



Town meeting information

Jericho Australian ballot vote Tuesday, March 4

The final step in Jericho's budget process is the Australian ballot vote on Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 4, at Mount Mansfield Union High School, Browns Trace. Polls are open 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM. You can request an absentee ballot from Jericho Town Clerk Jessica Alexander (JerichoVermont@yahoo.com). Among other articles, the ballot presents to voters the Jericho Town budget (\$4,091,311) and Jericho's portion (\$573,151) of the Underhill Jericho Fire Department budget (\$1,052,940).

To view Jericho's proposed budget in detail and official Warnings for the vote and the meetings over the past several months for the Town Meeting Reimagined process, go online to <https://jerichovt.org/jericho-town-meeting-2-0>.

The town of Jericho thanks everyone who helped plan and manage the Town Meeting Reimagined process and everyone who participated in the Thursday, January 23 budget discussion process, whether through livestream, Zoom, in person at the high school or by watching the MMCTV recording online at <https://youtu.be/0Wq2LDh6EAA>.

The Jericho Town Meeting Reimagined Taskforce is planning to meet Thursday, February 20 and again on Monday, March 10 to listen to feedback we receive by then and share our own observations about the budget discussion meeting on January 23 and the entire three-step Town Meeting Reimagined process. Please remember the last and perhaps most important step — the Australian ballot vote on Tuesday, March 4.

We estimate that, as of January 29, more than 230 people attended the January 23 meeting or watched it online. The count may be understated, because there could have been more multi-person Zoom logons or livestream attendees than we were aware of, and the in-person count reflects a moment in time. But the count includes 78 in person at Mount Mansfield Union High School, 51 on Zoom real-time, 75 through MMCTV live stream real-time and 28 through MMCTV's posted YouTube recording of the livestream. Only those attending in person or on Zoom could participate in voting, asking questions, or making a motion. More people attended the meeting than any of us could see from our own individual vantage points.

Please share any comments about what you observed or experienced, along with any suggestions for improvements in our survey form (<https://jerichovt.org/embeds/projects/24189/survey-tools/24674>) or to any member of the Town Meeting Reimagined Taskforce. Or, email either co-chair: David Barrington (David.Barrington@uvm.edu) or Gaye Symington (gsym@together.net).

We have already received valuable comments — some of them granular, related to sound systems or voting procedures — and some of them broader comments about the process of building a budget and creating ballot items. We look forward to talking about how to improve both the granular tools and the general process for the 2026 budget process and public ballot items.

Westford Town Meeting sample ballots available

By Callie Hamdy, Westford Town Clerk

Westford's Town Meeting is quickly approaching and will be here before we know it!

You can find the sample ballot for Town Meeting online at <https://westfordvt.us/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/Sample-Ballot-TM.pdf>.

You can check your voter registration status here: <https://mvp.vermont.gov/>.

Feel free to reach out to the Westford Town Office with more specific questions regarding Town Meeting — 802-878-4587 or townclerk@westfordvt.us.

Jericho Town Meeting Reimagined — video links

By Angelike A. Contis, MMCTV

Here is the link to the Mount Mansfield Community Television (MMCTV) Town Meeting Reimagined video, which we supported with planning help, a cart full of gear, and two tech-savvy MMU students on camera and audio mixing (thanks Verity and Ben!) There are two options for viewing:

- YouTube: <https://youtu.be/0Wq2LDh6EAA>
- Internet Archive (permalink): <https://archive.org/details/JerichoTMR01232025>

We worked hard to convert Mount Mansfield Union High School's auditorium into a hybrid meeting room (and know it wasn't perfect) but are open to suggestions as we work to help the town improve this effort in the future.

Underhill FY26 Budget, Guide available online

By Jennifer Silpe, Underhill Finance Officer and Human Resource Administrator

Town Meeting Day is just around the corner — the 2025 Town Report is headed to the printers, but I want to make sure that everyone has time to read and understand the proposed budget for Fiscal Year 2026 (FY26) that you will have the opportunity to vote for at Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 4. I have created a Budget Guide FY26 and it is uploaded to the Town of Underhill website along with the approved proposed Budget FY2026. The links to both documents are below.

The Budget Guide takes you line by line through the proposed budget and will explain changes, define items that you may be unclear about. The guide has embedded links to services that we pay for as appropriations so you may better understand the costs associated with places such as the Deborah Rawson Memorial Library or Mills Riverside Park, and how their budget flows through to expenses on our budget. We will also be hosting an informational meeting at Underhill Town Hall on Thursday, February 27 at 6:00 PM.

Please don't hesitate to reach out to me or any other Town employee or Selectboard member if you have questions or would like more information about any budget line item. We have worked hard to create a balanced budget that while being frugal maintains the services and infrastructure we expect as residents of Underhill. We also keep in mind the future both short and long term when it comes to our equipment, roadways, buildings, and retaining the staff that work hard every day to keep this town running smoothly and efficiently.

Link to FY26 Budget: <https://www.underhillvt.gov/media/13421>

Link to FY26 Budget Guide: <https://www.underhillvt.gov/media/13416>

If you would like a copy of either of these emailed or mailed to you, let me know (jsilpe-katz@underhillvt.gov) and I will be happy to get them out to you.

Westford Annual Town Report available

By Holly Delisle, Westford Town Administrator

The 2024 Annual Town Report is now available to view in full color on the town website at <https://westfordvt.us/annual-town-reports/>. This year's report is dedicated to long-time resident and public servant Ira Allen, for his dedication to Westford over the years.

A paper copy of the report will be mailed to all households with a registered voter as well.

Bolton Town Meeting Day, elections

Bolton will be returning to our traditional Town Meeting on Monday evening, March 3, 7:00 PM with an in-person Town Meeting.

Voting by Australian ballot will take place on Tuesday, March 4, 7:00 AM – 7:00 PM.

Both Town Meeting and voting will be held at the Smilie Memorial School Gym.

In January the Select Board completed the FY 25/26 draft municipal budget for voter consideration. Community members are welcome to join Select Board meetings, which are always open to the public and attendance can be electronic or in-person. Agendas and electronic access information can be found online at <https://boltonvt.com/boards-minutes/elecboard/>.

At Bolton's Town Meeting on Monday, March 3, the following items were among the articles warned and will be voted from the floor:

- the municipal budget of \$1,709,087 (Article 1);
- to appropriate \$106,000 in uncommitted general funds to the Highway Projects Fund.

You must be a registered voter IN THE TOWN OF BOLTON to vote in Bolton. The Vermont Secretary of State has a voter information page, <https://sos.vermont.gov/elections/>. Voter registration may be done in person at the Town Office, by mail, or online through the Online Voter Registration (OLVR) at <http://olvr.vermont.gov/>. You may also register the day of an election at Bolton's polling place, Smilie Memorial Elementary School. You may update your voter information at <http://mvp.vermont.gov/>.

To request an absentee ballot, you may:

- request one at My Voter Page (MVP), <http://mvp.vermont.gov/>;

- request one in person at the Bolton Town Office Monday-Thursday, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM;
- call the Town Office and request an absentee ballot, 802-434-5075, ext. 221; or
- email the Assistant Town Clerk request an absentee ballot (<https://boltonvt.com/wp-content/uploads/2024/02/Absentee-Ballot-Request-Form.pdf>). You may request an absentee ballot for another person. However, you may only pick up your own ballot. All third party requests will be MAILED to the address on file for the voter.

Underhill ballots and Town Reports available

By Sherri Morin, Underhill Town Clerk

Our Annual Town Meeting is just around the corner, and ballots and Town Reports are available!

Ballots are ready for pickup or to be mailed. If picking up a ballot, please be mindful that you can only pick up your ballot. If you'd like to request a ballot, call the Town Clerk's office, 802-899-4434, or request a ballot at <https://mvp.vermont.gov/>.

Town Reports can be picked up Jacobs's Market, Well's Corner Market, Deborah Rawson Memorial Library, Underhill Town Hall, and online at <http://underhillvt.gov>. Don't forget to bring your Town Report to the meeting.

On Tuesday, March 4, we will meet at Browns River Middle School for our Annual Town Meeting. Voting begins at 7:00 AM and Town Meeting begins at 9:00 AM. An informational meeting on all Australian Ballot Articles will be held Thursday, February 27, 6:30 PM at the Town Hall.

Don't forget our pot-luck luncheon (hosted by the Jericho Underhill Lions Club) that immediately follows the meeting. Please bring a dish to share. It's a great way to see old and meet new friends.

Hope to see you there.

School budget information

EWSD Board budget meeting February 18

By Ben Dickie,

Communications/Public Relations Coordinator, EWSD

The Essex Westford School District Board will meet in the Essex High School Library, 2 Educational Dr., Essex Junction on Tuesday, February 18, 6:00 – 9:00 PM, starting with comments from the public. The full meeting will also be available to watch on Facebook Live thanks to the Media Factory (<http://www.facebook.com/BTVMediaFactory>).

Agenda items for the meeting include:

- FY26 Budget presentation and deliberation;
- Board's adoption of the FY26 Budget;
- approval of the FY25 Annual Meeting Warning.

Your voice matters! Learn about the EWSD budgeting process by viewing the EWSD budget web page (<http://www.ewsd.org/>

budget) for the latest news, frequently asked questions, blog posts, Board meeting materials, and more.

You can also become more involved by:

- sharing your questions and feedback about the FY26 budget using the form at <https://bit.ly/3WntoTY> (short for https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSfJamQww5km4Hgl7ozr18eStpbxcCWKBqSMOz_NTbL2jBvhgQ/viewform);
- joining the virtual conversation as part of our EWSD BudgetTalk series (Thursday, February 20) from 6:30 – 7:30 PM to ask questions and learn more about the budget. Use this link to take part: <https://meet.google.com/uuw-jgyz-yuq>;
- if you are a community member who would like to receive budget-related updates from the EWSD, please sign up at <https://bit.ly/3E1kWDG> (short for <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/e/1FAIpQLSeRfY06SiCAIutgF1bDFHZtgHbxNovvSANSByoqzMs9jUAA/viewform>).

FY26 budget information at MMUUSD February 27

By Edey Graning, Chair, MMUUSD Board

We invite you to join us for an informational meeting on Thursday, February 27 at Mount Mansfield Union High School at 6:00 PM about the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District (MMUUSD) FY26 Budget. All documents can be found linked in the agenda of the February 10 Board meeting, <https://bit.ly/3XhjZOn>.

The Board will also be appointing Michelle Patnode as principal of Brewster Pierce Memorial School.

The February 10 meeting was recorded for those who could not make it, and Budget Information can be found on the website https://www.mmuusd.org/school_board/budget_and_annual_report_info.

NEWS BRIEFS



Underhill selectboard candidate

Lisa M. Carmichael is running for a one-year term on the Underhill Selectboard.

PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

By Lisa M. Carmichael, Underhill

Allow me to address why I am running for the Underhill Selectboard (one-year term).

I had the good fortune of living in Underhill from 1998 through the 2000s, where my daughter went to Poker Hill School and the Central School. Then work pressures caused me to leave not only Underhill but Vermont. I gratefully returned nearly three years ago and count my blessings to be back every time I pass Chamberlin's and take in that view.

One of my core values is to volunteer and help others. When I had a young family, I enthusiastically volunteered at the local schools. Getting those kids on skis was backbreaking! Now, I volunteer for COTS and CASAN but would also like to bring my volunteer efforts back closer to home — on the Underhill Selectboard.

I have 25+ years professional experience in IT and Cybersecurity and have hands-on experience in cloud migration, personal identity and networking. Having followed Selectboard meetings, I know the Town's IT consultants do a great job helping the town administrators with technology. Yet artificial intelligence and its use by bad actors can rapidly overwhelm teams trying to protect digital transactions and access to sensitive data.

Besides my general interest in the many important issues that challenge our town, I figure that I can add my specialized IT skillset to the Selectboard and help the Town better understand and navigate the increasingly complex digital landscape. I also have experience with running a small business, from web marketing to budgets to contract negotiations.

I look forward to meeting more townspeople and serving the greater community — and am always willing help tackle whatever IT gremlin is making a neighbor miserable! I am eager to get to know our special place on this planet a whole lot better.

Winter roads

By Russ Clark, Highway Supervisor, Underhill Highway Department

The snow keeps falling!

The Underhill Road Crew would like to remind everyone that plowing snow across the town roads is unsafe and against the law per 23 VSA1126a.

With the amount of snow we have already received and is still forecasted, mailboxes can be damaged by snow exiting the plow. If your mailbox is damaged, we can assure you that it was not done intentionally.

Garbage cans can also become an issue when they are placed in the traveled portion of the road. Please do your best to place them off the road and remove them after the trash is picked up.

One last thing: DON'T CROWD THE PLOW!

Our dedicated crew works long hours to keep our roads as safe as possible and we appreciate the waves and the thumbs up — enjoy the rest of the winter!

Underhill Highway crew: Russ, Scott, Dwayne, and Ken

Country breakfast to help the Lang family

The Knights of Columbus Council #7810 will serve a country breakfast on Sunday, February 23, 8:00 – 10:30 AM at the St. Thomas Parish Hall in Underhill Center. All of the net proceeds from this breakfast will go to Craig and Susie Lang, who lost their home in Underhill in a house fire on Monday, February 3.

The buffet-style breakfast will include juice, eggs, pancakes, sausage, bacon, home fries, and coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and orange juice.

While we suggest a donation of \$12, please be generous and help our neighbor in this difficult time. Come and bring the whole family. All are welcome! The Parish Hall is handicapped-accessible; the lift is on the left side of the church.

Unmute yourself!

By Angelike A. Contis, MMCTV

Last year Mount Mansfield Community TV (MMCTV) applied for and received an FCC license for a Low Power FM radio station. Now we're listening to YOU to find out what you want to hear on the very local airwaves on WRUJ, coming your way in 2025 on the internet and then in the near future on Low Power FM 100.5.

Please take a minute to fill out our survey online at <https://forms.gle/Ruz3a1qKZFQZTdqG9> to tell us what you want to hear. Survey participants will be in a raffle drawn on Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 4 for a \$25 Burlington Records gift certificate.

If you'd like to learn more, contact mmctv@mtmansfieldctv.org.

Jericho Planning Commission meeting February 18

By Chris Shaheen, Jericho Town Planner

The public is welcome and encouraged to attend and comment the Jericho Planning Commission (PC) meeting on Tuesday, February 18, 7:00 – 9:00 PM, at Jericho Town Hall, 67 VT Rt. 15, Jericho and on Zoom.

Main topics of the meeting include a public hearing on proposed changes to residential density and discussion on proposed changes to zoning that include how site plan and subdivision applications are reviewed.

The agenda for the meeting, including a Zoom link, is posted online here: <https://jerichovt.org/2443/widgets/7646/documents/64589>.

Email any public comments ahead of time to be delivered to the PC to Jericho Town Planner Chris Shaheen, cshaheen@jerichovt.gov.

Lions host Underhill Town Meeting potluck luncheon

By Charles Cyr, Underhill

This year, the Jericho Underhill Lions Club is again proud to host the annual Underhill Town Meeting luncheon traditionally hosted by the Underhill Historical Society.

The lunch will take place from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM in the Browns River Middle School (BRMS) cafeteria on Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 4.

This is a POTLUCK event and people who plan to attend the meeting are encouraged to contribute items appropriate for a luncheon.

We look forward to having you perform your civic obligation of attending Town Meeting at BRMS — and plan on attending and contributing food to the luncheon!

Any questions can be directed to odchuckles@gmail.com. Thank you, from your local Lions Club!

The Cambridge Community Center and its Town Meeting article

By William Kearney, Cambridge 360, Inc

Cambridge 360 Inc. will withdraw Article Three from the Cambridge Town Meeting agenda. This article sought town funds to support the purchase of the Cambridge Community Center by Cambridge 360 Inc, a 501(c)(3). Despite the very ambitious timeline for fundraising and planning, C360's goal of acquiring and managing the center for the town was met with enthusiastic community support, as evidenced by the successful petition drive and the funds raised from local donors.

We deeply appreciate this tangible and generous demonstration of support for the health and well being of this community. Donated funds will be returned or disbursed according to donor wishes.

The center's current owners John Dunn and Russ Weis are in negotiations with private buyers who intend to operate the center as a community-oriented sports, recreation, and community events facility, including its meeting rooms and classrooms. They have the resources, experience, and energy to renovate and successfully manage the center as a business and have connections to the community. Further details will be announced as they become available.

Cambridge 360 remains committed to supporting programs at the Center to ensure its accessibility to town residents. We anticipate sponsoring and seeking town support for programs that will maintain and expand the Center's availability to a wider range of residents and families, regardless of the Center's ownership. We expect to continue these programs as long as the Center continues to be operated as a sports and recreation facility.

News from Jericho Town Hall

Mobbs Committee: The final draft of the Mobbs Farm Management Plan is posted on their website. They also have a vacancy on the committee if you would like to serve. More

details at <https://jerichovt.org/Mobbs-Committee>.

The Jericho Planning Commission (PC) met on Tuesday, February 4, for discussion including next steps to complete review of Village Center District zoning updates and the 2025 Planning Commission work plan. The public is welcomed and encouraged to attend and comment.

Dog Registration 2025: please remember to register your dog with the Town Clerk's office. Visit the <https://jerichovt.org/dog-registration> to get full details on rules and procedures and tag pick-up options.

The Sustainability Book Group has selected The Light Eaters by Zoe Schlanger as the next title for a discussion on Wednesday, March 5, 7:00 PM at the Jericho Town Library. Please sign up in advance (<https://bit.ly/3WxDSAd>) so we can let the library know who might need a copy.

- Upcoming meetings in Jericho:
- First Monday: DEI Committee jerichovt.org/diversity-equity-inclusion
 - First Tuesday: Planning Commission: jerichovt.org/planning-commission
 - First Thursday: Select Board: jerichovt.org/selectboard
 - Second Monday: Bicycle & Pedestrian Connectivity Committee: jerichovt.org/bike-pedestrian-committee
 - Second Tuesday: Affordable Housing Committee: jerichovt.org/jericho-affordable-housing-committee
 - Second Wednesday (as needed): Development Review Board: jerichovt.org/DRB

Results of LVRT user survey

By Laird MacDowell, Jeffersonville

VTrans conducted a public survey last fall concerning use of the Lamoille Valley Rail Trail (LVRT) and suggestions for improvement. Jackie Cassino, VTrans Rail Trails Coordinator, compiled and analyzed the results of the survey which only covered non-winter use of the rail trail.

- Some of the general findings from the survey:
- there were 441 surveys completed;
 - more trail users were female than male;
 - trail users were older than the general population of Vermont;
 - the LVRT is used frequently (50% use the trail once a week);
 - the primary non-winter use is cycling;
 - the highest used trail section is Cambridge Junction to Morrisville, and the least used section is Cambridge Junction to Sheldon Junction;
 - LVRT users are contributing to the local economy.

Here is the link to the survey results and analysis go online to <https://bit.ly/3CEWkXo> (short for <https://drive.google.com/file/d/11Sxf0rq6k54CKdoiWitxOPjVZAR5ZNYf/view?usp=drivesdk>).

Westford Rec: open seats; needs ice rink master, help for July 4th

By Amanda Gifford, Westford Recreation Coordinator

Westford Recreation needs your help. There are two seats open on the Westford Recreation Committee (WRC) — we need fresh ideas and enthusiasm! If you would like to help, please contact recreation@westfordvt.us to let us know. If you know someone who would be good at this, tell them why you think WRC needs them and ask them to reach out to us!

Meetings are usually the first Tuesday of the month, 7:00 – 9:00 PM. This volunteer role does not involve organizing/attending/helping at every event, just events that move you, and your input at most of the monthly meetings.

If you want a 4th of July celebration in Westford, a 4th of July Organizer is needed. WRC cannot manage all the moving parts without help. Up to \$500 in stipend is set aside for this volunteer!

Wish we had a rink this year... If you would like to help with returning the rink to the Westford Common for winter 2025-26, please contact recreation@westfordvt.us to let us know you want to help! The boards will need a good coat of paint and looking over for structural integrity in the spring/early summer. And a person will be needed to commit to being the Rink Master — there is a stipend of up to \$500 for this volunteer as well!

Bolton dog license fees increase for 2025

In the 2024 session, the Vermont Legislature increased the fee to be collected for the rabies control program as part of licensing dogs and wolf-hybrids, by \$2 effective January 1, 2025.

This raised the total that the Town Offices must collect to \$11 for neutered or spayed dogs and \$15 for unneutered ones registered by Tuesday, April 1, of which \$7 must be remitted to the state. The law also expanded the use to which the money collected may be spent to include the administration of the State April 's animal welfare laws.

- Fees:
- \$11 for neutered before April 1;
 - \$15 for unneutered before April 1;
 - \$13 for neutered AFTER April 1;
 - \$19 for unneutered AFTER April 1.
- There are several ways to register:
- If your dog was registered in 2024 and the town has a current rabies certificate, all you need to do is drop off or mail the correct fee.
 - If your dog was registered in 2024 and had a rabies booster, drop off a copy of the updated rabies certificate and the correct fee.
 - If your dog was not registered in 2024, download the application and drop off or mail the application, a copy of the current rabies certificate, and the correct fee.

You may stop by during regular office hours, Monday-Thursday, 8:00 AM – 4:00 PM. It April 'll take a few minutes to process the registration and you can leave with your registration and tag. Or, you can mail everything to Bolton Town Office, 3045 Theodore Roosevelt Hwy, Bolton, VT 05676 and your registration and tag will be mailed to you. Or, you can put everything in the 24/7 drop box to the right of the front door of the Town Office and your registration and tag will be mailed to you.

If you do not register your dog, reminders will be sent out beginning Thursday, April 10.

CHITTENDEN MILLS BEVERAGE

5¢ OFF



FREE COFFEE 12 OZ.

PER GALLON OF GASOLINE

Cannot be combined with other offers. Ad required for discount.

COMING EVENTS

February is Black History Month

Here are some ways to celebrate:

The Black Experience 25 featuring Ta-Nehisi Coates | 153 Main St, Burlington, VT, United States, Vermont 05401 | February 22, 2025 — Explore some of the stops on the *Vermont African American Heritage Trail*, a collection of 10 historic sites illustrating Vermont's Black heritage and its contributions to modern society. Some of the sites, such as the Rokeby Museum and Turner Hill Wildlife Management Area are also home to trail systems and can be combined with a snowshoe, cross-country ski, or walk around the grounds for the full experience. Check it out: *An Outdoor Visit to Vermont's Black History*. You can also check out GMC's presentation with the heritage trail's founder, Curtiss Reed, Jr. of Brattleboro.

Catch author, hiker and friend of GMC Derick Lugo in Vermont *Peace and Justice Center's February Author Series*. "The Unlikely Thru Hiker is the story of a young Black man setting off from the big city with an overweight pack and a can-do attitude." Thursday, February 24, 6:00 – 7:00 PM on Zoom, register here: <https://bit.ly/3GrWdKh>. If you missed GMC's speaker presentation with Derick last summer, you won't want to miss this hilarious and entertaining evening.

The "I am Vermont Too" Photo Exhibit is currently on display at the state house in Montpelier. BIPOC Vermonters share their experiences with microaggressions and racism in this photo project that has been going on since 2014. It's on display in Montpelier until Tuesday, February 25.

Ongoing Events

It Takes a Village Women's Circle meets on the last Tuesday of the month (February 25, March 25), 6:00 – 7:30 PM at the Waterville Town Hall, 544 VT Rt. 109, Waterville. Pot-luck — so if you can please bring something to share; if not, whatever the reason, just bring yourself! Also bring a journal and pen. Donation based; suggested donation \$5 goes to the upkeep of the Waterville Town Hall. But all are welcome, always! <https://www.facebook.com/events/1071704021631117?ref=newsfeed>

Square Dancing — Tuesdays, September-May, 6:00 – 8:00 PM, Tuttle Middle School, S. Burlington. Tuttle Middle School, S. Burlington. If you can walk to music, you can learn to square dance! Join the Lake Champlain Squares to exercise bodies and minds through square dancing. All ages and experience levels are welcome.

Burlington Literature Group — a weekly virtual book group that meets weekly, Tuesdays at 6:30 PM, on Zoom. We welcome new committed readers to our sessions. The group has been in existence for years meeting in a physical space but, since the pandemic, has changed to online Zoom sessions. We break down interesting, challenging books into weekly segments of 60 to 100 pages, discuss form, content, and our impressions in a friendly online forum. Details can be found at <https://nereadersandwriters.com/> or by emailing info@nereadersandwriters.com. Our next book is *Herzog* by Nobel Laureate Saul Bellow. Our schedule: *Herzog* — February 25, chapter beginning "The telephone rang — five, eight, then peals." to "No, entirely mortal, but human."; March 4, section beginning "As he was putting on his shirt he made plans" to "They shook hands."; March 11, chapter beginning "At last he embraced his daughter" to end.

SongFarmers is a music jam for people of all ages who want to play folk, Americana, blues, bluegrass, Celtic, and more on acoustic instruments; no electronics except for keyboard and bass. It's a circle gathering where everyone who wants to will have a chance to lead songs or instrumentals. Common tunes with simple chord progressions are encouraged so that everyone can play along. If you plan to lead, please choose a song that you can play at a steady rhythm and bring a chord chart for your song. Novice or advanced, you can have fun in a music circle. Please note this is not a performance, open mic, or lesson. Folks who want to sing or just come and enjoy the gathering are welcome too. No alcohol. It's okay to come late if you can't make the start time. Free! Third Wednesdays (February 19, March 19), 6:00 – 8:00 PM at the Community Center in Jericho, Browns Trace, Jericho Center. Registration is appreciated; email CommunityJamJUVT@gmail.com.

The Underhill-Jericho Walking Club meets Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, 5:30 PM, at the United Church of Underhill on Park St., Underhill. We walk for 30-45 minutes; we don't walk if it is raining or snowing. Please bring yak tracks and a headlamp. Join us whenever you like!

The Jericho Historical Society meets at the Old Red Mill, VT Rt. 15, Jericho on the second Thursday of each month (February 13) at 6:00 PM. Visit our website for more information or to request a zoom invitation: <https://www.jerichohistoricalsociety.org/events.html>.

The Underhill Historical Society meets on the second Wednesday of each month at 6:30 PM. Meetings are at the Old Schoolhouse, 32 Pleasant Valley Rd., Underhill Center, spring through fall and at the Town Hall in the winter. Visit our website for more information about the Underhill Historical Society: <https://underhillhistoricalsociety.org/>

Craft Group: meets twice a month on Thursdays (February 20; March 6, 20), 6:00 – 8:00 PM, Deborah Rawson Memorial Library, 8 River Rd., Jericho. Open to anyone interested in coming with any craft they like: crocheting, rug hooking, knitting, needlepoint, watercolors, jewelry making, macramé... you name it! If you have any questions please contact Amy Tower, 802-355-9671 or atowerinv@gmail.com, or Julie Hehir, 802-899-3199 or juliehhehir@comcast.net.

Waterville Country Church hosts a Community Meal the first Thursday of each month (March 6). Come enjoy a relaxing homemade meal with neighbors at the church or pick up meal(s) to go. Donations accepted. All donations will be given to a local nonprofit, charity, or community service organization. For information contact Susan Schill or Kim Pitt, watervillecountrychurch@gmail.com. Ask about delivery to shut-ins!

Monday night yoga in Underhill Center, Mondays, March 10-May 26, 6:30 – 7:30 PM, upstairs in the Great Room at the Underhill Town Hall. We will engage the connection between breath, body, and mind to generate heat and build strength and flexibility. *Vinyasa* incorporates a dynamic flow of gradually intensifying postures, with intentional breath, followed by cool down and rest. All levels and abilities are welcome! Bring your own mat and any blocks or props. Cost: \$7 per class or \$30 for

5-class punch card. For more information, go online to <https://www.underhillvt.gov/recreation-committee/page/vinyasa-yoga>

Bone Builders Class: at the Jeffersonville Church (Second Congregational Church of Christ, 16 Church St., Jeffersonville) from 11:00 AM – 12:15 PM on Mondays and Thursdays. It is a drop-in class, but first-timers have a couple of pages to fill out and sign. It is free, but a donation bucket is available for those wishing to reimburse the church for the use of the space. All are welcome. We have a good time — be prepared for some laughter as well as improving your strength and balance. Call Melody Tobin (802-644-2409) to discuss, or just show up.

Bone Builders Class: at St. Thomas Catholic Church, Underhill Center, on Mondays/Wednesdays/most Fridays, 9:00 – 10:15 AM; first Friday of the month, 9:45 AM. Sponsored by the United Way of Northwest VT, RSVP Bone Builders is a free exercise program for men and women, designed to prevent the negative effects of osteoporosis. For more information contact Danielle Schwer, 802-861-7821 or danielle@unitedwaynwvt.org.

RSVP Bone Builders program, Westford Common Hall, Wednesdays and Fridays, 10:30 – 11:30 AM. Free! Please wear comfortable clothing and bring water. This program focuses on balance and light weight training to protect against fractures caused by osteoporosis. Per studies by Tufts University published in the *New England Journal of Medicine*, those who participated in the program just twice a week, gained muscular strength, balance, and increased bone density. Contact Jocelyn Chauvin, 802-999-6387.

Coming Events

Friday, February 21

Let's Do Lunch!, 11:00 AM – 12:30 PM at the Second Congregational Church, Church Street, Jeffersonville. Sponsored by Cambridge Recreation with the support of the Second Congregational UCC, Cambridge Elementary School sixth grade class, Cambridge Village Market, and community volunteers. There is no charge for the meal, but donations to help defray the cost of preparing the meals is appreciated. Bring a food shelf donation if you can.

Saturday, February 22

JULC Annual Pancake Breakfast, 8:00 – 11:00 AM, United Church of Underhill, Park St., Underhill. Got cabin fever? Come out to Underhill Flats for the Jericho-Underhill Lions Club 34th annual pancake breakfast. We'll be serving pancakes (regular and gluten-free) with real Vermont (local) maple syrup, sausages, bacon, coffee, milk, and orange juice — a meal to enjoy with neighbors and friends — and you don't have to cook! Proceeds go to fund the David Damkot Memorial Scholarship fund, which provides scholarships to deserving Mount Mansfield Union High School seniors. Take-out is available. No fee for the breakfast — suggested donation only. Also, help out your needy neighbors: food donations are accepted and encouraged for our local food shelf.

7th Annual Stark Mountain Foundation StorySki at Mad River, 10:30 AM – 2:00 PM, Mad River Glen Cooperative, 57 Schuss Pass, Waitsfield. Join us for a reading of *Wake Up, Moon!* by Lita Judge, an Alaskan native now living in New Hampshire, as you ski through the woods at Mad River Glen. The cozy picture book follows animal friends on an unforgettable snowy night. Free, but skiers will need a lift pass for Mad River Glen. For information contact Bret Halverson, 802-583-3536 or bret.halverson@starkmountain.org. So we can order stuffies and hot chocolate for everyone, please pre-register at <https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/vym4hg8>.

Sunday, February 23

Country Breakfast to benefit the Lang family, 8:00 – 10:30 AM, St. Thomas Parish Hall, Underhill Center. The Knights of Columbus Council #7810 will serve breakfast, with the net proceeds to go to Craig and Susie Lang, who lost their home in Underhill in a house fire on Monday, February 3. Menu: juice, eggs, pancakes, sausage, bacon, home fries, and coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and orange juice. Suggested donation of \$12, please be generous and help our neighbor. Come and bring the whole family to this delicious breakfast. All are welcome! The Parish Hall is handicapped-accessible; the lift is on the left side of the church.

Texas Hold'em Benefit, doors open 8:30 AM, games 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM, Green Mountain Aerie #3210 Fraternal Order of Eagles, 646 VT Rt. 109, Jeffersonville. Support Vermont's own Rebecca "Becky" Pelkey on her journey to be "Vermont's first" international Grand Auxiliary President of the Fraternal Order of Eagles 2025-2026. 70% payout to the top five places! \$100 one-time buy-in for \$20k in chips. The blinds will be 15 minute rounds. Come early to reserve your seat — first come, first served. Must be 18 yrs old to attend. Refreshments available; no alcohol. Sponsored by the Green Mountain Auxiliary #3210 Jeffersonville. Based on the number of players attending, a second tournament to be held on Sunday, March 23, same location.

Sunday-Monday, February 23-24

Bread for Peace Fundraiser, 12:00 – 6:00 PM Sunday, Ohavi Zedek Synagogue, N. Prospect St., Burlington. Pick-up locations in Burlington and Richmond on Sunday or Monday. Bread For Peace is a collaboration between Ohavi Zedek (OZ) and interfaith, cross-wide partners. OZ is working with Burlington Friends Meeting on a fundraiser for humanitarian aid in Israel and Palestine. Order fresh baked bread, with 100% of the proceeds going to charity — split equally between United Hatzalah of Israel and Palestine Children's Relief Fund. Both provide free medical care where it is needed most and have high ratings from Charity Navigator. Place your order now for challah, pita, and gluten-free oat bread. For more information, go online to <https://ohavizedek.org/event/bread-for-peace-2/>.

Monday, February 24

Healthy Food, Thriving Communities: Food as Medicine, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, Community Center in Jericho, Browns Trace, Jericho Center. In their ongoing series on resiliency topics, Transition Town Jericho hosts Melissa Needham, Public Health Specialist at the Burlington District Office of the VT Department of Health. *Food as Medicine* is a holistic approach to preventing, managing, and treating chronic diseases through nutrition and food. This session on *Supporting Wellness through Food as Medicine* delves into the transformative role of nutrition in improving individual and community health outcomes. It also highlights successful models of Food as Medicine programs. RSVP requested: Ttjericho.VT@gmail.com.

Tuesday, February 25

Meet with Underhill/Jericho Representatives, 6:00 – 7:00 PM, Deborah Rawson Memorial Library, 8 River Rd., Jericho. Vermont state representatives Edey Graning of Jericho and Trevor Squirell of Underhill provide an update on Vermont's legislative session and answer your questions.

How to Love a Forest, 1:00 – 2:30 PM, Faith United Methodist Church, 899 Dorset St., S. Burlington. Hosted by Burlington Garden Club, Inc. What does it mean to love a forest at this strange and challenging moment in time? Ethan Tapper, the author of the 2024 book *How to Love a Forest*, will discuss how forests work, the many threats and stressors that Vermont's forests face, and what it means to care for forests in a changed and changing world. Ethan Tapper is a forester who served as the Chittenden County Forester from 2016-2024, in which role he earned numerous awards and distinctions. Now he runs his own forestry company — Bear Island Forestry — writes and works on his homestead, Bear Island.

Wednesday, February 26

Community-Based Scientific Management of Knotweed, 12:00 – 1:00 PM, on Zoom. Flood events disperse introduced highly competitive species, like knotweed. Managing the spread and limiting the harm knotweed causes is a tall task, but the Conservation Commissions from Warren, Waitsfield, and Fayston have developed a management approach that yields results — keeping knotweed in check, reducing its prevalence in the watershed, and restoring habitat it had dominated. Hear from program leaders and a few of their partners who brought expertise, covering specific steps and advice for those interested in getting similar efforts going in their communities. Presenters include Walt Poleman, director of UVM's Field Naturalist Program and Ecological Planning Laboratory; Jito Coleman, Warren Conservation Commission (CC); Andrea Henderson, Fayston CC; David Moroney, Field Naturalist Program graduate and GIS coordinator; and Curt Lindberg, Waitsfield CC. For more information and to register and get the Zoom link, go online to <https://vlt.org/events/untying-the-knot/>. Free; donations welcome. Please email Sam, sam@vlt.org, with questions.

News Flash!!

MMCTV & Richmond Free Library
Free Video Workshop
For Middle School Students

The Library is once again partnering with local community media center MMCTV to offer the tenth annual video workshop for middle school students during the February school vacation.

This year the theme will be, *News Flash: What's Happening at the Library*. Participants will learn how to produce promotional material for television, internet and radio as they set up an imaginary news studio and cover the local news as it unfolds at the library.

Students ages 10 – 14 are invited to register for this fun, free workshop offering hands-on filming and editing experience. Time will be split between the library and the television studio on:

February 24 & 25 from 9 am—noon. Space is limited.

Sign up by calling or emailing the library:

802-434-3036

library@richmondvt.gov

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The Mountain Gazette

6558 VT Route 116, Starksboro, VT 05487
802-453-6354 • mtngazette@gmavt.net

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One letter per writer, per calendar month.

Must be signed for attribution with writers address and phone number. Send your news to mtngazette@gmavt.net

HEALTH NEWS

Weekly yoga class in Underhill March-May

From the Underhill Recreation Committee

Mondays can be tough. Come recover from your day, and restore to continue your week — Monday night yoga will be offered March 10-May 26, 6:30 – 7:30 PM, upstairs in the Great Room at the Underhill Town Hall in Underhill Center.

In this class we will engage the connection between breath, body, and mind to generate heat and build strength and flexibility. *Vinyasa* incorporates a dynamic flow of gradually intensifying postures, with intentional breath, followed by cool down and rest.

All levels and abilities are welcome! Students need to bring their own mat and any blocks or props they may want or need. The cost is \$7 per class or \$30 for 5-class punch card.

For more information, go online to <https://www.underhillvt.gov/recreation-committee/page/vinyasa-yoga>

Fitness classes at CCJ

Everyone can do it! No matter what your goal, these classes are designed to be fun first. You'll giggle your way to whatever "shape" you'd like to be in.

Come to the Community Center in Jericho (Browns Trace, Jericho Center) Mondays from 9:00 – 10:00 AM, Tuesdays and Thursdays from 6:00 – 7:00 PM, for an hour of fun with fat burning moves and exercises that build muscular strength, endurance, and suppleness to make everything you do easier, and finishing with Pilates and yoga relaxation poses to get your perspective back.

Purchase a virtual punch pass that's good for any of the three classes offered throughout the season, now through Tuesday, April 29: six classes for \$48; 12 classes for \$80; and single class drop-in \$10. Use whenever you like through April 29.

The classes are offered by Trish Densham, personal trainer and long-time fitness professional. To sign up or get more information email tdmover@gmail.com or text/call 802-999-1265.

Free radon test for your home

From the Vermont Department of Health

Did you know you can get lung cancer without smoking? Radon is a radioactive gas that has no color, taste, or smell but may be inside your home. Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer among people who do not smoke. If you smoke or used to smoke, your risk of getting lung cancer from radon is especially high.

One in seven Vermont homes has elevated levels of radon. Test your home for free by requesting a kit from the VT Health Department at <https://www.HealthVermont.gov/radon> or by calling 800-439-8550.

Health ads:

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or email mtngazette@gmavt.net

Copley Hospital provides update on key strategic issue

The Board and Administration would like to provide an update on a strategically significant issue for Copley Hospital (CH) that we are actively addressing: supporting Lamoille Health Partners (LHP).

We have previously shared some information on this matter, as has the press through published articles. While media coverage provides awareness, our direct communications are more precise and comprehensive, given our involvement and understanding of the issues.

Lamoille Health Partners update

At the end of November 2024, LHP reached out to Copley requesting our help and support with the dire financial crisis in which they had suddenly found themselves. Working together, we developed and signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in early December. We want to address the concerns and rumors that have surfaced in the meantime.

LHP is a Federally Qualified Health Center (FQHC), allowing it to receive additional financial support from state and federal sources. Similarly, Copley Hospital (CH) operates as a Critical Access Hospital (CAH) and benefits from federal funding. Preserving these designations is essential for both organizations.

In January 2025, we provided a \$150,000 unrestricted cash grant to support them during this time. Currently, we are conducting a comprehensive four- to six-week assessment of LHP's finances, technology, quality, operations, staffing, and services. This assessment will help inform long-term collaboration options, including the possibility of a merger.

It is important to clarify that the rumor suggesting CH is "taking over" LHP is false. Such an action would not be legal under federal FQHC regulations. Instead, we are exploring a potential merger in which a revised FQHC entity would encompass two distinct functions: a Hospital and Primary Care services. This structure would foster a collaborative, resource-sharing model, potentially integrating physicians, staff, and community boards.

The goal of this partnership is to enhance financial stability, streamline clinical and support services, reduce costs, and improve quality and access to care. Leadership roles would evolve over time with no anticipated layoffs. At this stage, CH is fully funding the necessary assessments and resources for a potential merger. While the process could begin immediately, realizing the full benefits could take one to three years.

As previously stated and agreed upon in the December 2024 MOU:

"CH and LHP are deeply committed to serving the residents of Lamoille County and beyond. With shared patients and aligned missions, this collaboration presents a promising opportunity to enhance operations and financial outcomes. A closer partnership has the potential to deliver substantial benefits to patients, families, staff, providers, and nurses, while also strengthening efforts to secure Federal and State support for this new integrated care model."

To date, we have conducted nine formal meetings on this matter with Copley and LHP leadership at the table, along with numerous informal discussions. At this stage, we remain in the planning phase, carefully evaluating our options.

Summary and next steps

The Copley Board remains committed to thoughtful governance and careful stewardship of hospital operations, always prioritizing the best interests of both the institution and our community. As we continue to evaluate the recommendations from the Oliver Wyman report, we will consider any strategic partnerships that enhance efficiency and quality of care.

Addressing the immediate needs of LHP is our highest priority, as their continued viability is essential to the broader healthcare ecosystem of our region.

We appreciate the community's understanding and patience as we navigate these complex and critical issues.

Dental emergencies

Parents have recently been asking me a mouthful of questions about what to do if their child chips or knocks out a tooth accidentally. Since February is National Children's Dental Health Month, let me see if I can do more than just brush the surface on this one.

When children are active, they're sure to knock into each other and occasionally will knock out one of their teeth. Teeth that are jarred and pushed forward may bleed a little but usually return to their normal position. Chipped teeth, painful or not, eventually need to be seen by a dentist.

If a baby tooth comes out, it's out forever.

What if a permanent tooth is knocked out?

This represents an emergency. It's imperative to get the tooth back in place as quickly as possible. To do that, here are a few suggestions:

First, find the tooth as quickly as you can. Pick it up by the top or the part you normally see so that you avoid touching the root. Best results are achieved when the tooth can be reimplanted within 15 minutes. After two hours, replacement is essentially worthless and is unlikely to work.

Rinse the tooth off first with running water.

If you are not comfortable getting it back in, then place it in a saltwater solution, over-the-counter tooth preservation product, a container of milk, or even your child's saliva, but do not store it in tap water.

If you do think you can replace it, then put it into the socket without touching the root so it is facing the correct way. Press it in until it is level to the adjacent tooth.

Have your child bite down on a wad of cloth until you can reach a dentist to stabilize what you have done.

If the tooth is chipped, and your child is in pain because a nerve has been injured in the tooth, please call your child's dentist immediately so they can do what they can to save the tooth.

If the tooth is chipped and your child is not in pain, this is less critical but still warrants a call and probably a visit to your dentist in the near future.

The best way to deal with a displaced tooth is to not let it happen. A good way to do that is to make sure your child wears a mouth guard if they are actively engaged in contact sports.

Hopefully, tips like these will allow you and your child to sink your teeth into the proper care of the chipped or knocked out tooth.

Lewis First, MD, is Chief of Pediatrics at The University of Vermont Children's Hospital and Chair of the Department of Pediatrics at the University of Vermont's Larner College of Medicine

LEGISLATIVE REPORTS

Legislative update — VT House

By Brenda Steady, Chittenden-25 House District

January 28-31

Each week at the State House is getting busier.

A few bills were passed on the floor unanimously. They are: H.27, An act relating to coercive controlling behavior and abuse prevention orders; and H.35, An act relating to unmerging the individual and small group health insurance markets.

Many adjustments to the current budget have been sent to the Appropriations committee including the Homeless Winter program being extended until June 30 at a cost of approximately \$2 million.

My committee, Human Services, began working on H.13, An act relating to Medicaid payment rates for home and community-based service providers and designated and specialized service agencies, and on H.91, An act relating to the Emergency Temporary Shelter Program. This is the link to the Human Services committee page, <https://legislature.vermont.gov/committee/detail/2026/16>. All handouts can be viewed from the testimony that was heard. It is important to hear from constituents regarding bills. I believe it helps to make informed decisions, especially with the costs associated with these bill and the effect these increases have on so many Vermonters. While I understand the creators of the bills have good intentions, my own personal concern is the additional costs to implement them. I realize there are so many people that are already struggling to pay their property taxes. If landlords have to raise their rents to pay their own bills, will this cause more homelessness?

Legislative update: budget

By Thomas Stevens, Washington-Chittenden House District

February 7

H.141, the mid-fiscal year Budget Adjustment Act, passed through the Appropriations Committee and the full House of Representatives this week.

You can find a summary of the budget at this link: <https://legislature.vermont.gov/Documents/2026/Workgroups/House%20Appropriations/FY%202025%20Budget%20Adjustment/House%20Recommended%20FY%202025%20Budget%20Adjustment/W-Emily%20Byrne-H.141%20FY25%20BAA%20Highlights-2-4-2025.pdf>.

The mid-year BAA is an attempt at triuing up the budget passed last June with adjustments to bottom line using funds that have been reverted back to the General Fund and with revenue that came in higher than expected. Nearly \$133M was withheld by the Administration in their proposal to keep in reserve for the FY2026 budget ("the Big Bill") that will take effect on July 1, 2026. This withholding prevented investing in more affordable housing at this time, though those funds may be available to use for that purpose as we work through the FY26 budget.

The primary reason for this withholding, which we ended up

agreeing with, was to prepare for any changes that may be made to education funding. The Governor has floated his intentions, and the committees of jurisdiction have been taking testimony on the Administration plan since it was released. Another reason to withhold funds is the uncertainty with federal funding. The actions of the federal government with respect to the payment of federal funds to the states for necessary programs is deeply unsettling, and, if continued, will prove incredibly hurtful to Vermonters.

With some funds found within the budget, the House was able to allocate funds for affordable housing, a housing development for developmentally disabled adults, reparations to a number of court houses and for extending the hotel/motel program three more months. The bulk of the budget adjustments proposed by the Governor went to fixing financial and accounting errors, payments for increased Medicaid matches, technology services, and providing emergency relief to nursing homes, including the Vermont Veterans Home in Bennington. There wasn't much controversy between the House and the Administration in this BAA, and because of the diminished amount of funds from COVID-19 relief programs, there wasn't much complication. The bill passed primarily along partisan lines, with opposition due to the increased funding for keeping unhoused Vermonters sheltered for a longer period of time.

As always, please reach out with questions to tstevens@leg.state.vt.us.

Weekly legislative update

By Theresa Wood, Washington-Chittenden House District

Last week, the House started to see some bills come the floor for a full vote. Here's a brief description of each bill:

H.78 — Updates to the use of Australian ballot system in local elections;

H.27 — a bill regarding updates to the domestic violence fatality review commission;

H.35 — a bill to permanently unmerge the individual and small group health insurance markets.

In my committee (House Human Services) we began testimony on H.13, which is a bill that seeks to address Medicaid rates for home and community-based service providers.

There is a great deal of information about the above bills and many other items of interest on the legislative web page at <https://legislature.vermont.gov>.

And if you are looking for something to watch on these cold, snowy days, the House deliberations can be viewed on YouTube at https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCC1w34lygIvB-HT6dt_4eMA/featured.

As always, I can be reached at twood@leg.state.vt.us.

COLLEGE NEWS

Amber Fitzgerald of Jericho, VT has earned Dean's List honors for the Fall 2024 semester at the University of Tampa, Tampa, FL. Fitzgerald is a freshman majoring in Nursing BSN-PRE.

Arielle M. Graning of Jericho, VT was named to the Fall 2024 Dean's List, first honors, at Clark University, Worcester, MA.

Lily Korczykowski of Jericho Center, VT was named to the Winter 2024 President's List at the College of Charleston, Charleston, SC. Korczykowski is majoring in Exercise Science.

Carleigh Lane of Jericho, VT was named to the Fall 2024 Dean's List at Champlain College, Burlington, VT, majoring in Accounting.

Avery Luther of Jericho, VT, was named to the Fall 2024 Dean's List at Champlain College, Burlington, VT, majoring in Computer Networking & Cybersecurity.

Annika Mahoney of Jericho Center, VT was named to the Winter 2024 President's List at the College of Charleston, Charleston, SC. Mahoney is majoring in Commercial Real Estate Finance.

Ella Schroeder of Jeffersonville, VT has been named to the Dean's List and President's List for the spring 2024 semester at the University of Hartford, West Hartford, CT.

Jordan Shullenberger of Waterbury, VT has been named to the Fall 2024 Dean's List at the University of Albany, Albany, NY. Shullenberger's intended major is Business Administration.

Kaia L. Sleeper-Spady of Jericho, VT was named to the Fall 2024 Dean's List, first honors, at Clark University, Worcester, MA.

Reilly Stevens of Jericho Center, VT was named to the Winter 2024 President's List at the College of Charleston, Charleston, SC. Stevens is majoring in Psychology.

Haily Sumner of Underhill, VT was named to the Fall 2024 Trustees' List at Champlain College, Burlington, VT.

Ben Treybal of Underhill, VT was named to the Fall 2024 President's List at Champlain College, Burlington, VT.

We have room for your ad.

Call Brenda Boutin

at 802-453-6354

for more

information

or email

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SUMMER CAMPS AND SPORTS 2025

Planning ahead: summer 2025 activities for kids

Chittenden County Soccer School 2025 — Registration is open for Chittenden County Soccer School (CCSS) 2025, to be held Monday-Friday, July 14-18, 9:00 AM – 3:30 PM at Mills Riverside Park in Jericho. There are half- and full-day camp options; age groups range from 5 to 16+!

All players receive a camp tee and team award. We have a dedicated and experienced coaching staff returning again this summer to bring the “love of the game” to all our players. Individual ball skills, teamwork, game tactics, full-sided and small-sided games, and goalkeeper training are all part of our daily plan!

Please email Eric Barker of Underhill, barkereric15@gmail.com with any questions, or visit our website at <http://chittendencountysoccerschool.org>.

Summer Fairy Camp, Underhill — Registration for Poker Hill Arts summer Fairy Camps is open. These usually fill fast — find information, pictures, videos, and dates at our website <https://www.pokerhillarts.com/magical-fairy-camp>.

Poker Hill Children’s Theatre may still have openings for the week of July 28-August 1. This musical theatre camp located in Underhill is for students entering second grade through fifth grade. If your child loves singing, dancing, arts and crafts, and water time, this is the camp for them! Here is the link for more information and to register: <https://bit.ly/410wT5j>.

Canciones y Cuentos: Kids Spanish Camp — Sing songs, read stories, play games, make art, and move your body! All levels, ages 4-9 at the Community Center in Jericho, Browns Trace, Jericho Center. Two Monday-Thursday, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM sessions: July 28-31 and August 11-14. \$275 per four-day session, or sign up two kids for \$500. Contact Christie Moulton, christiemoulton@gmail.com, to register. Campers should come with a water bottle, morning snack, and lunch.

The lineup of Burlington City Arts’ (BCA’s) 2025 summer camps is live online at <https://bit.ly/4fZmACP>. At BCA’s award-winning camps, students work closely with professional teaching artists for a full week of in-depth studio arts experience. Every camp includes high-quality art materials and a final celebration. Come for a half-day, or pair a morning and afternoon camp together at BCA Studios to make a full-day experience. Camps at the BCA Center run for the full day. Registration for all opened on Monday, February 10, and class waitlists are active. Browse the digital guide online at https://issuu.com/bvcityarts/docs/bca_summercamp_catalog_2025_mech_single-pages.

ReTribе’s 2025 summer camps — Registration is open for ReTribе Summer Camps in Underhill. Is your kid ready to unleash their wild side this Summer? Check out our camp options for ages 5-12 at <https://www.retribe.org/day-camp> for both information and a link to registration link. Week-long Day Camps: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Monday-Friday, June 23-27 (Underhill), July 14-18 (Richmond), August 4-8 and 11-15

(Underhill). Week-long Seers, Scouts, Sprites camps: 9:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Monday-Friday, June 16-20, August 18-22, and August 25-29, all in Underhill. Questions? Reach out to Julia Martin at ReTribеTransformation@gmail.com or 609-933-0877

Water Wanderings camp for camping, canoeing — Water Wanderings is entering its ninth summer and we are excited to offer five camps, including an all new Young Adults session and another Grandparents day this season! There are several age groups and two Family Camp sessions offered:

- Youth, ages 9-12: Monday July 7-Friday, July 11 (four nights)
- Teens, ages 13-15: Monday, July 14-Monday, July 21 (seven nights)
- Young Adults, ages 16-18: Wednesday, July 23-Wednesday, July 30 (seven nights)
- Grandparents Day: July 31
- Family Camp I: Monday, August 4-Wednesday, August 6 (two nights). Recommended for families with older campers (ages 7-10)
- Family Camp II: Thursday, August 7-Saturday, August 9 (two nights). Recommended for families with younger campers (ages 1-6)

All camps happen on the Green River Reservoir in Hyde Park, Vermont and have a maximum group size of 12. The youth and teen camps are comprised of three counselors and nine campers while the young adult camp and the family camps have two counselors and ten campers. For more information (including cost and reduced-cost sliding scale), go online to <https://www.waterwanderings.org/register.html>.

WORSHIP SERVICES

Calvary Episcopal Church

Calvary Episcopal is a welcoming, caring, Christian community called to live the Gospel of Jesus Christ, grow our spiritual gifts, and serve our neighbors. Calvary is located at 370 VT Rt. 15 in Jericho. Sunday, February 23 (and next month, March 23), Calvary worships at St. James in Essex at 10:00 AM. The other Sundays, Calvary worships at 9:30 AM at the Jericho church. The next Soup/Supper (held the last Thursday of the month) will be February 27, 5:00 – 7:00 PM. The parish administrator can be reached at calvarychurchjericho@gmail.com or 802-899-0453. The Spirit is stirring in this little church. Come be a part of it!

Mount Mansfield Unitarian Universalist Fellowship

Sunday services at MMUUF are held at 9:30 AM on the second and fourth Sundays (February 23, March 9, 23) of each month, September-June. Services are led by members of the fellowship and by invited guest speakers, including visiting UU ministers and leaders of other faiths. Each service explores a different topic. Worship, reflect, and sustain one another, within an inclusive spiritual community, built on values of honoring and affirming the worth of every person, striving for justice, participating in the world community, and respecting the natural web of exist-

ence. Services will be held at our Barn, located opposite Packard Road at 195 VT Rt. 15, Jericho, and also over Zoom; please contact info@mmuuf.org or 802-899-2558 for how to join virtually. Learn more at <https://mmuuf.org/> and www.uua.org.

Jericho United Methodist Church

Jericho United Methodist Church welcomes you to grow in Christ with us. We hold dear the United Methodist Church’s motto: “Open Doors. Open Hearts. Open Minds.” We recognize that our faith journeys are all unique, just as we as individuals are all unique. Know that whoever you are, whatever you do, you are welcome here. We believe that we grow together or not at all. All are welcome! Join us Sundays at 10:00 AM. There will be music, prayer and message from our pastor, Rev. Taeseob Cho. Please contact Rev. Cho at the church phone number, 802-899-4288, or his email, umcho@gmail.com. Located next to the Jericho Town Hall on VT Rt. 15.

United Church of Underhill

The United Church of Underhill is an active, vibrant community. We are young and old; straight and LGBTQIA; singles, couples, and families; believers, questioners, and questioning be-

lievers. We are an Open and Affirming and Reconciling church, which means all ARE truly welcome. We are the Old Fashioned Harvest Market Church, the Clutter Barn Church, and a church of fellowship, mission, and service. We gather to worship together virtually and in-person every Sunday morning at 10:00 AM for a traditional but lively service with music, and Sunday School and nursery for the children. We welcome you to join us for worship or just come in, be still, and contemplate your faith. Located at 7 Park St., Underhill. Pastor’s office (with voicemail) 802-899-1722; church secretary email secretary@ucu.church. For instructions on joining worship from home, please see <https://unitedchurchofunderhill.com/joining-worship-from-home/>.

Second Congregational Church, Jeffersonville

The Second Congregational Church in Jeffersonville would like to invite all who feel called to join us for our online church services, Sundays at 10:00 – 11:00 AM, in person or on Zoom. Know that no matter who you are or where you are in life’s journey, you are welcome at our church; or in this case, our web-space! <https://www.facebook.com/SecondCongregationalUCC>

Worship services continued on page 6

Get up to \$24,500 off weatherization projects with home repairs*

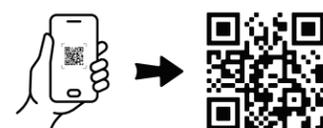


efficiencyvermont.com/wx (888) 921-5990

Stay warmer all winter and stop wasting the heat you’ve paid for!

- Get up to \$9,500 off comprehensive home air sealing and insulation projects with an Efficiency Excellence Network contractor (or \$4,000 depending on household income)
- Plus, income-eligible Vermonters can now get **up to an additional \$15,000** for home repairs that are necessary prior to completing a weatherization project
- Financing options start at **0% interest**, or add the monthly payment to your utility bill

Income-eligible Vermonters may also qualify for free weatherization services.



Learn More — Use your phone’s camera to scan.

*Subject to availability and eligibility.

COMMUNITY COLUMNS



The term “tongue twisting” comprises rolling, folding, rotating, adjusting, and turning of the tongue. Snowberry Clearwings (*Hemaris diffinis*) roll their tongue with apparent ease. Try this at home — it’s fun! Let us know when you can mimic a Clearwing. View more Snowberry Clearwing moths online at https://www.inaturalist.org/observations?taxon_id=358549.

PHOTO BY BERNIE PAQUETTE

Do we live in a community or just a place on a map?

By Julia Blake, Community Center in Jericho

Community is a postman pausing to help you lift a heavy sofa into your truck, a school bus driver stopping to ask a walker in trouble if he needs a ride; community is stopping on your jog to chat with someone planting bulbs and respecting your neighbor even if their political views differ from yours. Community is caring about your neighbors and knowing they will be there for you when you need them. It is the feeling that you belong to a place, even if you came from “somewhere else.” It is knowing that you share with those around you THIS time, THIS town, THIS weather. Community is the feeling of “we’re all in this together.”

Community is more than a physical place, but includes the hills and fields, the roads and houses, the animals — domestic and wild — who share the area. “Real” community is created by residents who care about the place and its people, who participate in local life, beyond their individual tasks and comings and goings. Creating a real community requires working together, playing together, creating together and prioritizing the future together. It means getting beyond ourselves, joining in, showing up, and connecting to the people around us. Enter into the life of a place and you will find you have put down roots, roots that give you stability in storms, roots that enable you to grow and flourish.

In Jericho there is a “Community Center” whose goal is to foster in us a sense of belonging to and caring about this local area. The goal is to strengthen all that is meant by the word “community.” This Center needs the care and tending of many people to deepen its mission and preserve its role, because it is more than a building.

If you have ideas and energy to give to the mission of growing “real” community in Jericho, get involved. Email juliavblake@comcast.net or ccjvermont@gmail.com for more information. For years to come may Jericho remain a “community” and not just a place on the map.

Worship services continued from page 5

Jericho Congregational Church

“An Historic Church Proclaiming an Eternal Message”

On the Green in Jericho Center, VT

Senior Pastor, David Coons and Youth Pastor, Pete Anderson

Sunday School at 8:30 AM for all ages

Fellowship time at 9:30 AM

Worship Service at 10:00 AM

Nursery care provided

Youth group 6:15 PM Sundays in our Sunday school building
802-899-4911; officejcc@comcast.net; www.jccvt.org

All are welcome at Good Shepherd, Jericho

You are invited to worship at Good Shepherd Lutheran Church on VT Rt. 15 at 9:00 AM every Sunday. The building is accessible — all are welcome! There are varied musical styles in worship services, including Folk, Contemporary, Celtic, Latin American, and traditional. Weekday online offerings include Centering Prayer. We are an open-minded Christian community with a focus on social justice issues, where people from different faith traditions, along with those who aren’t sure where they belong or what they believe, seek the support of a spiritual home. We welcome you in the name and love of Christ. More information is at www.goodshephrdjericho.org.

St. Thomas Catholic Church

“Worshiping God in Spirit and in Truth in the Holy Sacrifice of the Mass”

On Green Street in Underhill Center

Weekend Masses: Saturday 4:00 PM, Sunday 8:30 AM

Weekday Masses: Wednesday 6:30 PM, Friday 8:00 AM

Pastor: Rev. Domenico Pizzonia; Deacon: Peter Brooks

Religious Ed. Coordinator: Laura Lynch Wells, 802-899-4770

Parish Secretary: Theresa Gingras, 802-899-4632

email: office@stthomasvt.com; website: www.stthomasvt.com

Waterville Union Church

We meet in person at 9:30 AM at the church; masks recommended. Zoom is only available when there is bad weather or illness of a speaker. We do not post our recorded services to Facebook. But information can be found at <https://www.facebook.com/watervilleunionchurch>, watervilleunionchurchvt@gmail.com; 32 Church St., Waterville.

Monarch Larva Monitoring Project!

By Amy Ludwin, Bolton Conservation Commission member

Be a community scientist with the Monarch Larva Monitoring Project (MLMP)! The MLMP team from the Monarch Joint Venture and the UW-Madison Arboretum co-lead this virtual one-day training on how to collect data that contributes to our knowledge about the monarch population.

Participants learn about monarch biology, monitoring procedures, and data entry protocols, and are able to ask monarch biologists their questions about monarchs and monitoring.

In the North, the training will take place on Wednesday, May 7, 11:00 AM – 4:00 PM, with one-hour break at 1:00 PM. This training is designed for the northern states (North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Iowa, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Illinois, Indiana, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New York, New Jersey, Rhode Island, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Delaware, Vermont, New Hampshire, Maine) and all Canadian provinces. Language: English. Instructors: Monarch Joint Venture & University of WI Madison Arboretum. Course Fee: \$50. Users will be prompted to create an account in order to register for and access this course. If cost is a barrier to your participation and you would like to request financial support, please email learn@monarchjointventure.org.

For more information and to register, <https://learn.monarchjointventure.org/courses/LIVE-Monarch-Larva-Monitoring-Project-Northern-2025>.

The times they are a-changin’

By Bill Schubart

Your children are not your children.

They are the sons and daughters of Life’s longing for itself.

They come through you but not from you,

And though they are with you yet they belong not to you.

You may give them your love but not your thoughts,

For they have their own thoughts.

You may house their bodies but not their souls,

For their souls dwell in the house of tomorrow,

which you cannot visit, not even in your dreams.

You may strive to be like them,

but seek not to make them like you.

For life goes not backward nor tarries with yesterday.

— Kahlil Gibran (*The Prophet* 1929)

Come mothers and fathers

Throughout the land

And don’t criticize

What you can’t understand

Your sons and your daughters

Are beyond your command

Your old road is rapidly agin’

Please get out of the new one

If you can’t lend your hand

For the times they are a-changin’

— Bob Dylan (1964)

What’s changed in 40 years? One thing has: we live a lot longer than we used to. When I was young growing up in Morrisville, many of the adults I knew died in their 50s and 60s. We smoked and drank, ate questionable food, and drove too fast. Some of our fathers worked in the Eden asbestos mills, or the Atlas Plywood Company breathing the toxic glue they used in manufacturing. Today the average life expectancy in Vermont is 78.4 years. I’m already past my “sell-by” date.

When I think of death, I’m less haunted by the thought of it than by my thoughts of the world that we’re leaving to our children and the power over it we’ve hoarded as we age. Clinging to power in the autumn of our years makes it impossible for succeeding generations to step up and begin managing the world they will inherit. We must learn to get out of the way of our children and grandchildren, welcome and cede to them the power they need to manage their future.

Here are some ways we might do that.

In my unexpectedly long life, I’ve chaired twelve statewide nonprofit boards. I’m now, by choice, no longer on any boards. It’s intentional, as I want to make room for younger leadership. How many boards do you serve on, alongside members of younger generations? Has your nominating and governance committee tried to recruit young people? In the broader world of global decision-making, how much civic infrastructure or board governance encourages young people to want to serve? Does your local school teach civics and one’s inherent responsibilities to the common good?

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Gratitude for and a reminder about kindness

To the Editor,

There is a well-known quote which says: “Be kind, for everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.” (attributed to Ian McLaren)

In the past two weeks, two different people have helped our family when we really needed a hand. Those extensions of kindness from people who don’t know our current circumstances made a positive and lasting impact. We are so grateful!

Unfortunately, this afternoon, we had an unnecessarily condescending and unpleasant conversation with a different member of our community. That interaction has also had an impact, but this one is negative and probably isn’t what the other person intended.

So I write this post both as a thank you and as a reminder. Extending kindness and grace to others, loved ones and strangers alike, is always worth doing.

Kate Lucier, Underhill

Help the Lang family rebuild

To the Editor,

Late into the evening Monday, February 3, a house fire consumed the Lang home on River Road in Underhill Center. Please take a moment to read about this recent hardship of my neighbors Craig and Susie Lang. They have lost most of their possessions as well as their home and business. Please consider donating to the link set up on their behalf, <https://gofund.me/2af202de>. I appreciate your consideration.

Mike Fullem, Underhill Center

Never a fan of term limits, I’ve come to believe they’re critical now that we live longer and have chosen to cling to the reins of what we imagine is progress. What systems do we have to recruit, welcome, and prepare our young into the world of civic governance and decision-making as progress careens forward?

Technological advances are accelerating even though our traditional governance systems remain largely the same as they have been in the past. Just in my own lifespan I remember when the last hill farms of Elmore and Wolcott were first being wired with electricity, and farmers were still farming with horses rather than tractors. We shared our phone line with five neighbors and only answered our ring. I lived through the bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki — my father did not — and I’m now on my fifth all-electric vehicle, have a smartphone that answers all my questions, and, as a writer, live in fear of artificial intelligence.

But how often have I had an inquisitive conversation with a young person in which I ask about their fears, or what they think about the world we’re leaving them?

As elders, we’re hoarding the decision-making spaces our children need to manage a future that works for them. We can certainly support their decision-making with the acquired wisdom of our advanced age, but we must make room for them to join us at the levers of control. This means making space in our for-profit and non-profit governing boards and our political systems for succeeding generations. It may even mean offering life-style supports that enable their participation — such as childcare, healthcare insurance, and travel expenses.

I’ve been a columnist for many years, and before that a regular commentator on *Vermont Public*, assuming that I was reaching people of all ages and interests. But recently, a young woman living with us challenged me by asking how many young people I believe read or even see my columns. I thought for a minute. Her question and subsequent discussion made clear to me that her generation not only doesn’t hear what I and others in the traditional news media have to say, they don’t access that media.

I asked how her generation gets their news, and she answered that it’s primarily through podcasts on social media. I winced. I’m neither a fan of “social media” nor “influencer capitalism.” After hearing Mark Zuckerberg’s congressional testimony wherein he was confronted directly about the number of children exposed to pornography, direct-marketed Fentanyl, or sexually groomed by pedophiles on his Facebook and Instagram platforms, I decided that the evil outweighed the good and swore off all social media... promotional suicide for a writer.

Our conversation put front and center that my generation must confront the question of how we bridge the generational gap by talking with and listening to our children and grandchildren, so as to learn from them rather than clinging to our role as if we were the only intelligence in the room. They’re aware of the havoc in the world they’ll inherit, while feeling powerless over it.

There are positive signs. Much of my nonprofit experience was in the arts, an area that seems to be a natural bridge between generations. Recently my wife, my former wife, and I spent an evening at the Mount Abraham school auditorium hearing *Dido and Aeneas*, a 17th century English opera performed by the Youth Opera Company of Middlebury. We all left imbued with great hope and enthusiasm for the 50-plus young people singing on stage. The Vermont Youth Orchestra is another stunning example that brings generations together in our love for the arts. Among our enduring memories was attending Peter Gould’s *Get Thee to the Funnery* last year in Craftsbury, where teenage actors produce and perform a Shakespeare play every summer. Each summer at the Rokeby Museum in North Ferrisburgh, even younger children at their summer camp create and perform a play based on the history of the abolitionist Quaker farm family who welcomed fleeing enslaved people on the Underground Railway.

Similarly, *UpforLearning* empowers young people to participate in the design of the very educational systems that prepares them for the future world.

Perhaps Vermont’s best formal recognition of this need in politics, although their role is only advisory, is the Vermont State Youth Council established in 2022 with its five subcommittees: Climate Change, Education, Equity and Anti-racism, Youth Mental Health, and Youth Voice. Perhaps Vermonters can elect more legislators like Will Geer from Bennington-2 to our governing body.

There are other emerging examples that bridge the generational gap and that open doors for young people to exert influence and power over their future.

We need to create more ways not only to talk with one another but to yield power to those who will inherit our earth.

Vermont Afghan Alliance supports American allies

To the Editor,

I serve on the Board of Directors of the Vermont Afghan Alliance (VAA), a non-profit welcoming and assisting more than 600 Afghans in Vermont. We provide a variety of services, including employment and interpretation assistance, housing support, immigration legal assistance, case management, legal rights and civics training and driver’s education. In 2024, we supported more than 35 Afghans, including 10 women in obtaining their Vermont driver’s license.

Last week, the White House froze funding for some of our key programs, including our signature driving program. With litigation ongoing, our federal funds remains uncertain.

These programs and services are led by Afghan refugees themselves who are committed to helping their community thrive, and growing the Vermont workforce and economy.

I serve on Alliance Board because of the responsibility I feel to our Afghan allies who risked their lives to support U.S. military and diplomatic missions in Afghanistan.

Today, I’m inviting you to join me in standing by our Afghan allies by contributing what you can to the VAA.

All donations are tax deductible and can be made via the website www.vtafghanalliance.org or by check to: Vermont Afghan Alliance, 60 Main St. Suite 102, Burlington, VT 05401.

With your support, we’ll weather the uncertainty coming from Washington, continue key programs, and show the Afghan community Vermonters have their backs. To learn more about VAA programs visit: www.vtafghanalliance.org.

Adrie Kusserow, Underhill

LIBRARY NEWS

DEBORAH RAWSON MEMORIAL LIBRARY

Hours: Tuesday and Thursday 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM; Wednesday and Friday 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM; Saturday 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM; Sunday 1:00 – 4:00 PM.

All programs are held at the library and open to all, unless otherwise noted.

Adults

Mondays, February 24, Wednesdays, February 19, 26; 10:00 – 11:00 AM: Seated Tai Chi for Health & Balance [Registration required.] This starter-level course in person and on Zoom is for older adults and people with chronic health conditions. There is no charge for classes, but donations to Age Well are appreciated. Email instructor Jo Osborne at joannosborne2@gmail.com for the registration link.

Thursdays, February 20, March 6, 20, 6:00 – 8:00 PM: Crafters' Group. Bring a craft you're working on, and join the camaraderie and conversation. For more information, please contact Amy Tower, 802-355-9671 or atowerinvt@gmail.com, or Julie Hehir, 802-343-0034 or juliehhehir@comcast.net.

Third Tuesdays (March 18) through April, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, Deborah Rawson Memorial Library Fireplace Room: book discussion series on The Anxious Generation. How the Great Rewiring of Childhood is Causing an Epidemic of Mental Illness by Jonathan Haidt. ReConnect is a group of families from the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District (MMUUSD) working on the impacts of smartphones and social media on our kids and hosting a four-part discussion series focused on Haidt's book. There will be podcast options as well, so feel free to join even if you don't have time to read the chapters. The remaining meetings are: March 18, part 4 (Collective Action for Healthier Childhood); and April 15, Recap and Looking Ahead: What's next for our community? If you don't have time to read the whole book but would like an overview, here's an interview with the author you can listen to: <https://www.goodinside.com/podcast/7065/the-anxious-generation-with-jonathan-haidt/>.

Thursday, February 20, 7:00 PM: Deborah Rawson Library Board of Trustees Meeting. The monthly meeting is open to all. Those who wish to attend remotely may email drawsonmemlib@gmail.com to receive the link.

Sunday, February 23, 2:00 PM: Weekend Community Coffee Hour. We'll be serving coffee, tea, and the opportunity to chat with neighbors in the Library's congenial Fireplace Room. Take a break from chores and relax with friends over a hot cuppa.

Tuesday, February 25, 6:00 – 7:00 PM: Legislative Update. VT state representatives Edye Graning of Jericho and Trevor Squirrel of Underhill will provide an update on Vermont's legislative session and answer your questions.

Tuesday, February 25, 7:00 – 8:00 PM: French Conversation Chez Henry. All levels of French speakers, as well as the French curious, are welcome to this informal conversation group.

Youth

Tuesdays, 10:30 AM: Baby Toddler Story Time. For kids ages birth to Pre-K, with a caregiver. Join Mz. Abbey and the other story time regulars for singing, bouncing, finger games, and, of course, stories!

Fridays (except February 28), 11:00 – 11:45 AM: Stories and Songs with Beth and David London. For kids ages birth to five, with a caregiver. Cozy up with your little ones in our Fireplace Room, while listening to stories, singing songs, and shaking the sillies out. If schools are closed on any Friday, this program is cancelled for that day.

Thursday, February 20, 3:00 – 5:00 PM: Animation Club [Registration required] [Ages 8+] Curious about being an animator? With a lot of patience and the equipment at the library, you too can make short, stop-motion movies. To register, please visit or call (802-899-4962) the library, or email youth_librarian@drml.org.

Friday, February 21, 3:00 – 4:30 PM: New! Chess Club [Ages 6+] Kids from first grade and up, regardless of skill level, are invited to join us to learn and play the game of chess.

Tuesday, February 25, 3:00 – 4:00 PM: STEM Stations [Ages 6+] Our program room is transformed into a science lab, with stations including Makey Makey simple circuit boards, a 3D Doodle pen, and two LEGO Education STEM kits. Each visitor will get about 20 minutes at each station before we switch.

Thursday, February 27, 10:30 AM – 12:00 PM [All ages] Swifties of all ages are welcome to hang out, chat, listen to some T. Swift, and make friendship bracelets — because you can never have too many!

For complete details on these programs and all that the library offers, please visit our website at <https://www.drml.org/>.

Deborah Rawson Memorial Library, 8 River Rd., Jericho. Please visit drml.org or call 802-899-4962 for the most up-to-date information. Contact information: rawsonlibrary@drml.org; www.drml.org; 802-899-4962.

JERICHO TOWN LIBRARY

Hours: Tuesdays 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM; Wednesdays, Thursdays, 10:00 AM – 6:00 PM; Fridays 12:00 – 6:00 PM; Saturdays 9:30 AM – 2:30 PM.

Jericho Town Library is launching a new book/discussion group for adults, starting this spring: the Current Events & Societal Issues Book Club. This group is for adults interested in thinking about and discussing important issues in our local communities and in greater society. Each month, we will center our reading and discussion around a particular topic, with a suggested nonfiction book to help focus our conversation. For those who are interested in participating but cannot commit to reading an entire book, we will also share recommendations for relevant articles, podcasts, and videos. Interested? Please fill out this form to let us know what times and days work best for you, as well as what topics you might like to discuss: <https://forms.gle/eaRTFMdmMHwDRiHXA>, or alternatively, reach out to catherine@jerichotownlibraryvt.org or call us at 802-899-4686.

Weekly events

Mondays, 6:30 – 8:00 PM, through April 21: The Artist's Way Creativity Group. Blocked, stuck, or adrift in your artistic endeavors? Curious about ways to live a more creative lifestyle? Join this journey through The Artist's Way, the landmark book by Julia Cameron about the creative process. Cameron's tried-and-true techniques of daily freewriting and weekly solo "Artist Dates" combined with the readings and exercises in the book will guide us along a path to higher creativity. You will need a copy of The Artist's Way: A Spiritual Path to Higher Creativity by Julia Cameron (often available inexpensively through online used book retailers), a notebook, and an open mind. Register online at

<https://forms.gle/ZLAH9MPGGX81ZJfW7>. Contact Amy (amy@jerichotownlibraryvt.org) with any questions. Read about the book online at <https://www.npr.org/2023/09/05/1193447515/the-artists-way>.

Tuesdays, 8:00 – 9:00 AM: Gentle Yoga, a donation-based class for adults taught by local instructor Deanna Bartlett. Donations are optional. Second floor.

Tuesdays, 10:00 – 11:00 AM: Story Explorers Playgroup, a read aloud and loosely structured playgroup for kids ages 0-5 and their grown-ups. Second floor.

Wednesdays, 6:00 – 7:00 PM: Embodied Wisdom Women's Group. Please join Project All Together Now (ATN) and Deanna Bartlett for a weekly multi-generational Women's Yoga Circle! This group is meant to serve women of all ages in building connection with themselves and each other. Gather up your friends, moms, aunts, grandmothers, mentors, and any female-identifying people in your life that could use some more spaciousness in their weeks and explore how restorative yoga can support you in rest and connection. Second floor.

Thursdays, 9:30 – 10:00 AM: Move and Groove, a movement-based storytime for kids ages 0-5 and their grown-ups. We'll sing, play with scarves and shaker eggs, pretend to be animals as we practice some yoga poses, and read a story together before ending with a bubble dance party. First floor.

Fridays, 6:00 – 7:00 PM: Restorative Yoga, a donation-based class taught by local instructor Deanna Bartlett. Donations are optional. Second floor.

Saturdays, 9:00 – 9:30 AM: Romp and Rhyme, a storytime for babies, toddlers, and their caregivers. First floor.

Monthly or twice-a-month

Early Release Days in Jericho (usually the second Wednesday of the month): 1:00 – 2:00 PM: Crafternoon, followed by a movie screening. Registration is required due to limited space: <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/1005405995397?aff=oddtcreator>.

Building accessibility note: We are working hard on a project to make our library accessible to all, but our historic building is not yet fully accessible; a set of steps leads up to our front entrance. Please reach out to discuss accessibility needs; we may be able to offer programs in a hybrid format or move them to an alternate location with advance notice.

Find us on Facebook and Instagram ([@jerichotownlibrary](https://www.instagram.com/jerichotownlibrary)) for regular updates on our programs, services, and collections. 802-899-4686, library@jerichotownlibraryvt.org, www.jerichotownlibraryvt.org.

VARNUM MEMORIAL LIBRARY JEFFERSONVILLE

Fortunately February is short, and if tromping through the snow with a pair of the Varnum's snowshoes isn't your thing, we now have a bicycle-workstation for public use within the (heated) library! Feel free to come try it out for yourself and see if you get through more emails if you're pedaling...

Find snacks, warm drinks, and space to breathe within the walls of the Varnum Memorial Library

New hours: Sunday/Monday — closed; Tuesday 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM; Wednesday/Thursday 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM; Friday 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM; Saturday 10:00 AM – 1:00 PM.

Join the LRSWMD for a three-part winter book discussion

The Varnum Library is seeking residents interested in becoming a Library Trustee. We will have one open seat to be filled on Town Meeting Day, Tuesday, March 4. This is a five-year term. The length of the commitment benefits the town and the library as we engage in planning for the future and for the sustainability of this treasured community resource. The Varnum has been in business for over 125 years! We look forward to continuing to thrive and evolve to meet the needs of our community.

As always, all programs are free and open to the public.

Programs for February

Wednesdays, 4:00 – 5:00 PM: Genealogy Meet-Ups. Come to a new, informal meet-up with some of our best local genealogists with over 50 years combined experience to find out more about your family's history. Want to know if your family's stories have some truth to them? Stuck on a particular ancestor and don't know where to look next? No registration required.

Thursdays, 10:00 AM: Coffee and Conversations.

Tuesdays and Wednesdays, 10:00 AM: Story Time.

Wednesdays, 12:30 – 2:00 PM: Winter Writers Workshop. Facilitated by a professional writer and educator to help you grow your practice in writing. All are welcome and encouraged to attend! Snacks and good conversation are always on hand.

Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:00 PM: Crafternoons.

Friday, February 21, 10:00 AM: Homeschoolers Meet-Up.

Various Saturdays, 2:00 – 4:00 PM: Canadian Cultural Diversity

Find program descriptions and more details on our website <http://www.varnumlibrary.org>.

We're always happy to see you at the library! www.varnumlibrary.org, 802-644-2117.

WESTFORD PUBLIC LIBRARY

Library hours: Tuesdays and Thursdays 10:00 AM – 7:00 PM, Wednesdays and Fridays 1:00 – 7:00 PM, and Saturdays 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM, no appointments needed.

Patrons of all ages are welcome; children under 12 must be accompanied by an adult. If you feel you need curbside service, for whatever reason, please email Bree at the library (westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com) and we can work something out. We want nothing to impede you from using the library.

The Westford Food Shelf is now open twice a month, on the first Wednesday of each month (March 5), 4:30 – 5:30 PM, on the third Saturday (March 15), 8:00 – 9:00 AM. With increased openings, they need more inventory! The Westford Public Library has food collection bins at all curbside pickups from now on. These bins are for non-perishable food and household items.

All Month Long — Check out our display of "blind date" books. All you get is a very brief summary. Will you find a new favorite author? Will you have a new reading experience? Spice up your reading by checking out a "blind date" book — take a chance!

Tuesdays, 10:30 – 12:00 PM, Coffee and Cards. Meetup with folks at the library for coffee, conversation, and cards — a great opportunity to socialize and keep those card playing skills sharp. Open to anyone, but especially looking to connect with seniors.

Thursdays, 11:25 AM: Early Literacy Storytime. We sing songs, read stories, move, and do crafts! No sign up needed, all ages are welcome. February 20: Teeth; February 27: Polar Bears.

Wednesday, February 19, 7:00 – 8:00 PM: Adult Book Group discussing The Art Thief. Stéphane Bréitwieser is the most

prolific art thief of all time. He pulled off more than 200 heists, often in crowded museums in broad daylight. His collection was worth an estimated \$2B. He never sold a piece, displaying his stolen art in his attic bedroom. He felt like a king Until everything came to a shocking end. Michael Finkel gives us a remarkable true-crime narrative. Available in print at the library or as an ebook or audiobook on Libby.

Friday, February 28 (Part 1) and Friday, March 14 (Part 2), 2:00 – 3:00 PM: Shakespeare Group, discussing As You Like It. The group will study a Shakespearean play for two months: Part 1, read some of the play out loud, discuss, and maybe watch a portion of a classic performance; Part 2, discuss the entire play and pick then next play to discuss. All materials will be provided. To read or not to read? Come join a new group that is interested in learning and enjoying the written word. No need to be a scholar — the Bard wrote for everyone!

Thursdays, March 13, April 10, 6:30 – 8:00 PM: Writer's Group. Meets the second Thursday of each month. Facilitated by J Bruscini. Here you can have the opportunity to share and receive feedback on your writing with a low-stakes and supportive atmosphere. So far, together we have done timed writing exercises, responses to a Robert Frost poem, and free writing to our interests. One member is working on another novel! We hope to see you at our meetings soon to continue bringing to light the many shining voices of Westford.

The Westford Public Library, 1717 VT Rt. 128, Westford; 802-878-5639; www.westfordpubliclibrary.org; westfordpubliclibrary@gmail.com, Bree Drapa, Librarian. Find us on Facebook (www.facebook.com/westfordpubliclibrary) and Twitter (www.twitter.com/WestfordVT_pl).

FAIRFAX COMMUNITY LIBRARY

A bit of housekeeping: while BFA Fairfax is closed for Winter Break Monday-Friday, February 24-28, the Fairfax Library may also be closed. We have yet to hear which days, if any, that we need to close for construction, but we will update our website and social media as soon as we know more!

Youth

Wednesday, February 19, 10:30 AM: Preschool Story Time. Join us for stories and songs! Children's books will be available to check out as well. Before you leave, pick up an activity to make at home! This event takes place in the library.

Wednesday, February 19, 3:00 PM: Custom Pins. Create your own custom pin badges! Materials provided. Ages 8+ Please email libraryfairfax@gmail.com or call 802-849-2420 to register! This event takes place in the library.

Friday, February 21, 3:00 PM: LEGO Club. Kids ages 6+ enjoy themed LEGO play after school. Please register! This event takes place in the library.

Adults

Thursday, February 20, 2:00 PM: Library Book Club. The book this month is TBD. Book club will meet in the library. A Zoom link will be available for anyone who wants to attend remotely. If you would like to borrow a copy of the book, or request the Zoom link, please contact the library at fairfaxlibrarian@gmail.com or call us at 802-849-2420. All are welcome!

Families

Saturday, February 22, 10:30 AM: Animal Ambassadors with VHNC. Come meet a variety of frogs, snakes, and lizards from the Vermont Herpetofauna and Nature Center (VHNC)! You'll be able to learn about each animal, and even get a chance hold them! Registration is not required, but it is appreciated. This event will take place at the Fairfax Town Office at 12 Buck Hollow Road.

Library hours: Monday-Friday, 10:00 AM – 4:00 PM.

Fairfax Community Library, 75 Hunt St., Fairfax; 802-849-2420. For up-to-date info about programs, visit our website www.fairfaxvlibrary.org, where you can also find a link to the interactive Google calendar.

RICHMOND LIBRARY

Library hours: open for in-person browsing and pick-up at the circulation desk on Monday, Tuesday, Thursday, and Friday, 10:00 AM – 5:00 PM; Wednesday, 10:00 AM – 8:00 PM; and Saturday, 10:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

The Library will be closed Tuesday, March 4 for Town Meeting Day.

COVID-19 Tests are available at the circulation desk. We also encourage you to visit <https://covidtests.gov/> to order a set of four free at-home tests through the mail and to check the expiration date on your existing tests. Many tests have an extended shelf life, so check before you throw any away.

Trustee Meetings are on the second Monday of the month (March 10), 6:30 PM at the Library. All meetings are open to the public. Individuals may also join via Zoom.

Seed Library now accepting seeds! If you're a seed saver or are looking for a home for your unused seeds, consider donating them to the library. Seed donations must include the following information: plant type and varietal, harvest date, and location. If you are saving your own seeds, please note that we can only accept open-pollinated (non-GMO/hybrid) seeds. Email rhegg@richmondvt.gov with any questions. Stop in to "check out" some of our seeds generously donated by High Mowing, FedCo, and Seed Savers Exchange. If possible, plan to save and bring back some of your harvested seeds for next year! Stop in or email rhegg@richmondvt.gov for more information.

February Art Show — we will be showing Finding Hope Within, an exhibit featuring artwork created by incarcerated artists at Vermont correctional facilities. The exhibit posits art making as a transformative, healing, and cathartic practice, and highlights the human instinct to create as a way to transform one's relationship to community, to the environment, and to the self.

Snowshoes to Lend — Patrons with valid library cards from Richmond or Huntington may now borrow snowshoes at the Richmond Free Library for a week at a time. Adult and youth sizes as well as poles are available. Snowshoes were purchased by the Richmond Recreation Committee (comprising members from Huntington, Bolton, and Richmond) through a grant from Rise VT. Call or email the Library for more details or stop by to borrow.

Seeking artists and collectors — We are currently scheduling art shows for our walls and display case in 2025. If you have framed pieces (art, photography) and would like to schedule a show, please contact us. No professional experience is necessary, just a willingness to share your talent. We're also seeking

MISCELLANEOUS NEWS

VCF — a permanent resource for disaster response, recovery

The VT Community Foundation (VCF) has announced the establishment of the David R. Coates Fund for Vermont Disaster Relief — a permanent fund ensuring Vermont communities and individuals have a reliable, immediate resource to prepare, respond, and recover when natural disasters strike.

“Rather than create a new fund for each disaster, we are establishing a permanent resource to allow us to act swiftly when communities are in need. This fund will ensure that, together, we can continue to serve the state with the urgency and flexibility that’s so crucial in times of crisis,” said Dan Smith, President and CEO of VCF.

Naming the fund after David Coates, the founding chair of the VT Disaster Recovery Fund (VDRF), honors one of Vermont’s most trusted and respected leaders. Coates’ impact spans numerous organizations, causes, and issues. His leadership was instrumental in the flood recovery efforts of 2011. Through this fund, we hope to carry forward the values Coates exemplifies.

“It is a fitting tribute that this fund is being named for David Coates. His extraordinary leadership helped hundreds of Vermonters through the state’s worst disaster in 84 years,” said Chris Graff, VDRF chair. “The model of relief and recovery David built following Tropical Storm Irene was innovative, focused on survivors, and has stood the test of time.”

This new fund draws on the close collaboration between the VDRF and VCF that dates back to Tropical Storm Irene. Since then, both organizations have played a critical role in local disaster relief. The VDRF provided \$6 million in individual assistance following Irene and \$1.6 million to survivors of the 2023 and 2024 flooding. Through the generosity of individuals and businesses across Vermont and beyond, more than \$14 million has been raised and committed through VCF’s Vermont Flood Response & Recovery Fund. These funds have supported communities, farms, businesses, families, and individuals impacted by the devastating floods of 2023 and 2024. This track record of support has shown the incredible power of collective giving and underscored the importance of having swift and flexible resources available for disaster recovery.

As Vermont faces an increasingly unpredictable future with more frequent extreme weather events, the need for greater preparedness in addition to both immediate and long-term support is more important than ever. In response, VCF and the board of the VDRF have taken the next step in their collaboration to create the unified David R. Coates Fund for Vermont Disaster Relief.

To launch this permanent fund at the VCF, the remaining funds in the VDRF will serve as seed funding, kickstarting its long-term impact. Ongoing fundraising will continue to be vital to its success. This fund not only provides a strong base for effective response and recovery but also serves as a home for donations when a disaster hits. Through this fund, donors can quickly, strategically, and equitably direct their support where it’s needed most. This proactive approach aims to provide Vermonters with the peace of mind that support will be there when it is needed most.

“We are proud to partner with the Vermont Community Foundation to create a fund that can be mobilized quickly and effectively in times of need,” said Neale Lunderville, VDRF board member and former Irene Recovery Officer for the state.

Library news continued on page 7

interesting collections for our foyer display case. If you are a collector of thimbles, old books, feathers, nut crackers or anything else that would fit in our case that you would be willing to share, we would love to hear from you. Call or email the Library.

Adults

Through Thursday, March 20: Winter Reading Bingo for Adults. Stop in to pick up a bingo card or show us your completed lines and pick up a ticket. Then pop your ticket(s) into one of four buckets for a chance to win a stack of books.

Tuesday mornings through April 8: Tax Help with AARP. Volunteers working with AARP are meeting with seniors to prepare tax returns in the library community room. Call the library to schedule an appointment.

Wednesdays from 6:30 – 8:00 PM: Knitting & Stitching Group. Drop in to knit, embroider, or otherwise needlecraft with your neighbors.

Saturdays, 10:30 AM – 12:30 PM: Chess Club. Join us in the Mezzanine Lounge for an all-ages chess club, which will be led by a local chess coach. BYOB (Bring Your Own Board) or use one of ours.

Thursday, February 20, 7:00 PM: Mystery Book Group. Join us in the Mezzanine Lounge for discussion of *Slow Horses* by Christopher Huang. Contact Maureen Parent (802-434-2055, mparent@gmavt.net) with any questions.

Saturday, March 1, 12:00 PM: Cookbook Club. Join us as we discuss *Indian-ish* by Priya Krishna. Stop by to check out a copy of the book to register, then pick a recipe to prepare and bring to the meeting. During the meeting, we’ll try the dishes and talk about the reading, cooking, and eating experience!

Tuesday, March 11, 6:00 PM: (Mostly) Fiction Book Group. Join us in the Mezzanine Lounge for discussion of *Page Becomes Her: The Power of Women’s Anger* by Soraya L. Chemaly. Contact Gwen Landis (802-434-5012; gwenie1972@yahoo.com) for information on joining this group.

Children

Weekly/monthly children’s programs at the library run from September-May and follow the MMUUSD schedule for vacation days and weather closure days.

Monday-Friday, February 24-28, 1:00 – 3:00 PM: February school break, with daily Crafternoons and Games. Each day during the break we will have arts and crafts materials, as well as board games and puzzles, set up in the Community Room for drop-in fun. There will be supplies for a special daily project with plenty of additional materials to satisfy any creative impulse. Kids of all ages are invited to spend some time creating, puzzling, or playing games together.

MMCTV Video Workshop for Middle School Students We are once again partnering with our local community media center MMCTV to offer the tenth annual video-making workshop for middle school students during the February school vacation. Call or email the library for details.

Wednesdays, 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM: Playgroup & Storytime.

“This transition represents a new era of readiness for Vermont, with a focus on agility and rapid response. By creating a sustainable, flexible resource, we are preparing Vermont for the challenges ahead.”

The David R. Coates Fund for Vermont Disaster Relief will serve as an enduring safety net, providing funding for a swift, coordinated response in times of crisis. It will allow the Vermont Community Foundation to continue its vital role as a trusted philanthropic leader in mobilizing resources with speed, precision, and efficiency, ensuring that Vermonters and their communities can recover and rebuild in the aftermath of natural disasters.

To learn more about the Disaster Relief Fund, visit vermontcf.org/vt-disaster-relief.

Support Empty Arms VT 5K

Empty Arms Vermont’s 3rd annual 5K Run & Walk is coming up on Saturday, May 17!

Empty Arms Vermont is a nonprofit organization providing peer support to individuals and families who have experienced pregnancy and infant loss. The annual 5K Run & Walk is our biggest fund-raising event of the year, and a joyous way for the community to join together in support.

After the race, we’ll have a Ben & Jerry’s truck, *Smokey Newfield Project* playing music, and a magic show by Alyx the Magician for kids and kids-at-heart!

Visit <https://www.emptyarmsvermont.org/5krun> to register for the race or to become a sponsor. Hope to see you there!

Preschooler with medical needs in foster care

From Burlington Family Services VT Department for Children and Families

For children in foster care with medically complex needs, finding highly skilled foster care providers is a huge challenge.

At this time, there are a number of children with complex medical needs entering foster care. These children require specific and skilled home care. Currently, the Family Services Division’s most urgent need is to identify a caregiver for a specific pre-school aged child. An ideal caregiver would be someone who has a background in providing medical care and support. This child requires a feeding tube, home oxygen, catheterization, intensive supervision and monitoring including the management of a compromised immune system and high risk of infection. Despite all these medical challenges, this little one is sweet, loving, incredibly smart, and has captured the hearts of all who know them.

As a foster care provider for this child, you can expect extensive training, inclusion on the child’s medical team, an enhanced rate of reimbursement, and ongoing in-home support.

Whether you are that skilled individual or family, or have connections in the community, medical field, or know of any appropriate, skilled resources we can tap in to, we would be incredibly grateful to hear from you as we try to secure care. We are specifically looking for a new placement for the child described above, but we also need caregivers who can support a range of kids with medical complexities — including mobility challenges, non-verbal, require medical equipment, experience frequent medical and treatment needs including oxygen,

Join us for free play followed by stories and action songs in the Library Community Room. Co-sponsored by the Library and the Lund Center. Kids infant to age 5 and their grownups are invited to join the fun — we will start with Playgroup at 10:00 AM and then finish up the morning with a short storytime at 11:30 AM.

Mondays, 10:30 AM: Baby Laptime. This short, active storytime is for our youngest little book lovers and their grownups. We’ll look at picture books, sing simple songs, do some rhyming and bouncing, and sometimes get out the shakers and scarves. Designed for infants and early toddlers.

Contact us at 802-434-3036 (leave a message after hours) or rfl@gmavt.net.

Richmond Free Library, 201 Bridge St., P.O. Box 997, Richmond, VT 05477; 802-434-3036; fax 802-434-3223; <http://richmondfreelibraryvt.org>.

BROWNELL LIBRARY, ESSEX JUNCTION

Ongoing drop-in programs
Community Puzzle: spend some time working on a puzzle in the library. Puzzles rotate as they are completed.

Community Loom: collaborate on our community loom!
Pattern Swap, Puzzle Swap, Magazine Swap, Coupon Swap
Brownell Library, 6 Lincoln St., Essex Junction. Contact Main Desk 802-878-6955, Youth Desk 802-878-6956, Reference Desk 802-878-6957, or frontdesk@brownelllibrary.org.

ESSEX FREE LIBRARY

Hours: Monday/Wednesday/Friday 9:00 AM – 5:00 PM; Tuesday/Thursday 9:00 AM – 8:00 PM; Saturday 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM.

We still have free COVID tests, harm reduction packs, and gun locks!

Accepting Book Donations! Two boxes accepted per household/per week that are easy for us to carry. Fiction and nonfiction, juvenile and adult, hardcover and paperback, in very good condition that we may put into our collection or sell in our June book sale to benefit the Children’s Summer Reading Program. No library discards, textbooks, magazines, VHS, encyclopedias, multi-volume sets, technology or travel books over five years old, or mildewed, stained, or smoky items please. Thank you so much! Donations accepted through Tuesday, May 27.

All library programs are free and open to the public.

All ages
Saturday, February 22, 10:30 – 11:30 AM: Siber Sled Dogs! Musher Milagro Turner is back with her beautiful and friendly sled dogs! Meets in the back garden.

Children and teens
Tuesday, February 18, 4:00 – 5:30 PM: Read to Chewy the Therapy Dog! Kids and families can sign up for a 15-minute slot and choose a book to read to Chewy and his human in our community room. If you sign up and cannot attend, please reach out to library staff so we can open the spot to someone else. Sign up on the website.

chemotherapy, managing diabetes, etc.

There are no expectations — only the hope that you might consider taking a next step to support a child in your community by reaching out to us for more information or that you might share this information with others.

If you would like us to contact you, complete the form at <https://dcf.vermont.gov/foster-care-inquiry>; or reach out to Meghan.Flanders@vermont.gov.

United Way volunteer opportunities

CONNECT TO COMMUNITY BY VOLUNTEERING – United Way’s Volunteer Connection site is set up to help connect agencies and volunteers. Here is a link for Volunteer Connection — <https://unitedwaynwvt.galaxydigital.com/> — to learn more about these and other opportunities.

SHARE YOUR OWN STORY – National Alliance on Mental Illness of Vermont (NAMI) is looking for volunteers to share their own mental health stories in 60-minute presentations to help others see that there is always hope. Anyone who is stable in recovery from a mental health condition can be a presenter. A one-day training session is provided, and volunteers are asked to commit to giving at least two presentations within a year of training. Register for NAMI Vermont’s next In Our Own Voice training online at <https://namivt.org/form-2/>.

MENTOR! MENTOR! – Spectrum Youth and Family Services needs volunteers to spend a few hours a month making a difference in the life of a teenager or young adult. A bike ride, cooking up a treat, exploring career options, and more can tell a young person there is someone who cares and believes in them. You don’t have to be a trained counselor, just share some time with a youth between 12-22 who needs a positive role model. To learn more, call 802-864-7423 Ext. 321.

MORE CHOICES! – Milton Family Community Center has numerous volunteer opportunities that vary with the seasons such as Food Shelf support, Community Center clean-up, minor building maintenance (e.g., painting), gardening, and a lot more! Contact Caitlin, cblake@miltonfamilycenter.org.

TECH BUFFS NEEDED – Dismas House residents are in need of computer literacy skills for both personal and professional contacts, and volunteers are needed to help provide assistance one-on-one that will enable residents to transition to the broader community. Volunteers should be familiar with computers and basic financial skills (opening a bank account, managing personal expenses, etc.) and enjoy teaching and working one-on-one. Contact Holly Rossi, 802-658-0381 or holly@dismasofvt.org.

Lamoille County Legislative Breakfasts

By Pat Ripley, Lamoille Economic Development Corporation

With the start of the 2025 legislative session, Lamoille Economic Development Corporation (LEDC) and Lamoille Chamber of Commerce are sponsoring our 2025 Legislative Breakfast Series, which began on Monday, January 6 in Hyde Park.

The legislative breakfasts offer an opportunity to hear from our Lamoille County representatives and learn about what they are working on at the Statehouse. Attendees will also be allowed

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Saturday, March 1, 10:00 – 11:30 AM: Read to Chewy the Therapy Dog! Kids and families can sign up for a 15-minute slot and choose a book to read to Chewy and his human in our community room. If you sign up and cannot attend, please reach out to library staff so we can open the spot to someone else. Sign up on the website.

Mondays, 11:00 AM: Musical Storytime. Rock’n’read with Miss Noreen!

Wednesdays, 11:00 AM: Storytime with Emily. Stories, songs, and activities for young patrons.

Wednesdays, 3:00 – 4:00 PM: LEGO Club. Grades 1-5. Kids in grades 4 and younger need to come with an adult.

Thursdays, 3:00 – 4:00 PM: Pokémon Club. Grades 1- 8. Decks available for card games. Themed crafts. Participants may bring gaming devices for Pokémon Go and other Pokémon games.

Fridays: Grab’n’Go Craft Kits. While supplies last.
Exploration Station: ongoing. Check out the blue table for this week’s challenge.

Adults
Tuesday, February 18, 6:00 – 7:00 PM: Zentangle with Julia Davenport, for adults. This art form welcomes slowing down, taking your time, and seeing what happens. Sign up on the website. If you register and can’t attend, please call to open the spot for someone else.

Wednesday, February 19, 2:00 – 3:00 PM: Scrabble/Conversation Français. Open to ages high school and above; for levels Elementary II and above. Improve your French while enjoying a friendly game of (French) Scrabble!

Thursday, February 20, 6:00 – 7:00 PM: Trivia Night for adults and teens. Join us for some friendly trivia competition! Light refreshments provided.

Tuesday, February 25, 6:00 – 7:30 PM: Board Games for Ages 18+ Bring your friends and enjoy the library’s board game collection (or bring your own to share with the group). Light refreshments provided.

Saturday, March 6, 12:00 – 1:00 PM: Noontime Book Group reading *Liliana’s Invincible Summer: A Sister’s Search for Justice* by Cristina Rivera Garza. Pulitzer Prize Winner for Nonfiction. “A searing account of grief and the quest to bring her sister’s murderer to justice years after the fact” (*The Boston Globe*)

Tuesdays, 10:30 – 11:30 AM: Tech Time. Drop in with your device and your questions. We’ll do our best to answer them! No appointment needed.

Tuesdays, 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Drop-In Needlecraft Group. Enjoy chatting with other crafters as you work on your project.

Fridays, 1:00 – 3:00 PM: Rummikub for Adults.

Social media: check us out on Facebook and Instagram for updates on events!

Essex Free Library, 1 Browns River Rd., Essex; 802-879-0313; @essexfreelibrary; <https://www.essexfreelibrary.org>.

PEOPLE IN THE NEWS



CVU grad HeatherAnne Lee winner in international illustration contest

Shelburne native and Champlain Valley Union High School graduate Ms.

HeatherAnne Lee is a winner in the L. Ron Hubbard Illustrators of the Future Contest, earning her a trip to Hollywood for a week-long master-class workshop, an awards event, and her winning art will be published in the international bestselling anthology *L. Ron Hubbard Presents Writers of the Future Volume 41*.

HeatherAnne Lee has lived across the U.S. in states from Washington (where she was born in 2004) to Hawaii to New York and Vermont. HeatherAnne — *Heather* to her friends — now resides in Savannah, GA, pursuing a Bachelor of Fine Arts in illustration at the Savannah College of Art and Design.

Heather started drawing as soon as she could hold a crayon and never stopped, graduating from crayon to graphite to paint, and now primarily works digitally. Despite working on a screen Heather holds to her painting knowledge, layering colors and textures on her drawing tablet, emulating traditional painting techniques in a digital medium.

Heather takes much of her inspiration from the world around her, translating reality into epics and stories of dragons and knights. Heather always strives to push her work to the limit, working with clients to bring their stories to life through her illustrations.

The Illustrators of the Future Contest judges include Bob Eggleton (11 Chesley Awards and 7 Hugo Awards), Larry Elmore (Dungeons & Dragons book covers), Echo Chernik (graphic designs for major corporations including Celestial Seasonings tea packaging), Rob Prior (art for *Spawn*, *Heavy Metal* comics and *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*), and Ciruelo (*Eragon* Coloring Book).

The Writers of the Future Contest judges include Tim Powers (author of *On Stranger Tides*), Kevin J. Anderson and Brian Herbert (Dune prequel series), Robert J. Sawyer (*The Oppenheimer Alternative*), Brandon Sanderson (*Mistborn* series, *The Stormlight Archive*), Larry Niven (*Ringworld*), Orson Scott Card (*Ender's Game*), Nnedi Okorafor (*Who Fears Death*), Hugh Howey (*Wool*), and Katherine Kurtz (*Deryni* series) — to name a few.

Following the 1982 release of his internationally acclaimed bestselling science fiction novel *Battlefield Earth*, written in celebration of 50 years as a professional writer, L. Ron Hubbard created the Writers of the Future (<https://writersofthefuture.com/>) in 1983 to provide a means for aspiring writers of speculative fiction to get that much-needed break. Due to the success of the Writers of the Future Contest, the companion Illustrators of the Future Contest was inaugurated five years later.

In the 40 years of the Writers of the Future Contest, there have been 559 winners and published finalists. The past winners of the Writing Contest have published 2000 novels and nearly 6300 short stories. They have produced 36 *New York Times* bestsellers, and their works have sold over 60 million copies.

In the 35 years of the Illustrators of the Future Contest, there have been 406 winners. The past winners of the Illustrating Contest have produced over 6800 illustrations, 390 comic books, graced 700 books and albums with their art, and visually contributed to 68 television shows and 40 major movies.

The Writers of the Future Award is the genre's most prestigious award of its kind and has now become the largest, most successful, and demonstrably most influential vehicle for budding creative talent in the world of speculative fiction. Since its inception, the Writers and Illustrators of the Future contests have produced 40 anthology volumes and awarded upwards of \$1 million in cash prizes and royalties.

For more information about the Contests, go online to <https://writersofthefuture.com/>.

Salvation Farm receives funding

The Northern Borders Regional Commission has announced funding for Salvation Farms, a Vermont-based nonprofit, to establish a food processing hub in collaboration with the Lamoille Economic Development Corporation. Located at 48 Congress St., Morrisville (the former Walgreens), this facility will support local farmers and the broader food system by aggregating and processing surplus fruits and vegetables — perfectly edible food that might otherwise go to waste due to market limitations. The new hub will create additional revenue opportunities for farmers while making locally grown food more affordable for institutions such as Meals on Wheels programs, schools, and correctional facilities. In addition to improving food access, the facility will provide employment opportunities. Partnering with workforce development organizations, Salvation Farms aims to prioritize hiring individuals facing barriers to employment, offering training and a supportive work environment. Salvation Farms' mission is to create a future where local farms feed local communities, harnessing one of the most overlooked agricultural resources — surplus food that is both nutritious and delicious but often fails to reach traditional markets. This new facility represents an opportunity to expand and deepen their impact by increasing access to local food. "Beyond a food processing facility, we hope this space



becomes a central gathering place and food-based activity hub for our neighbors, farmers, and local businesses," says Salvation Farms Executive Director Kelly Dolan. "We are thrilled to bring this project to the heart of Morrisville."

OBITUARIES



Roger F Resseguie, age 88, of Jeffersonville, VT passed away with his family by his side on Wednesday, January 29, 2025. He is survived by his wife of 54 years Marilyn Resseguie and their son Gregg Resseguie and his wife Terri Resseguie. He was born June 14, 1936 in Millbury, MA to Raymond C Resseguie and Mary A Durand. Roger joined the United States Marine Corps in 1954 and served until 1957. He then moved to Vermont in the early 1960s and married Marilyn in 1968. He worked in excavation and logging for many years. Roger became one of Jehovah's Witnesses in 1974 and used his secular work skills to aid in the building of many Kingdom Halls throughout New England. He enjoyed the outdoors and spending time with his dogs. The family is very appreciative of all the help provided by Lamoille Home Health agency and Hospice Care.



Rachel Irene Thompson Burroughs of Underhill Center, VT was born to Russell and Adeline Thompson on May 18, 1935 in Barre, VT and passed away unexpectedly on Thursday, January 16, 2025. Rachel grew up in Newbury, VT and attended school at Newbury Center and Newbury High. She graduated from the University of Vermont, School of Nursing in 1957. Rachel worked tirelessly as a nurse throughout her life, including for the VT/NH/NY Regional Perinatal Program in the 1980s. From 1968-1975, Rachel was a Clinical Instructor at the University of Vermont's Department of Professional Nursing. She was an invited presenter at many conferences on obstetrics, low birth weight, and other maternal health care issues. She was devoted to improving the health and care of mothers and their children and Rachel belonged to several professional associations including the American Nurses' Association, the Vermont State Nurses' Association, and NAACOG/AWHONN. Rachel continued to work in the medical field, including as a Coder, at the University of Vermont until she was in her late 70s. Rachel married the love of her life, Roland Burroughs on August 8, 1957. They bought their first house in 1963 in Underhill Center where they have remained an active part of their community. They have belonged to the United Church of Underhill since they moved to Underhill Center. Rachel has served on every committee at the church over her long years of service. Rachel leaves behind her husband of 67 years, Roland Burroughs; and her children: Robin Simard, husband Allen, and their children Jonathan and partner Cary, Christopher and wife Lizzy; Thomas Burroughs, wife Kim, sons Robert and wife Terra and Jackson and wife Jessica; Wendy Burroughs and sons Alex and Parker Audet; Rand Burroughs

and wife Nancy and sons, William and Nicholas; Rebecca Curry and husband Jon and children Jackson and Brooke. Rachel also leaves her four siblings, many nieces, nephews, and great-grandchildren. Along with her busy family life, Rachel was an avid bird watcher, puzzler, and musician. She was always ready for a game or a rousing sing-a-long at a moment's notice. Services were held on Saturday, January 25, 2025 at the United Church of Underhill, 7 Park St., Underhill, VT, with a reception following the service at the Church. Interment will be held in the Spring at the Newbury Townhouse Cemetery, Newbury at the family's convenience. In lieu of flowers, the family request that donations be made to the United Church of Underhill, or the Harvest Crossing Affordable Housing Project. Donation checks can be made out to UCU or online donations can be made at <https://secure.myvanco.com/YQFY/home>. Housing project details can be found at www.harvestcrossing.org.



Martin Donlin, age 76, of Cleveland, TN, passed away on Friday, January 17, 2025. He was born in Sidney, NY, and later lived in Jericho, VT before recently moving to Cleveland, TN. A proud veteran of the U.S. Army, Marty served at the rank of Sergeant and completed two tours in Vietnam. He was a graduate of Unatego High School, Class of 1966, and earned an associate degree in Electronics from RCA Institute in New York City. Marty, as his friends and family fondly called him, had a deep passion for electronics and enjoyed working on them throughout his life. He was an avid bird feeder and spent countless hours tending to the birds in his yard. Marty also loved playing Xbox and was an active participant in the online community, especially enjoying daily games of *Words with Friends*, where he connected with people from all over the country. In his professional life, Marty's career began as floor supervisor at Digital, followed by a role in the cash office at Ames. He later worked as a Customer Service Representative at the University of Vermont Medical Center, where he was valued for his dedication and professionalism, retiring from this role after many years of service. Marty is survived by his brother Richard Donlin (Vickie); his sister, Joyce Mikolaicyk (John); his stepchildren Amy Marshall (Aaron) and Tim Leclair (Laurie); his grandchildren Autumn, Zoe, Meredith, and Callie; and several nieces and nephews. He was preceded in death by his wife Gail Donlin, his father Martin Donlin; mother Marjorie Donlin; brother Robert Donlin who has a surviving spouse, Janice; as well as his brother Thomas Donlin. Marty will be remembered for his generous spirit, love of technology, and his ability to connect with others through shared experiences. He will be greatly missed by all who knew him. Services will be held later by the family in late Spring, early Summer 2025.

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a chance to ask questions about the topics on their minds. These breakfasts have proven to be popular with Lamoille County residents and we expect good interest again this year. Be sure to register early!

The breakfast series continues Monday, March 3, 8:00 – 9:30 AM at Jenna's House, 117 St. Johns Rd., Johnson, cost \$8; and in April (date and location TBA). Each event begins with a light breakfast and coffee from local restaurants, followed by a short briefing by the legislators and an audience Q&A.

Register online at <http://www.lamoilleeconomy.org/breakfast>.

Am I ready to become a foster parent?

<https://americaskidsbelong.org/blog>

1. *What are the pros and cons of becoming a foster parent?*

Why should people become foster parents? Perhaps the best answer is simply, "You are needed." Consider that your unique life experiences and challenges you've overcome may have prepared you for this — to help a kid in foster care today who is adjusting to separation and uncertainty.

Brian Mavis, founder of *America's Kids Belong* speaks to the issue from a broad perspective: "You hear about homelessness, human trafficking, and other social wounds, but you don't hear about foster care (which is a major risk factor for all of these). When you step into foster care, you are going upstream. You're helping kids avoid more trauma."

Of course, fostering isn't all puppies and rainbows. Beyond the challenges of working within a complex system, the cons of being a foster parent may include navigating the various physical and emotional needs of children and youth in foster care, financial burden beyond state reimbursements, and challenges bonding with the children in your care.

The truth is that becoming a foster parent will stretch you in

ways you could not imagine, but that stretching will cause you to grow. Your heart, your family, your perspective on life — all of these can be deeply enriched through your choice to foster and they can make a tremendous difference to and for the child/youth in your care.

2. *Do I have a strong support system?*

A support system is vital for a foster family to thrive. Fostering can be challenging and unpredictable, so having a strong support system can provide stability both for parents and the children in their care.

Even before you are licensed, you can begin to seek out fellow foster parents, support groups, and resources to connect with others who understand. You can "begin to build your village".

Although this might seem overwhelming in today's digital and distanced world, sometimes just putting a pen to paper and making a list of the supportive people in your life will help reassure you that you are not going it alone. Think about your network of friends, family members, and professionals who can offer encouragement and practical assistance when needed.

When making this list, be sure to include at least one or two individuals who would be willing to provide respite care or step in to help during times of crisis or personal need.

The truth is that most foster parents last about 15 months and up to three years. There are exceptions! Limits are sometimes due to a lack of support but sometimes homes close because of integrating a newly adopted child into the family. However, it's clear that having your "village" in place can help you foster longer and stronger.

Foster care can be messy, but it doesn't have to be lonely. Surround yourself with people who will uplift and empower you as you open your heart and home to children in need. And rely on the support of your team - your case worker, resource coordinator, and recruitment and retention specialist who are here to support you.

3. *Can I support reunification?*

"Fosters have more of an impact on parents than they think. My fosters had faith in me as a parent, as a mother. They supported us 100%" acknowledged Rachel, a biological mom.

Keep in mind that the primary goal of the foster care system is reunification: to safely return children to their biological families whenever possible. As a foster parent, you play a pivotal role in facilitating this process by providing a nurturing environment for children while their families work towards reunification.

Many people are afraid they will get too attached, but that is exactly the type of love a kid in foster care needs when they are living in that "in-between" space, waiting for their families to be in a position to care for them once again.

The sacrifice to open your heart in spite of potential loss requires a deep commitment to understanding and respecting the bonds between children and their birth parents. It also requires a willingness to collaborate with case workers and support services to promote family reunification.

Embracing the goal of reunification is prioritizing the best interests of the child, even if it means saying goodbye when the time comes.

Can I support children who have different cultural backgrounds and religious beliefs than my own?

Foster parenting often involves welcoming children from various ethnicities, cultures, and religious backgrounds into your home. It requires an open-minded approach, where you respect and celebrate each child's unique identity.

Are you prepared to learn about and honor the cultural traditions, customs, and beliefs of the children in your care? Will you create an environment that fosters understanding, acceptance, and appreciation for diversity?

As many of our own staff who are foster parents can testify, embracing differences enriches the fostering experience, providing opportunities for mutual learning, growth, and connection.

SPORTS NEWS

Cambridge Youth Baseball and Softball sign ups open

By Liv Perry, Treasurer, Cambridge Little League

Cambridge Little League Registration is open now, and closes Saturday, March 1.

To register, go online to <https://clubs.bluesombrero.com/cambridgellvt>, then tap or click on the Register button. Create a Sports Connect account and profile for your child, and choose the appropriate baseball or softball program to register.

Starting with the 2025 season, children League Age 4-7 will have the ability to register for any Little League program they choose. For players League Age 8-12, eligibility is still based on residency or school enrollment.

You can also sign up to volunteer as a coach or team helper, as well.

If you have questions or need more information. Email cambridgeyouthbaseball@gmail.com.

2025 Mount Mansfield Girls Lacrosse

Mount Mansfield Girls Lacrosse Club offers girls in grades 4-8 the ability to learn and play lacrosse. The season runs from the end of March through the first week of June.

Practice is held at Browns River Middle School, Mondays and Wednesdays, 6:00 – 7:30 PM; games are played on Sundays from the first Sunday in May through the first weekend in June.

Please contact melisamutolo@icloud.com for details. Registrations will be accepted through Saturday, March 15.

Mount Mansfield Youth Lacrosse registration open

Mount Mansfield Boys Youth Lacrosse (grades 3-8) 2025 Spring Season registration is open. Guaranteed registration closes Friday, February 21.

Our Tiny Sticks program for K-2 Boys and Girls will remain open indefinitely.

After February 21, potential players can still register but will be waitlisted dependent on specific age group/team numbers. We can only have a certain number of players per team to ensure all athletes get an enjoyable amount of playing time.

Mount Mansfield Boys Youth Lacrosse (MMBYL) offers lacrosse programs for youth residing in the Mount Mansfield Unified Union School District (Underhill, Jericho, Richmond, Bolton, Huntington) as well as neighboring communities without programs (i.e. Cambridge) aged K-grade 8. No experience necessary at any level. All are welcome.

To register and get more information on the program(s), go online to <https://bit.ly/4jxFTq5>.

Girls on the Run at BRMS needs volunteers

Girls on the Run Vermont (GOTRVT) is an amazing organization that helps girls build confidence to overcome difficult situations, inspire others to keep going when it's hard, and embrace their confidence to make a difference in their community. It's also a lot of fun! There are girls in grades 5-6 at Browns River Middle School who would like to participate in GOTRVT but we need volunteer coaches to make that happen! Would you be interested in volunteering your time to this fantastic 10-week program this spring?

Make a positive impact and empower young Vermont girls in your community by volunteering as a coach with GOTRVT this spring! Navigating through tough times takes perseverance. Today's girls deserve mentors who teach them how to build their inner strength and keep going, even when it's difficult. GOTRVT's curriculum helps participants build this very confidence. As a coach, you are the one who guides them through this unforgettable journey.

Not a runner? Haven't coached before? No problem! Girls on the Run Vermont provides training, easy to follow lesson plans, supplies, and support for a transformational season. The 10-week season begins the week of March 17, and ends with a celebratory 5K on Saturday, May 31. Teams meet twice weekly for 90-minute sessions to connect, move, learn, and have fun! Team schedules are set by their volunteer coach teams. The BRMS GOTR program will be open to girls in grades 5-6.

Visit <https://www.gotrvt.org/coach> to learn more about coaching or to sign up to volunteer. Learn more about GOTRVT's programs and complete a Participant Interest Form at <https://www.gotrvt.org/programs>, where caregivers can complete a Participant Interest Form, too. Questions? Contact GOTRVT at stephanie@girlsontherunvermont.org or 802-871-5664.

GOTR is coming to Cambridge!

Girls on the Run (GOTR) inspires individuals of all abilities to discover, build, and grow their self-confidence. Together, they experience a sense of belonging and connection as a team. Volunteer coaches facilitate lessons that blend physical activity with life skill development including managing emotions, fostering friendships, and expressing empathy. At the end of the season, the team completes a 5K together at Essex Fairgrounds, which provides a tangible sense of accomplishment and sets a confident mindset into motion.

In Cambridge, GOTR is open to girls in grades 3-6. Practices will be held on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 4:00 – 5:30 PM at Cambridge Elementary School, beginning Tuesday, March 18 and running through the end of May. The registration fee is \$86 per participant, with scholarships available.

For more information and to register, go online to <https://www.gotrvt.org/>.

SENIOR NEWS

Mount Mansfield Villages — neighbors helping neighbors

By Nancy McRae, Mount Mansfield Villages

Are you over 50 and live in Cambridge, Underhill, or Jericho? Do you need support to “age in place?” Would you like to connect with and help your neighbors?

Mount Mansfield Villages (MMV) is a local non-profit of neighbors helping neighbors. Our network of local volunteers provides members with support and services such as grocery shopping, transportation, shoveling, light home maintenance, technology help, and friendly visits. We also provide social connection with gatherings, activities, and other fun events.

MMV is part of the national Village to Village Network. There is yearly fee to be a member, and we have scholarships available. You can be a member, a volunteer or both! Join us!

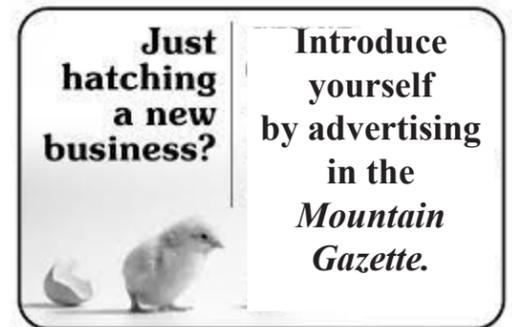
To learn more, visit www.mountmansfieldvillages.org, call us at 802-858-5381 or email us at mountmansfieldvillages@gmail.com.

Free online courses for seniors

Technology Literacy Online, weekly on Wednesdays, through March 19, 1:00 – 2:30 PM, offered on Zoom by the Central Vermont Council on Aging. Are you interested in learning more about technology? Technology for Tomorrow, Central Vermont Council on Aging, and Southwestern Vermont Council on Aging are offering free classes to attend through Zoom. Classes will require an email address to send the Zoom link to, and internet access to use Zoom. The classes are:

- February 19: Intro to Social Media;
- February 26: Dealing with Misinformation in Media;
- March 5: Online Scam Prevention;
- March 12: Understanding Smartphones;
- March 19: Intro to Gmail.

To register contact Lucas Rose, 802-479-1953 or lrose@cvcoa.org, with your name and the course(s) you would like to take.



ART / MUSIC / THEATER

Underhill Art Show — The Underhill Art Show is up and running. This fine collection of local art is in the grand hall of the Underhill Town Hall, Pleasant Valley Rd., Underhill Center. The show is free and open during Town Hall hours. All Underhill artists are welcome to show their creations. Please contact Julianne Nickerson, jdnicker@gmail.com, for additional information.

Art for DRML Jericho — Deborah Rawson Memorial Library is once again seeking art for the Library. We love hosting local artists, and are presently featuring lovely work by Carolyn Subin and Barbara Frankowski. We have lovely walls for displaying work and a secure display case. Artists can request one or two months; presently March is open, April is taken; the rest of spring and summer are available — feel free to contact Susan Adams, sadams15@comcast.net, with any questions.

Thirty-one artists of the Essex Art League of Essex Junction will participate in a show at the Emile A Gruppe Gallery in Jericho through Sunday, March 16. The Essex Art League, one of the oldest art leagues in the state, was founded in 1971 and over the years has nurtured and enhanced hundreds of artists and art lovers in their pursuit of the creative spirit. For more information: the Emile A Gruppe Gallery, <https://www.emilegruppegallery.com/>, located at 22 Barber Farm Rd. Jericho; open 10:00 AM – 3:00 PM, Thursday-Sunday, or by appointment by calling 802-899-3211.

Call for Artists and Creatives: CASAN — Are you sympathetic to the plight of people who are seeking asylum in the USA? Would you be interested in leveraging your talents to support this cause? This is a Call for Artists and Creatives to join April Arts for Asylum Seekers — a month of creative sharing in support of the Chittenden Asylum Seekers Assistance Network (CASAN). The registration deadline Friday, February 28. See www.casanvermont.org for more information, including FAQ and sign-up information. To register for a zoom information session on Thursday, February 20, 7:00 PM: <https://bit.ly/3CE47OJ>. Questions? Email artsforasylumseekers@casanvermont.org.

Burlington City Arts opened its Spring 2025 exhibitions at the BCA Center on Friday, February 14. On the first floor, *Bunny Harvey: Worlds Within Worlds* features the landscape paintings of Vermont-based artist Bunny Harvey. Focusing on large-scale oil paintings and more intimately scaled works on paper, the exhibition debuts several new paintings created by the artist over the last year. In the Roth Gallery on the second floor, artist Stéphanie Morissette explores the conflicting relationship between humans, nature, and technology in *Speculative Future*. Using insightful observation and dark humor, the artist imagines a future where biological specimens and mechanical technology have merged to create a new, hybrid species of birds and flying creatures. Morissette's speculative future is not as fantastic as it may appear.

Applications are open for The Vermont Prize, a partnership between five Vermont arts organizations awarded to one artist annually. The winner receives a monetary prize of \$5000, their work is showcased and archived on the Vermont Prize website, and the artists are featured on each organization's social media channels. For more information and to apply, go online to <https://www.vermontprize.org/about>. Submissions are due by March 31.

Family Art Saturday at BCA — February 22, 11:00 AM – 1:00 PM at the BCA center. Join BCA for a drop-in artmaking activity inspired by the paintings of Bunny Harvey featured in her exhibition *Worlds within Worlds*. Create drawings that pay tribute to the sounds and memory of nature. Participants use pastels or markers to express the shapes, colors, or patterns that come to mind as they imagine their environment. Family Art Saturday is free and open to the public.

The 2025 Diane Gabriel Visual Artist Award application period is now live! Established in 2021 by the family of Diane Gabriel (1947-2017), one of Vermont's most celebrated artists and educators, this award is given on an annual basis to emerging Vermont-based artists. The award encourages experimentation and supports an artist's creative development, especially those artists interested in initiating innovative ideas, exploring new media, or better establishing their art-making practice. The award is valued at \$6000 and includes a cash stipend, complimentary class registration, and/or use of the BCA Studios. Apply via <https://burlingtoncityarts.awardsplatform.com/dashboard>; applications close Monday, March 10.

Art from the Heart seeks volunteers to visit patients and family members at UVM Medical Center and Children's Hospital to help make the hospital a more comfortable and creative place through the arts. Volunteers in this program visit patient rooms and waiting areas, working one-on-one and in small groups. A visit with a patient or family members can start as simply as talking about favorite TV shows and music. If interested, please contact Art from the Heart coordinator Rebecca Schwarz, rschwarz@burlingtoncityarts.org.

Call to Artists — Birds and Myth: meanings, metaphors, and guides — from the Birds of Vermont Museum. A myth might be a traditional legend, a widely-held-but-false belief, or a (mis-)representation of something true; and can offer insight into who we are, offer us ways to behave and ideals to live by. What understanding of birds and humans have you gained through myths you have heard, told, or invented? The Birds of Vermont Museum's 2025 art show is centered on these ideas. We invite art submissions that bring birds and their meanings into art to retell an old story, weave several together, represent your beliefs, and/or create a myth for the future. Entries are due by Monday, March 24, 2025, 11:59 PM. Submit up to three works using the online form at <https://tinyurl.com/bovm-art-2025> in one of these file formats: .jpg (visual art); .mp3/.mp4 (music/video); .pdf or .txt (stories, poems). Apple users, please use the “compatible” option if uploading an image, as we may not be able to view Apple's default .heic file type. Artists of all ages and all professions (or none) are invited to submit. No work using generative AI will be accepted. All traditional media and other digital media are allowed as are visual, textual, and/or audio works. Include your name, email, town, and a brief description of each work (size, media, when made) with your submission(s). Include a sentence or two about the story, belief, or myth you drew upon/created. We can also accept submissions by email: send files (same formats) to museum@birdsofvermont.org. Please put “Submission for Birds and Myth art show from <your name>” as the email subject. Or, you may send up to three prints or photos (not originals) to Birds of Vermont Museum, attention:

Birds and Myth art show, 900 Sherman Hollow Rd., Huntington, VT 05462. In addition to walls, we have shelves for smaller three-dimensional pieces, room outdoors for weather-impervious works, and some ceiling area. We may need to work together to display audio or multi-media works. You are welcome to visit to consider the potential. Jurors will select pieces by early April and will let artists know soon after, by email. Accepted pieces should arrive at the Museum by April 20 and be ready to hang or display (all hanging hardware already attached). The art show runs May 1-October 31 at the Birds of Vermont Museum. Artists are wholly responsible for shipping or drop-off/pick-up. Pick-up should occur by December 30, 2025, if possible. The Museum asks for permission to reproduce images of the selected works in print and online as part of publicity for the exhibit; this is not required. Artists who show their work here are invited to sell accepted work, cards, stickers, or related gift items on consignment through our gift shop. We are always thrilled to arrange artist workshops at the Museum with our exhibitors. Please call or email Kir Talmage or Allison Gergely with any questions. We can be reached at 802-434-2167 or museum@birdsofvermont.org. We look forward to seeing your work!

The weekly virtual Burlington Literature Group welcomes new committed readers to our sessions. The group has been in existence for years meeting in a physical space but, since the pandemic, has changed to online Zoom sessions occurring every Tuesday at 6:30 PM. We break down interesting, challenging books into weekly segments of 60-100 pages, discuss form, content and our impressions in a friendly online forum. Details can be found at <https://nereadersandwriters.com/> or by emailing info@nereadersandwriters.com.

VT Artists and the Changing Landscape of AI — While artificial intelligence (AI) opens up new possibilities for artists, it also presents significant challenges related to copyright, creativity, job security, and ethics. In the Vermont Arts Council's role as advocates for the needs of artists, we were interested to take the pulse of Vermont creatives on this fast-changing technology to get a sense of how we can support artists and organizations — whether through policy advocacy or professional development. So we asked! In our survey of Vermont artists that recently closed, we asked five open-ended questions, specifically about generative AI. Read about the survey responses on our blog at <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/blog/vermont-artists-and-the-changing-landscape-of-ai/>.

Grants awarded to support creative aging and youth — Vermont's youngest and oldest will soon have more opportunities to learn and socialize through painting, storytelling, dance, music, and other arts programming supported by grants from the Vermont Arts Council. Twelve organizations received a total of \$50,000 in funding through the Council's Creative Aging grant program, and six organizations received a total of \$30,000 in funding through the Council's Early Childhood Arts Partnership grant program. Among the funded projects are creative movement and circus arts instruction in St. Johnsbury; clay, photography, printmaking, and writing classes in Lamoille County; movement for Parkinson's classes in Burlington; and ceramics, fiber arts, and more in White River Junction. A full listing of supported programs can be found at <https://www.vermontartscouncil.org/grants/organizations/creative-aging>.

SCHOOL NEWS

Westford Robotics season wrap up

By Mark Drapa, Westford

What a season!

Let me start with our middle school FTC team, the Trash Pandas (team number 24107). Only in their second year, this band of 10 young engineers brought it all to the FTC State Championships this weekend. In a field of 22 teams (almost exclusively high schoolers), they ended 28 rounds of qualification matches as the number one seed — and the only undefeated record! They advanced into the semifinals and really impressed the other teams with their preparation and consistency. Most of all, they communicated their skill and passion, handled the day with grace and kindness, and left the day with new friends and great memories. We are incredibly proud of this team!

View official event photos online at <https://uvm.photoshelter.com/galleries/C0000aajw2TzwYik/G0000ppKMJL4W7So/2025-FIRST-Tech-Challenge>; video of the team in action (from the livestream): <https://youtu.be/SjTIXGYhEfc?t=11421>.

The Essex High School team (6 of 12 students are former Westford Pandas), HiveMind Robotics, also made it into semifinals. At closing ceremonies, they won the top award for robot design and engineering portfolio (Think Award), advancing to international competition for the second year in a row.

Our FIRST LEGO League teams all qualified and competed at the FLL State Championships on Saturday, January 18 at GlobalFoundries. Congrats to the Atlantic Pandas, Pacific Pandas, PanDucks, and Prodigy Pandas for being a force of fun, engineering skill, and gracious professionalism. Our teams collected awards for Core Values, Peer Recognition Award, as well as the Mentor Award for one of our amazing coaches! Teams finished in with scores in the top three of all 38 competing teams. Westford's impact and inspiration around the state was on full display!

Article about the event online at <https://vermontbiz.com/news/2025/february/01/globalfoundries-hosts-vermont-state-championship-first-lego-league>; read a news story at <https://www.mychamplainvalley.com/video/first-lego-league-championship/10398173/>.

A huge thank you to all of our mentors, sponsors, families, and school for the support to make all of this possible. Interested in sponsorship or mentoring? We need more support to keep up with student growth.

Winona Smith Scholarship opportunity now open

The League of Women Voters of Vermont Education Fund is now accepting applications for its Winona Smith Scholarship program. Created in 1998 to honor the legacy of League leader Winona Smith, the scholarship is awarded annually to Vermont high school seniors who embody the characteristics and qualities Smith displayed of civic participation and community service.

Three \$2000 scholarships will be awarded to students who demonstrate financial need, scholastic achievement, and come highly recommended by their teacher.

Applications, due on April 30, must be completed online at <https://lwvofvt.org/winona-smith-vermont-scholarship-application/>, where more general information is also available. Students need to submit two essays (300-500 words) — one on issues concerning voting rights, and the other on the impact of a recent civic, national, or world event. A letter of recommendation from a teacher is also required, submitted online at <https://bit.ly/LWVTeacherRec>.

The scholarship can be applied towards continuation of education in an accredited vocational, technical, or trade school, or at a two- or four-year college or university. Scholarship recipients will be announced on June 1.

Last year, the League awarded scholarships to students from Essex and Winooski High Schools and St. Johnsbury Academy.

Questions can be directed to Scholarship Coordinator Audrey Grant, lwvofvt.edfund@gmail.com.

News from the VT Student Assistance Corporation (VSAC)

Do you have students that need help filing their 2025-26 Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) for the 2025-26 school year? VSAC is offering one-on-one appointments, virtually and in person, throughout February. Go online to the VSAC calendar, <https://www.vsac.org/events/list>, for a full listing.

FAFSA — Filing a FAFSA is the first step to getting college financial aid. Need help filing your FAFSA? Visit VSAC's calendar of events to book a one-on-one virtual or in-person appointment.

Grants — These are often called "gift aid" as they don't need to be paid back. View VSAC's step-by-step webinar on completing the Vermont Grant application.

Scholarships — Use a single application to apply for more than 150 VSAC-assisted scholarships. Don't miss the Wednesdays, February 12 deadline.

Registration is now open for College & Career Pathways — VSAC will be offering this free, public event for high school families on Saturday, March 8, 1:00 – 5:00 PM. Families can participate in-person at UVM or virtually via Zoom. Find additional details by visiting <https://www.vsac.org/plan/college-career-pathways>. Also, high schools around the state are invited to bring students to one of this year's College & Career Pathways weekday events (<https://www.vsac.org/plan/college-career-pathways>) being offered at four locations:

Landmark College — Thursday, March 13, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM;

Saint Michael's College — Thursday, March 20, 9:00 AM – 2:00 PM;

Vermont State University Lyndon Campus — Monday, April 7, 8:45 AM – 1:45 PM (in partnership with the NEK College Fair);

Vermont State University Castleton Campus — Wednesday, April 9, 8:45 AM – 2:00 PM (in partnership with the Rutland Area Guidance Counselors' College Fair).

Find additional details go online to <https://www.vsac.org/plan/college-career-pathways> and visit <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/CCP2025> to bring students to one of the weekday events.

COMMUNITY COLUMN

Response to former UVM Pres. Sullivan's comments on VT healthcare

By Bill Schubart

A recent *VT Digger* commentary by UVM former President and current professor of Law and Political Science Tom Sullivan raises debatable questions. In his "meeting of the minds" call to consensus, he includes "regulators." Well, I'm sorry, but that's not what regulators do.

Vermont has two regulators with purview over healthcare. One is the Green Mountain Care Board (GMCB) established in 2011 and the other is the Vermont Department of Financial Regulation (DFR), formerly BISHCA.

Twenty years ago, I chaired Fletcher Allen Health Care — now UVM Medical Center. It was a challenging time. We negotiated and oversaw the merger of three Burlington hospitals and one foundation into one entity, oversaw the most aggressive buildout plans in the hospital's history, and sought and hired a new leader after our former president was convicted of lying to our state regulator, the Vermont Department of Banking, Insurance, Securities & Health Care Administration (BISHCA), and then remanded to serve a two-year federal prison term. Since that time, I've tracked our progress... or lack thereof.

Recognizing that healthcare delivery does not function as a free market, the GMCB regulates healthcare and DFR assumes BISHCA's earlier mission to oversee other monopolies.

Healthcare systems (sellers) have enormous leverage over patients (consumers), and for this reason, the consumers' interests need oversight.

Using the pitch that economies-of-scale will produce savings and improve outcomes due to better care coordination, Vermont and national healthcare systems have consolidated and grown into massive systems. But any measurable savings have not been passed on to patients, nor has care coordination improved.

Organizations don't get to "negotiate" with their regulator. Market regulation is the stopgap measure put in place to protect the "common good" when market expansion works against the interests of consumers.

The GMCB's role is to regulate healthcare delivery in Vermont. The members and staff serve the public interest by working to ensure we have accessible, affordable, high-quality, and financially stable providers for Vermonters. Its role is not to build consensus, find common ground, or negotiate with those providers and organizations.

When first established under Con Hogan, the GMCB was finding its way in a forest of theories about how best to deliver healthcare. I know as I was on the original GMCB advisory Board along with 50 other Vermonters. Sensing no serious regulatory initiative, all but a few of us resigned.

In 2022, with the appointment of Owen Foster, a Vermonter with former experience with the U.S. Dept. of Justice leading the prosecution of Purdue Pharmaceuticals and the Sackler family for criminal mis-marketing of Oxycontin, the GMCB began to take seriously its regulatory mission, defined as "population health," i.e. guiding and regulating a system that delivers high quality and timely access to affordable care to its defined population of Vermonters. Prior to that time, GMCB had been largely responsive to the expressed needs and wishes of Vermont's hospitals, especially those with the greatest financial and political clout.

The GMCB's approach is hardly "single-bullet," as Sullivan proclaims. With extraordinary effort it has sought relevant data from those hospitals it regulates and has raised the critical issues of a shared definition of specific healthcare data, internal funds flow, audit processes, and transparency.

Just in the Burlington area, there are four related entities: UVM Medical Center (UVMHC), UVM Health Network (UVMHN), UVM, and the Larner School of Medicine (Larner), each with its own independent governing body.

UVMHC is an academic medical center and a tertiary care hospital, UVM is a Land Grant university, and Larner is a college of medicine financially tied to UVM and UVMHC. UVMHN is not a hospital, but rather a nonprofit business aggregation and holding company focused on acquiring, owning, and managing hospitals in Vermont and New York, whereas UVMHN-Ventures is a for-profit business (P.12). As such, it increases rather than lowers healthcare costs. UVMHN owns three hospitals in

Vermont — Porter, UVMHC, Central Vermont, as well as Vermont Home Health & Hospice — and three in New York.

Sullivan makes a strong case for Larner, which does indeed benefit from a clinical partner such as UVMHC, but the rest of his observation betrays an intrinsic misunderstanding when he refers to it as an "academic medical center and a community hospital."

It's widely accepted that we can save money and deliver better care in our local communities. A financially sustainable integrated healthcare delivery system that delivers trauma-informed primary care, home health and aging care, chronic-disease management, hospice, mental health and substance abuse disorder counseling in our local communities is understood to be the most cost-efficient and effective. Urban tertiary care hospitals have much higher delivery costs and wait-times are much longer.

A recent analysis by BCBS-VT compares for four basic procedures at UVMHC, Dartmouth, community hospitals, and at freestanding facilities. The results speak for themselves.

Again according to Sullivan, UVMHC reported 66,000 emergency room visits. It would be useful to know how many of those were primary care visits. There's no place more expensive to deliver primary care than in an emergency room.

We're told and it's generally accepted that these adjacent services at UVMHC makes Larner a much more attractive choice as medical students can interact on all levels from primary care to acute specialty care. But at what cost to patients and quality? Do we even know how much of UVMHC's costs actually support Larner?

Sullivan goes on to say that the Network's annual economic impact in Vermont is \$2.7B but does not provide a source. Nor is there any source given for the \$348M in "community benefits," which must include the \$15 million invested in the failed OneCare Vermont initiative. We do know from National Academy for State Health Policy (NASHP) and American Hospital Directory (AHD) data that UVMHC is one of the most expensive hospitals in the country (slide 116).

There's some \$935 billion worth of annual embedded waste embedded in the \$4.5 trillion dollar U.S. healthcare system. How much of this is within UVMHC and UVMHC?

Furthermore, if the \$1.9B budget of UVMHC is divided between expenses attributable solely to patient clinical care and expenses for administration and management, new federal data indicates that the ratio is one of the highest in the country (page 8).

UVMHC's 2023 IRS filing indicates that the top 19 administrators made \$12 million in total (page 8). Do the math.

The myth of the Medicare-caused cost-shift is central to UVMHC's argument for how much it must charge, i.e. "We must charge more because Medicare underpays us for standard procedures." But in an analysis of 107 comparable (by bed size, average acuity, and outcomes) academic medical centers, 81% of them either broke even or made a modest profit solely on the Medicare reimbursements. Why can't UVMHC?

When I was chair, we took seriously our role on behalf of the people of Vermont to hold leadership accountable to delivering on the mission of quality, affordable, and accessible healthcare.

Most importantly, our leadership knew to listen and be guided by the voices of those working professionals who made possible the quality of care for which we were known. Now the voices of today's healthcare providers — the nurses, physician assistants, technical staff, and physicians — are apparently irrelevant.

A recent letter sent to management from the Vermont Federation of Nurses and Health Professionals along with the more recent letter sent from the service workers union aligned with the AFT provide a view of pervasive moral injury among those who deliver the quality of care and a severe hearing loss among those running the "business."

With all due respect, we need a common understanding of unimpeachable data and funds flow, transparent auditing, accountable nonprofit-board governance, and a shared goal and understanding of Population Health and how to deliver affordable care in a timely way to all Vermonters, not happy messages. But above all else, we must support the absolute authority of the Green Mountain Care Board to regulate an industry many Vermonters can no longer afford.

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Let's Build Homes announces board of directors

Let's Build Homes (LBH), a non-partisan, pro-housing alliance, has announced its Board of Directors. Representing diverse sectors, regions, and backgrounds, the Board will drive LBH's mission to advocate for strategic housing policy reforms in Vermont.

The Board includes leaders from business, housing, education, energy, and community organizations.

"One of my greatest challenges as CEO of Bolton Valley is securing housing for our employees," said Lindsay DesLauriers, CEO and President of Bolton Valley. "Vermont's housing crisis affects every industry — from tourism to healthcare."

"Housing is the foundation of a thriving Vermont," said Lorelee Tester, Executive Director of the Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce. "Without it, we risk losing the people, businesses, and institutions that make our state strong. Let's Build Homes is

taking critical action to address this crisis."

- Board members are:
- Elizabeth Bridgewater, Executive Director of the Windham and Windsor Housing Trust;
- Maura Collins, Executive Director of the Vermont Housing Finance Agency since 2019;
- Lindsay DesLauriers, CEO and President of Bolton Valley Resort;
- Brian Dunkiel, General Counsel for Beta technologies, an electric aerospace company;
- Mateo Kehler, CEO of Jasper Hill Farm;
- Neale Lunderville, President and CEO of Vermont Gas Systems;
- Casey McNeil, third-generation owner of McNeil & Reedy, a menswear store in downtown Rutland;
- Sue Minter, past Executive Director of Capstone Community Action, and formerly served in the VT House of Representatives;
- David Provost, Executive Vice President of Finance and Administration at Middlebury College;

- Jordan Redell, Associate Vice President of External Affairs at nonprofit Scholarship America;
- Tino Rutanhira, Executive Director and Co-founder of the Vermont Professionals of Color Network;
- Lorelee Tester, Executive Director of the Northeast Kingdom Chamber of Commerce; and
- Miro Weinberger, Executive Chair of Let's Build Homes and former mayor of Burlington, 2012-2024.

For more information or to join the coalition, visit www.letsbuildhomes.org.



Red, White, and Blue! The snow made a gorgeous backdrop for the red and blue at the feeders — and all the goldy yellow, tan, ochre, and black! Pictured above is a lovely red-bellied woodpecker at our feeder. Check out this post for more photos: <https://vtbirdsandwords.blogspot.com/2025/01/red-white-and-blue-against-backdrop-of.html>

PHOTO BY MAEVE KIM, JERICHO

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