursue.

### SCORPIO Oct. 24-Nov. 22

Scorpio, this week you’re serving up mysterious mastermind energy. People want your attention, but you are playing it really cool. Money or career secrets may come to light.

### SAGITTARIUS Nov. 23-Dec. 21

Adventure doesn’t have to translate to a far-off trip, Sagittarius. It could mean a new idea or even a flirty conversation. If you’re in the mood to explore, bring someone along.

### CAPRICORN Dec. 22-Jan. 20

Capricorn, you might be plotting your next power move, and this week the stars are backing you. You could be giving off boss energy, but don’t forget to take care of yourself, too.

### AQUARIUS Jan. 21-Feb. 18

You’re cool, quirky and full of surprises this week, Aquarius. Others are finally catching on to your appeal instead of trying to go up against you. A collaboration could spark genius.

### PISCES Feb. 19-March 20

Listen closely to your dreams this week, Pisces. They are trying to tell you something. A creative streak could hit hard and it might lead to something truly magical.



### FAMOUS BIRTHDAYS

- July 25 Rita Marley, singer (79)
- July 26 Andy Goldsworthy, sculptor and photographer (69)
- July 27 Maya Rudolph, actor and comedian (53)
- July 28 Marcel Duchamp, artist (d)
- July 29 Ken Burns, filmmaker (62)
- July 30 Emily Bronte, novelist (d)
- July 31 J.K. Rowling, author (59)

# The REPORTER

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# Restaurant guide

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From Provence to You  
*De la Provence à Vous*

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

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# REAL ESTATE



### AN IN-TOWN GEM OF A HOME!

This home has MUCH more than meets the eye from a casual look. Stylish back deck leads to a cozy enclosed porch. The updated kitchen has lots of cabinet space. The formal dining room and living room feature hardwood floors and a wood stove and hearth. Tall windows bathe the house in natural light. And out back is a renovated carriage barn with a loft style, ready-to-go Air BnB or apartment.

**\$398,000**



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

## House at the Bend



Spacious 1,576 sq. ft. home features 3 BRs and 2 Bs. A sunny, bright eat-in kitchen with pantry. Additionally, there is an 1,000 sq. ft. barn incl. 500± sq. ft. on each floor. The barn offers workshop, storage, & studio areas, all equipped w/hot water baseboard heating. Separate entrance to the studio area from the parking area. Barn connects to the house through a heated breezeway/storage area. Enjoy outdoors from open side & front porches. \$250,000

WhittakerRealEstate.com 802-247-6633  
(802)236-9076(T) (802)236-9075(C)  
Tom@WhittakerRealEstate.com  
Top of the Hill, Brandon, VT



CHECK OUT OUR LISTINGS ONLINE

## Charming Village Cape



FRESHLY PAINTED & READY TO MOVE IN. Charming cape-style home located in the village. Features include hardwood and softwood flooring, a wood burning fireplace in the living room, a 22'x11' deck with a 11.5'x13' foot patio area adjacent. The spacious backyard offers ample gardening space, while the oversized one-car garage provides plenty of storage. Ideally situated in the village center, close to shopping, the library, restaurants, & churches. \$330,000

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Top of the Hill, Brandon, VT



CHECK OUT OUR LISTINGS ONLINE

# Police report

*(Continued from Page 18)*  
alarm at Neshobe Elementary School. It was determined that the alarm was accidentally activated by an employee.

- Received a visit from a resident of Prescott Lane who wanted to speak with an officer about issues he was having with a family member. The individual was advised of his legal options to resolve the situation.

- Responded to a burglary alarm activation at a home on Pearl Street. The house was checked and determined to be secure.

- Responded to the Birdcage Inn on Wheeler Road after a security camera was activated showing someone driving on the property in an off-road vehicle, acting suspiciously. Officers checked the inn and surrounding area but were unable to find anyone.

- Took possession of a blue insurance envelope containing a driver's license and debit cards that was turned into the BPD. Officers contacted the owner, who retrieved the property.

### July 17

- Dispatched to a report of suspicious activity on West Seminary Street.

- Vehicle stop on Grove Street for failure to maintain lane. Warning issued.

- Attempted to serve a restraining order on an individual on Carver Street. The subject fled from the police with a child in the car and led the officers on a brief pursuit. The driver and child later fled on foot in the area of Barlow Avenue. The investigation is ongoing and criminal charges will eventually be sought.

### July 18

- Responded to an alarm activation at the Green Mountain Market on McConnell Road. The alarm was determined to be false and was believed to have been set off by a fuel delivery person placing an invoice into the door.

- Received a 911 call from an individual on Carver Street who was testing whether his phone was still working and could be used to reach emergency services. No response required.

- Received a walk-in complaint at the police station regarding a possible ongoing stalking issue.

- Received a complaint from a resident on Steinberg Road regarding unwanted contact from a neighbor who appears to be interested in seeking a romantic relationship with the complainant.

# Afterschool funding

*(Continued from Page 11)*  
for when that review would be completed.

School districts around the state had budgets for the 2026 fiscal year, which began July 1, with those federal dollars already built in.

The state's Agency of Education last week entered into a temporary hiring freeze to protect federally-funded positions at the agency. The agency uses a portion of the blocked federal funds to administer federal programs.

While the release of funds of-

fers some relief for afterschool programs, concerns still remain for other federally funded programs. More than \$18 million of congressionally-approved federal education funding for Vermont remains locked up, pending review by the Trump administration.

"Federal education dollars support our most vulnerable students and withholding these funds, even temporarily, disrupts districts' ability to staff critical positions and provide a wide range of programming," Ballard said in a statement

Monday.

Sen. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., speaking at a press conference Monday, said he has had "lengthy" discussions with Education Secretary Linda McMahon since the freeze began. He called the release of funding for afterschool programs a "partial success that will help a lot of struggling school districts."

"But the truth is that most of the money in those appropriation bills are still being held illegally by the administration," Sanders said.

Vermont was one of 24 states that last week sued the Trump administration to restore the funding, arguing the freeze was unconstitutional.

The funding pause generated bipartisan backlash in Congress, with senators on both sides of the aisle expressing concern over the impact.

Sanders said the federal government released the \$1.3 billion in federal funding for afterschool programs nationwide in part because of that pressure. More than \$6 billion was initially frozen by the Trump administration.

In Vermont, those dollars help fund nearly 100 afterschool and summer programs in Vermont that serve 11,000 students, Sanders said.

"Congress clearly and unambiguously passed this education funding and the president signed it into law. The Trump administration has no right to withhold or impound it," Sanders said in a release issued on Friday.



## ONLINE AUCTION

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Four staff members at Companions in Wholeness plan to continue to work without pay, as locals say losing the organization would be devastating.

## After losing funding, Rutland day shelter to become volunteer-run and reduce offerings

BY THEO WELLS-SPACKMAN/VTDIGGER

When Darcie Melvin started coming to Companions in Wholeness nearly four years ago, she said she was dealing with a substance abuse disorder. At first, she was just grateful for the food at the Rutland day shelter — then she got to know the staff.

“I was kind of at my wits’ end,” Melvin said. “This place has truly become like a family to me.”

Over the course of several years, the day shelter helped Melvin with bills, to furnish her apartment and connect her with other services. Melvin said she’s

losing both of her major public funding streams.

Companions in Wholeness is open Monday through Thursday, 6:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Apart from serving meals to about 150 people per day, it offers clothing, climate control, rest areas and appointments with service providers. In August, the schedule is set to shrink to three hours a day, offering one meal rather than two.

The loss of funding comes as the demand for Companions in Wholeness has been steadily growing over the past few years. McGarry said the latest round of evictions from the state’s motel voucher program produced acute

said. The organization also plans to become an independent entity and change its name to Rutland Neighbors.

But the building is not McGarry’s main worry. She had hoped for a total of \$260,000 in grants to carry the shelter’s growing burden this year. None of it came through. The organization requires about \$20,000 per month to operate, she said. Right now, it has \$10,000 in the bank.

The federal Emergency Food and Shelter Program, which the organization used to receive funds from, was frozen this spring. The program was administered by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, which did not respond to requests for comment.

At the same time, the Housing Opportunity Grant Program through the Vermont Department for Children and Families did not choose to award a payment to the organization, despite doing so each of the past two years.

Lily Sojourner, director of the department’s Office of Economic Opportunity, said the Housing Opportunity Grants originally were intended to support overnight shelters. Given that BROCC Community action, a nonprofit primarily serving Bennington and Rutland counties, has plans to open such a shelter in Rutland this fall, the state directed more significant financial support to that project.

Eric Maguire, the project director for the new BROCC Community Action shelter, said the facility likely will be up and running by November or December. The program expects to house 10 people to start, with high barriers to admission, requiring people to be sober and lack other housing alternatives. Maguire said having a sober, overnight shelter in the city is critical given the community’s current housing and substance use needs.

Companions in Wholeness does not allow entry to people who are disruptive or visibly under the influence, but McGarry said she welcomes people whom she knows to be dealing with substance use disorders.

Brooke Kurutza — a 31-year-old from Barre who has been coming to Companions in Wholeness for four years and had substance use disorders at various points in her life — said she has been experiencing homeless-

ness since she was 18.

“This place is everything to me,” she said.

Kurutza said a new shelter would greatly help the community, as Rutland’s Open Door Mission, where she currently stays, is full.

Both services are necessary, she said. Overnight shelters often require people staying there to leave fairly early in the morning, while places like Companions in Wholeness allow people to eat, rest and seek shelter from the elements during the day.

Ronald Jones has been going to Companions in Wholeness since it opened in 2018 and said

he eats all his meals there. He said he is worried what restricted hours and resources will mean for people who rely on the organization.

“It’s going to do damaging things,” he said.

Companions in Wholeness plans to host a bowling event in Rutland on Sept. 14 to fundraise the necessary resources to continue operations, according to a statement Friday.

“It’s taken me 39 years to find people like this,” Melvin said through tears. “I don’t want to lose it.”



THE MAIN ROOM at Companions in Wholeness.

Photo by Theo Wells-Spackman / VTDigger

now been in recovery for about 16 months, but she still comes in regularly to volunteer and has slowly stopped needing to accept offers of free food.

However, the shelter now faces uncertainty as it announced plans to lay off every paid worker on Aug. 2, after federal grants froze and state ones were not renewed in the spring. Four employees plan to keep working, unpaid, to keep the organization open.

“It would be a terrible thing,” Outreach Coordinator Linda Allen said of a possible closure.

Allen is among the four employees who plan to keep working without pay, citing a deep sense of obligation to the organization’s regulars.

People in the organization’s crowded main room on Thursday said the facility had been a cornerstone of their recovery — and sometimes survival. But Executive Director Ellie McGarry has been left with few options after

pressure on shelter services.

The situation was already severe. A 2024 report found that Rutland County’s unhoused population had increased by a factor of seven since 2019. Statewide, the rate of homelessness still ranked fourth worst in the nation last year.

Companions in Wholeness is part of the United Methodist Church in Rutland. It even operates out of the church’s physical space — staff push the altar aside to transform the room into a shelter just hours after Sunday services. Melvin said the connection with the church had been important for her.

People gather in a community center, some sitting at tables and others organizing clothing and items. Clothing racks line the walls and boxes are open on tables.

Companions in Wholeness is trying to expand and move to a larger church space, McGarry



# Golf Course

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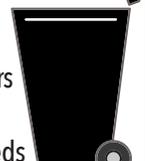
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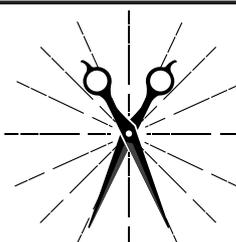
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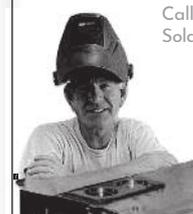
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# Off the Shelf



LYLA FULLER (RIGHT) and friend on their trip to Copper Canyon in Mexico.

## Copper Canyon

(Continued from Page 14)

owners told of the struggle to furnish it in the proper period.

Dinner was served after the cocktail hour in the huge dining room. Delicious chicken, veggies and soup, with crepes for dessert.

Early to bed, anticipating bird watching up an arroyo three quarters of a mile from the lodge where we saw a herd of cattle, locals with a train of burros, loads of turkey vultures, and two red tail hawks. I did see an eagle circling high over the canyon. Not the usual numbers of birds we were told.

Another great dinner and early to bed.

Breakfast was at 7:00 am, followed by a 4-mile hike to the little church that was built in the wrong place. It was commissioned by the Catholic Church but built in this canyon rather than the appointed place. It is still used by the locals. A truck picks us up and drives to the hill overlooking this beautiful little valley, a picnic lunch then back to the lodge. Long bath in a great old-fashioned tub before cocktails in the bar and another good dinner.

Our last day, we walked through town to the Hacienda San Miguel, the remains of the mill for the silver that was mined in the area. It had been a huge plant with stables and housing

for workers and guests. Also time for window-shopping and checking out the small shops.

It was the day for the drive back up the canyon wall! The driver this time was much more reckless. After an hour or so, we had a potty break. Boys on the right side of the road and girls on the left! After the stop, my friend and I chose to ride on the top of the car in the seats they have attached for that purpose.

It was exciting and by the time we arrived at the paved road I was carsick.

We were assigned the same cabin we had before our trip down the canyon, had a great dinner and then bed, another hike in the morning. We drove to the area not far from lodge and hiked 4-5 miles to and around the unusual rock formations much like stone henge spiraling into the sky.

Our 4-hour drive back to Chihuahua was not very com- (See Copper Canyon, Page 24)

*Views were spectacular and terrain changed as we descended from 8,000 feet to the floor of the canyon, about 500 feet. Pine trees then cactus and cotton trees.*

(Continued from Page 18)

### All the Men I've Loved Again by Christine Pride

It's 1999 and Cora Belle has arrived at college ready to change her life. She's determined to grow out of the shy, sheltered girl who attended an all-white prep in her all-white suburb. Cora is ready to conquer her fears and find her people, her place in the world, and herself. What she's totally unprepared for is Lincoln, with his dark skin, charming southern drawl, and that smile. Because how can you ever prepare yourself for the rollercoaster of first love with all its glorious, bewildering contradictions? Just when Cora thinks she's got things figured out, a series of surprises and secrets threaten to upend everything she thought she understood about love and loyalty.

### No Body No Crime by Tess Sharpe

Rural PI Mel Tillman has seen her fair share of bloody cases and botched cover-ups. But killing someone? That is a different kind of mess all together, and Mel's got real experience with it. No one's heard from Toby Dunne since Chloe Harper's sweet sixteen party—because the birthday girl and sixteen-year-old Mel buried him so deep in the backwoods, no one's ever finding him. Mel loses little sleep over it, Toby had been terrorizing them. What she does lose sleep over is Chloe, the girl with whom she survived that horrible night in the woods. Chloe, the girl she fell in love with. Chloe, the girl who disappeared and hasn't been seen in more than six years. So, when she has a chance to find Chloe years later, she discovers that maybe their secret isn't so buried after all.

## Classified

### ONLINE AUCTION

ONLINE AUCTION GOSHEN, VT: <https://www.auctioninja.com/stark-brothers-auctions/sales/details/goshen-sale-furniture-gold-silver-and-tractors-8.html> Stark Brothers Auctions is holding an online auction. Live bidding now! Bidding closes 7/28/25 at 6:30 PM. Items include: tractors, bulldozer, silver, gold and much more. Visit the link for an in-person preview, bidding instructions and pick up times. Questions call Mike Stark (802) 535-5775 or visit us on Facebook.

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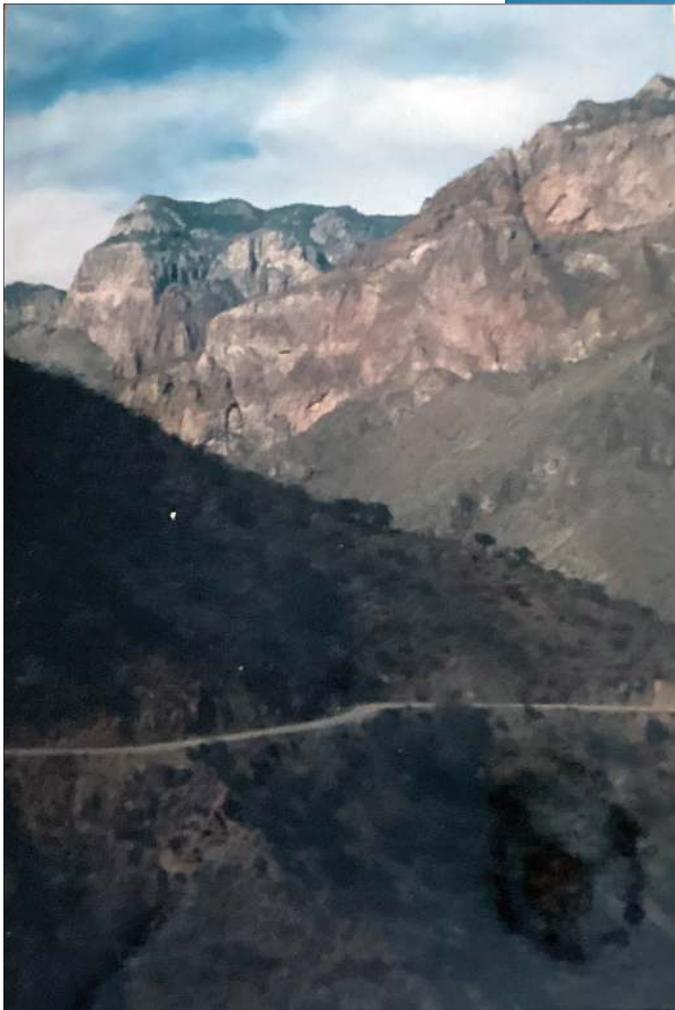
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# Copper Canyon

*(Continued from Page 23)*

portable with 7 people in the car. Lunch in the car is tomato-and-avocado sandwiches, apples, and water. We checked in to the San Francisco Hotel in the center of town. Large room with bath and hot water and electricity. Nancy and I set off to find cowboy boots, without success. Then a visit to the old cathedral and Poncho Villa's home. Chihuahua is a charming town. Morning flight home.

This memory is poignant because my friend passed last week.



VIEWS OF COPPER Canyon in Mexico.

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