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Ludlow Fire Dept. support BRGNS with Stuff-a-Truck

LUDLOW, Vt. – While 2020 was turned upside down for many, there has also been an abundance of good will and good neighbors within our community. Black River Good Neighbor Services was unable to offer its annual Stuff-A-Bus event due to Covid-19, and to our complete surprise the Ludlow Fire Department came to our rescue. Coordinated by firefighter Angela Kissell, a fire truck parked for two days in December at Shaw's parking lot while volunteer fire fighters collected an amazing amount of food for our food shelf. And at the end of each day delivered it to us!

There is a great need in our community, and it was a true pleasure knowing that the Ludlow Fire Department took on this effort, spending many hours on our behalf collecting such an impressive amount of food. It's what a community is all about, helping and supporting each other – in this case neighbors



Ludlow Firefighters at BRGNS Food Shelf.

PHOTO PROVIDED

helping neighbors. How grateful we are!

On behalf of Black River Good Neighbor Services food shelf, our sincere thanks go to the Ludlow Fire Department, whose commitment is so important to BRGNS. Folks in our communi-

ty will most certainly benefit from your efforts and generosity.

Written by Krey Kellington, Food Program Administrator, Black River Good Neighbor Services.

R.B. Erskine Inc. Farm, Garden & Pet Supply new ownership

CHESTER, Vt. – We are pleased to announce R.B. Erskine Inc. has reopened under new ownership. Like many community members, we were surprised and saddened to hear Mike and Catherine's announcement of their plans to close the store this past spring. "We" are Janessa Purney and Burleigh Sunflower, residents of Bartonville, Vt., and longtime customers of Erskine's. We love this store and the community around it and are looking forward to bringing it back to pre-pandemic operations.

The store, now Erskine's Grain & Garden, is currently open Tuesday through Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m., and Saturday, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. We have Poulin Grain and Green Mountain Feeds back in stock, pine shavings and straw, and lots of the pet food Erskine's used to carry. We're continuing to restock all the rest of things we need to keep our homes, hobbies, and farms running through the winter, as quickly as possible to the usual levels while recognizing we also have a duty to keep our store as safe as possible. We'll continue to follow all ACCD guidance for



Burleigh and Janessa in front of the store.

PHOTO BY REBECCA HAAS

retail stores for in-store shopping, as well as keeping pre-order curbside pick-up options available.

We are also happy and humbled to announce Mike Erskine plans to stay on in a part-time role for at least a year to help us in all aspects of learning his business. I know we are relieved to continue to see his friendly face – and knowledgeable brain – behind the counter on a regular basis, and we hope you will be, too.

As far as future plans go, we expect to spend the winter getting comfortable in the store, maybe moving some things around, but making no major changes with the exception of discontinuing some of the plumbing supplies – keeping all maple sugaring related fixtures – stovepipe, and basic hardware like nails, screws, and the like. Chester already has a perfectly good hardware store for those things! Soon it will be time to plant seeds for garden starts, and chick days will be here before we know it.

Why are we here? Our personal passions include keeping laying hens, raising poultry for meat, raising pigs, keeping bees, caring for a little orchard, as well as vegetable and flower gardening. Our two children, Louis (10) and Adeline (4), enjoy making messes with us. We look forward to sharing ideas and experiences with all of you. See you in the Depot!

Ludlow Selectboard revises budget after error, approves 0.6% increase

BY SHARON HUNTLEY

The Vermont Journal

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Ludlow Selectboard convened for an online special meeting Monday, Jan. 11 to make corrections and finalize their budget after discovering a \$106,000 error had been made in what they thought was their level-funded budget.

With the budget approximately \$100,000 over last year's numbers, Ludlow Municipal Manager presented the board with suggested cuts

totaling \$70,000, chosen because they "would not impact municipal services." There was also \$5,000 in additional revenue that had been previously overlooked.

Suggested cuts included \$25,000 from the cemetery budget, \$10,000 from the skate park fund, \$10,000 from the Police budget, \$10,000 from the lister's reappraisal, and eliminating a crushed gravel purchase of \$15,000.

Concerns about the amount to come from the cemetery budget were assuaged after realizing there were surplus funds that regularly rolled over into subse-

quent years, and they still had over \$70,000 to spend in this year's budget before the end of spring.

When asked by Board Chair Bruce Schmidt their thoughts on a final budget number, board member Justin Hyjek said that he would "like to keep tax rate as low as possible and not increase budget," a sentiment shared by the rest of the board.

The decision was made to accept all suggested proposed budget cuts, which would result in a final number to be raised of \$4,106,503, an increase of just 0.6%.

Chester will vote budget and articles via Australian ballot this year

BY SHARON HUNTLEY

The Vermont Journal

CHESTER, Vt. – During their Jan. 6 meeting, the Chester Selectboard decided the town budget and articles will be voted on by Australian ballot this year rather than during a traditional town meeting, due to health concerns of the ongoing coronavirus pandemic.

The informational meeting will happen remotely Monday, March 1 at 6 p.m. Voting will be the following day Tuesday, March 2, from 9 a.m.-7 p.m. at the Chester Town Office.

Board Chairman Arne Jonynas made a point of saying it would just be for this year and that he would "hate to see town meeting go away."

The board went through a general fund review; and although the numbers aren't finalized yet, Jonynas said that overall it was "looking pretty good for the town as far as our tax rate and what our budgets going to look like." He said that it did not see an increase, possibly even a small decrease.

One item discussed at length was the \$10,000 that is in the marketing budget this year. Both Town Manager Julie Hance and Jonynas said that they had heard mixed feelings in the community about spending money for marketing; some saying it was only a benefit for businesses on the green.

Hance defended the expense saying that they had already seen "really good results," including big response numbers for their Facebook

ads and Google ads, and an increase in calls to Bob Flint at the Springfield Regional Development Corp about starting a business in Chester. She also said that there have been a lot of young families moving to town for their permanent residence as a result of the outreach.

Hance said it helps the whole community and is not just a benefit for the green, though that is Chester's "eye candy."

The board went through the Capital Plan review, which included past and upcoming capital expenses as well as the bond debt repayment plan. Anticipated purchases in 2021 include a truck for the highway department, fund match for sidewalk project, a new cruiser, and town signage. The only bond being proposed this year is for paving.

Chester resident Scott MacDonald updated the board on Chester's Fall Festival, which was in search of new organizers after the Chester Rotary announced they no longer had the manpower to spearhead the town's signature event. MacDonald said that a short couple of days many Chester business people have stepped forward to volunteer. He said he would have more details as they become organized.

Hance reported that town was awarded the historic preservation grant for the remaining outside work needed on the Academy building. She was also pursuing a claim to the insurance company to see if the ceiling repairs inside might be covered, which could potentially save upwards of \$26,000.

Hance said the Public Safety Building progress was continuing and running about a week to 10 days behind schedule.



Chester to vote via Australian ballot.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Financially, the contingency fund, which has approximately \$90,000, has not been needed.

The gravel pit has cleared its last few regulatory hurdles after initially being rejected by the state. Hance said the town should receive their permit for gravel extraction by the spring.

Hance has discussed the possibility of establishing a Civilian Oversight Committee for Police Department complaints with town attorney Jim Carroll. She said Carroll had good ideas and provided some cautions about how it could work. Police Chief Rick Cloud was also involved in the discussion. Hance will present details to the board in February. The revised citizen complaint form and updated trifold are now on the town website.

A Local Government Reimbursement Grant has been received that will cover the entire cost for the sound system, acoustic ceiling panels, and acoustical shades for the windows.

The future of Jeffrey Barn will be on the agenda for Jan. 20. Chester resident Steve Mancuso spoke to the board about assembling a group of volunteers to help shore up the barn. That option, as well as other ideas, will be discussed at the Jan. 20 meeting.

The next Selectboard meeting is Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 6 p.m. via Zoom.

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CONTACT US

OFFICE ADDRESS:
8 High Street • PO Box 228 • Ludlow, VT 05149
BILLING ADDRESS:
PO Box 116 • Rutland, VT 05702
PHONE NUMBERS:
Ph: 802-228-3600 • Fax: 802-228-3464
WEBSITE:
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DEADLINES

The deadline for all content is **Friday at 12 p.m.** for the following Wednesday publication.

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Expeditionary School at Black River

LUDLOW, Vt. – Despite the turbulence of 2020, the Black River Independent School Committee remains committed to strengthening the Ludlow community, educationally and beyond. In a year marked by catastrophic wildfires, a global pandemic, historic job losses, and a national reckoning with systemic racism, BRISC’s vision for economic vitality offers an emerging model for how to re-design the relationship between local schools, the business community, and taxpayers. Now, with 2021 upon us, the highlights of our first semester are noteworthy.

We opened our doors tuition-free to 16 students Sept. 8, 2020. Offering a flexible culture of learning, we have remained fully open Monday through Friday. As our school has evolved with

these times, so has our name, and so has our desired impact. From the onset, the curriculum placed an emphasis on respecting a wide variety of cultures, religions, languages, and the challenges of socioeconomic diversity. Continuing with an acronym that references a specific religious ceremony is counterintuitive. It undermines our purpose.

We are excited to announce that our second semester will include marketing and branding our revised name: Expeditionary School at Black River.

In time, it is our intention to be referred to as “Black River.” This will be a key feature of how our long-term business plan aims to scale an ecosystem of flexible learning across the state, and possibly the nation. The positivity of our first four months

reminds us that the foundation to do so is solid. We have signed agreements with Black River Innovation Campus in Springfield and Castleton University’s the Center for Schools in Rutland. We are collaborating with Okeemo Valley TV right here in Ludlow to capture students’ participation in National History Day’s “Communication in History: Key to Understanding” project. Through these partnerships, we are developing a network that can help balance the demand for enhancing student’s technological skills with a need to simultaneously keep them connected to the natural environment.

We are keenly aware of how the coronavirus is creating a world that is dependent on access to the Internet. In light of this reality, we are embracing the expedition of finding ways

to facilitate learning opportunities where students must unplug from electronic devices. This past semester students participated in a rock climbing and canoeing excursion at the Chittenden Reservoir. With the help of the Book Nook here in Ludlow, we’ve purchased paper copies of Laurie Hulse Anderson’s “Seeds of America” trilogy. To strengthen our curriculum’s alignment with the Next Generation Science Standards, we are initiating partnerships with Vermont Institute for Natural Sciences and the Lake Champlain Maritime Museum, programming that we hope to make available by summer 2021. And, we are thrilled to accept the donation of a piano. Our interrelated approach to curriculum design allows us to weave music lessons into our teaching of the writing process.

To date, curriculum development and strategic plans have been influenced by EL Education’s approach to school improvement. The EL stands for Expeditionary Learning. This framework was first introduced 30 years ago via a partnership between Harvard Graduate School of Education and Outward Bound. Influenced by this philosophy, our organizational design is also anchored in the policy expectations put forth by Vermont’s Agency of Education in the mandates known as Educational Quality Standards (2015) and Act 77: Flexible Pathways to Secondary School Completion (2013). Both of which are still intact today.

At its core, expeditionary means “a journey or excursion undertaken for a specific purpose.” The second half of its definition conveys a commitment to “efficient promptness.” Initially, BRISC was established to maintain the presence of a cost-effective school in the heart of Ludlow. In response to the fiscal challenges created by Covid-19, with this revised nomenclature, the Expeditionary School at Black River’s approach intends to promptly respond to the needs of working parents and

guardians as well local business owners during the remainder of and post-Covid. We opened in spite of the complications presented by this pandemic. As a result, we are well positioned to serve as a solution to the difficult lessons garnered from the rapid scaling of “remote learning.” Communities like ours cannot afford to do otherwise.

In the weeks following this announcement, we will be rolling out the details of a member loan program. In order to remain open next year and beyond, ESBR needs to secure investors. Thanks to the entrepreneurial mindset of the members of BRISC, we have a chance to coordinate a renewed approach to funding local schools, doing so is more likely to safeguard an affordable lifestyle for all Vermonters.

Please feel welcome to get in touch with me at kendra@black-riveris.org. Working together we are more likely to ensure that a renewed approach to operating a community’s school can also create many positive new beginnings for students, their families, and the local workforce.

Written by Kendra Rickerby, Ph.D., Interim Head of School.


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Lake Rescue milfoil problem discussed at Rotary meeting —

LUDLOW, Vt. – The co-presidents of the Lake Rescue Association, Barbara Silver and Bruce Zanca, recently spoke to a meeting of the Ludlow Rotary Club to discuss the problems facing them due to Eurasian Milfoil and river sediment.

The LRA, formed in 1933 and incorporated in 1954, according to Silver, is “facing a crisis right now.” She was referring to the rapid build up of milfoil, a non-native, invasive aquatic plant that can grow from 4 to 6 inches a day in full sunlight.

The milfoil invasion of Lake Rescue and Lake Pauline was “rediscovered” in the lake system in 2014 following tropical storm Irene. It has become an ongoing problem that, if not addressed, could turn the “lakes into a swamp.”

Over the years since Irene, the LRA, in conjunction with state agencies, has spent thousands of dollars to remove the milfoil from the lakes. It was estimated

that the LRA would spend about \$48,000 next year on removing milfoil.

Zanca noted that they would probably never be able to totally eradicate milfoil from the lakes but would be able to reduce it to a controllable situation with constant maintenance care. To this end, the LRA is constructing a “Dash” boat that will be able to literally vacuum the milfoil from parts of the lake and its floor.

In addition to this problem, the LRA is also addressing the impact of sedimentation caused mainly by the Black River. One area of concern is the channel between Lake Rescue and Round Pond. Over the years, the sediment build-up has resulted in the creation of “islands” of sediment and raised the floor of Round Pond so that the depth of the water has been severely reduced.

The LRA has about 150 members. There are approximately 250-300 individual lake properties involved.

Area residents named to Dean’s List at University of New England

REGION – Shiloh Yake of Chester and Morgan Brown of Ludlow have been named to the Dean’s List for the 2020 fall semester at the University of New England in Maine. Dean’s List students have attained a grade point average of 3.3 or better out of a possible 4.0 at the end of the semester. Visit www.une.edu for more information.

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LOCAL HISTORY

BY RON PATCH

Ron Patch is a Chester native, Chester Historical Society president, and a lifelong antiques dealer.

He can be reached at 802-374-0119 or email knotz69@gmail.com

Rod & Gun Club history

Here are minutes from a 1954 to 1965 Chester Rod & Gun secretary's book in my collection. These were different times. Dues were \$1 per year. Game suppers were \$1.50 adults and \$0.75 for kids. Land could be bought for \$100 an acre. Yearly wages were \$5,000 to \$6,000.

Meetings were held at the Grange Hall, now VITICA. When the grange raised the rent from \$4 to \$5, the meetings were moved to the American Legion Hall, which today is Free Range.

"April 12, 1955... The matter of stocking the kids brook was discussed. A motion was made and 2nd. [T]he secretary make an application to the state for some trout for this brook. It was also decided to stock it from the swimming pool to Henry Thomas camp this year."

The kids' brook is the Lovers Lane Brook behind But-tonwood Farm. Some years as many as 175 kids registered. The swimming pool mentioned is not the one we have today. The old swimming pool was located further up on the same side. It was a concrete bottom pool with water taken in from the brook. I remember catching trout in the swimming pool.

"May 10, 1955... It was voted to donate \$10.00 to the Boy Scouts to help send a boy to camp specifying it be used for a Chester boy." To this day the Rod & Gun Club sends kids to Conservation Camp.

"March 13, 1956... It was decided that the Secretary order 250 new membership pins."

"May 8th, 1956... Allie Hawkes land was discussed and a motion was made and second that the directors purchase the land. Also check on lines and survey it if necessary."

"June 12th, 1956... It was suggested that there might be a chance to make a little money for the club by building a camp to raffle off this fall, as the Lions Club does not plan to do it this year."

I remember Chester Rod & Gun building camps up in Popple Dungeon. Up Dodge Road on the right the Rod & Gun built two or three camps. A few years ago, Tom Hildreth and I hiked from High Street over to the Dungeon. At that time, there was still one camp the R&G had built.

"Aug 12, 1958... Motion made and seconded that the Club buy the Richard Fields land located where the Rifle Range is now."

"Jan 12, 1960... A bag of Purina Dog Chow was raffle-d off it was won by John Benson." After meetings, they had a raffle and showed sportsman's movies on their projector.

"September 13, 1960... The Chester Rod & Gun Club voted to sponsor the Hunter Safety Course with the school, it was voted to donate \$20.00 to the course." I took this course at the elementary school in 1962.

"Nov 8, 1960... The 300 cinder blocks were delivered to the Range."

"January 14, 1964... President Stowell reported that work on the Motor Cycle Scramble Course was progressing satisfactorily... Charlie Richardson reported that he had collected old hot water tanks to be used on the project."

"7 April 1964... Dates for the motorcycle scrambles are set for May 17th, July 5th, August 9th, September 13th, and October 5th."

"August 11, 1964... There was discussion of 'Skip' Bessey appreciation day which was planned for August 30th. Larry Fuller suggested snow fence as a protection of spectators. Bill Arrison moved, Charlie Richardson secon-ded, that all profits except the concession receipts go to Skip Bessey or his family... President Stowell outlined the part 'Skip' Bessey played in laying out the Club's scramble track and in organizing the meets. He suggested the track should be named for 'Skip' Bessey."

"Sept. 8, 1964... A letter of thanks to the Club from Martha Bessey was read. Bill Arrison said the new name for the area owned by the Club, Thunder Hill, should be entered in the Club's records. Also that the name 'Skip' Bessey Memorial Scrambles Tract should be written in the records. It was so voted."

"Dec '64... Motion was made and seconded that a sign be made this winter to be erected next spring in regards to Thunder Hill, Skip Bessey Track."

"Jan 12, '65... Larry Fuller showed a diagram of a plaque which was designed to mark Thunder Hill and the Skip Bessey track. It was so voted."

This week's old saying is from Pat Decatur. Pat was telling me something - I forget what now. I interrupted her to ask a question. Pat said, "Try to keep up."



The 1950 Chester Rod & Gun Club pin.

PHOTO BY RON PATCH



The marble plaque for Skip Bessey mentioned in the minutes.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Jamie Townsend new art exhibit “Curvature”

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Gallery at the VAULT is excited to present a show of new works by beloved artist Jamie Townsend on view until Feb. 27. “Curvature” is a body of work created during this past year.

The circular formats have been showing up in Jamie’s outdoor work for the past couple of years, but now the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic have brought the circles to his canvases and structural paintings.

“Getting away from corners and simplifying the imagery was a natural way of dealing with what was going on in society this past year. Moving in, feeling the nurturing spirit, and comfort of the circle, seeing as the eye naturally sees. As a society, we have had to organize our lives and minds differently. This new place is therapeutic,” says Townsend.

Jamie Townsend grew up locally and continues to live and work here. It’s inspiring for him to feel this familiarity around him. For the past three years, he has divided his time working and showing in Europe.

Gallery at the VAULT, 68 Main Street in Springfield, is open Wednesday and Saturday, from 11 a.m.-5 p.m., and Friday, from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. For more information, call 802-885-7111, email galleryvault@vermontel.net, or visit www.galleryvault.org or Facebook. Handicapped accessible.



“String Shine” by Jamie Townsend.

PHOTO PROVIDED

“Painting Canal Street” featured art at Canal Street Art Gallery

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Canal Street Art Gallery presents “Painting Canal Street,” featuring watercolor paintings by Jean Cannon and oil paintings by Nancy Fitz-Rapalje with a common subject – views of Canal Street in Bellows Falls. These works are included in the “Art For All” seasonal group show open through Jan. 23.

This collection is especially meaningful to all those who feel a connection to this beautiful and real streetscape along North America’s oldest canal – circa 1790s. The landscape artworks illustrate the gentle ruggedness of this old mill-town steeped with countless architectural detail and history.

On Jan. 15 at 6 p.m., join the Bellows Falls Third Friday Gallery Night on Facebook. Take part in celebrating with the artists while exploring this collection. In this month’s online tour, the artists will speak about their artwork and answer your questions. Go to www.canalstreetartgallery.com to visit CSAG’s new interactive online viewing rooms.

The CSAG is also excited to announce that programming will be expanding in 2021 with 11 exhibitions featuring more solo shows and a new represented artists group show. Browse over 500 original artworks at www.canalstreetart-gallery.com or on Facebook @ canalstreetartgallery.

Canal Street Art Gallery, 23 Canal St. in Bellows Falls, is open Wednesday through Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information, call Mike or Emmett at 802-289-0104 or email artinfo@ canalstreetartgallery.com.



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obituaries

CHURCH SERVICES

David L. McCormack, 1932-2020

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – David Lawrence McCormack, 88, of Prescott Valley, passed away Dec. 25, 2020. He passed away in Good Samaritan Nursing Home, Prescott Valley due to complications from the Covid-19 virus. David was born in Springfield, Vt., to Ernest LeRoy McCormack and Florence Austin Holt.

David was married to Lorraine Eleanor Williams for 60 years. She preceded David in passing in 2011. They had four children together – one, Linda M. Roby, preceded David in passing in 2018.



David L. McCormack, 1932-2020.

PHOTO PROVIDED

He is survived by his older sister Joyce Waite (91) of Springfield, Vt.; his children David E. McCormack of Alabama, Stephen L. McCormack of Springfield, Vt., Stephen's wife Michelle, and Diane L. McCormack-Murphy of Prescott Valley, Ariz.; 11 grandchildren, 9 great-grandchildren, 6 great-great-grandchildren; many nieces and nephews, and many friends.

Ruffner-Wakelin Funeral

Home will be tenderly caring for David's after death care. There will be no memorial services at this time. A gathering in remembrance of "Latigo Dave's" multi-talented life will be pending the current pandemic. To be announced at a later date.

For more information, please contact his daughter Diane by email artemistar.432@yahoo.com.

Arnold B. Robinson, 1949-2021

CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – Arnold Bruce Robinson, 71, of Cobb Road, passed away in the early morning of Jan. 6, 2021 at his daughter's house in Springfield, Vt. He was born Oct. 8, 1949 in Bellows Falls, Vt., to Lila (Colburn) and Roland Robinson.

He is predeceased by his wife Patricia Robinson. They were married in 1993. Bruce leaves behind three children Amy Robinson and her three children of Springfield, Vt., Philip Robinson and his four children of South Royalton, Vt., and Kelsey Robinson of Charlestown, N.H., and several brothers, sisters, nieces, and nephews.


Bruce was an avid sports lover, a fan of the Knicks, Cow-

boys, and especially the Atlanta Braves – Chop On. He spent many years of his life donating his time to the Bellows Falls Little League program and the Connecticut Valley Pee Wee Football League for 50-plus years. He impacted the lives of many young athletes over the years. He retired from the Dunning Box Shop in Walpole, N.H. He worked there for over 30 years.

In lieu of flowers, we ask that you donate to either the Bellows Falls Little League program or the Connecticut Valley Pee Wee Football League, both in Bellows Falls. A service will be held at a later date.

Fenton & Hennessey Funeral Home in Bellows Falls, Vt. is assisting with the arrangements.

CHURCH SERVICES: We are currently running Social Distancing Church Services on an alternating schedule. Subject to space. All services are posted online at www.VermontJournal.com.



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ASCUTNEY, VT.

Open Bible Baptist Church, 168 Cemetery Rd.

Sunday services are being held in the church, with people sitting every other pew. Sunday school is at 9:45 a.m. Morning service at 11 a.m. Sunday evening service at 6 p.m. and Wednesday evening at 7 p.m. Services are also available on Facebook and YouTube. For more information, call the church at 802-674-2266 or visit www.obbcvt.org.

Brownsville Community United Methodist Church, 66 Brownsville-Hartland Rd.

Sunday service is 9:30 a.m., held in the church with reduced occupancy or streaming online at www.facebook.com/brownsvillecommunitychurch and www.brownsvilleumc-vt.org. Our Christmas Eve service will follow occupancy guidelines for both services at 7 p.m. and 9 p.m. Please RSVP for the service you would like to attend on our website.

BELLOWS FALLS, VT.

Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church St.

Please join us Sundays at 10 a.m. via Zoom. Go to Facebook @ImmanuelEpiscopalChurch. For more information, go to www.immanuelepiscopal.org.

CAVENDISH, VT.

St. James United Methodist Church, 570 Main St.

Please join us Sundays at 8:45 a.m. with Pastor John Hawkins. All are welcome. Masks and social distancing are required. For more information, call 802-674-3443.

CHESTER, VT.

St. Joseph's Church, 96 S. Main St.

Public masses have resumed. Services at St. Joseph's include Saturday at 4 p.m. and Wednesday at 9 a.m. There are no live streams for these masses. For more information, go to www.stmaryjoseph.com.

St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 313 Main St.

Zoom services are Sundays at 10 a.m. Our service will be an enhanced Rite One Morning Prayer Service with music. For information, visit www.stlukesepiscopalvt.org.

GRAFTON, VT.

Grafton Community Church, 55 Main St.


Worship begins Sunday at 10 a.m. Masks must be worn in the sanctuary and maintain a safe distance from others. View sermons on Zoom. For more information, go to www.graftoncommunitychurch.org or call 802-843-2346.

LONDONDERRY, VT.

First Baptist Church, 62 Crescent St., S. Londonderry, Vt.

Worship services are now online-only and can be live streamed

OBITUARIES



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at www.firstbaptistslondonderryvt.org/streaming-worship.html. For more information, visit www.firstbaptistlondonderryvt.org or call 802-856-7266.

LUDLOW, VT.

The United Church of Ludlow (UCC and Methodist), 48 Pleasant St.

Sunday services are held in person and streamed online. Please be safe and care for each other. Email unitedchurch@tds.net for more information. Visit www.unitedchurch.us to receive Covid-19 updates on services and meetings.

Ludlow Baptist Church, on the Green, 99 Main St.

Sunday school and service at 11 a.m. are in person. Sunday evening worship is canceled. Mid-week prayer will continue over Zoom. For more information about social distancing guidelines, go to www.LudlowBaptist.org or call Pastor Jerry Scheumann at 802-228-7600.

Tyson Community Church, Corner of Rt. 100 and Dublin Rd.

Service is at 10:30 a.m. on Zoom. For more information, go to Facebook @TysonCommunityChurch, call 802-522-8249, or email cindysummer55@gmail.com.

MOUNT HOLLY, VT.

Village Baptist Church, 32 Church St.

We're returning to our renovated sanctuary. Masks recommended, but we welcome all to come and worship with us Sunday at 9:30 a.m. Pastor Glenn Davis is available to counsel or pray with anyone who is struggling with anxiety or other issues at 802-259-2440.

SPRINGFIELD, VT.

Calvary Baptist Church, 156 Main St.

Live streaming of Sunday services at 9:30 a.m. will continue at www.facebook.com/calvarybaptistchurchspringfieldvt. For more information, go to www.calvarylovespringfield.com.

First Congregational Church UCC, 77 Main St.

Sunday services are at 9:30 a.m. Live streaming is available on Facebook @FCCUCCSpringfield. For more information, call 802-885-5728, email fccucc@vermontel.net, or go to www.fccuccspfdvt.org.

Precision Valley Baptist Church, 69 Rt. 106

In-person Sunday services start at 10 a.m. Please wear a mask and observe social distancing. Live streaming is also available. For more information, check out Facebook @PrecisionValleyBaptistChurch.

Springfield Assembly of God, 269 River St.

Sunday morning services are in-person and live streamed starting at 10 a.m. Masks are available and social distancing is encouraged. The sanctuary seating is arranged to promote distancing. Go to www.facebook.com/Springfield-Assembly-of-God-156583214402910 for links and more information.

St. Mary's Catholic Church, 10 Pleasant St.

Sunday mass is at 9 a.m. and Tuesday at 7 p.m. to watch the live streams, go to www.youtube.com and search Holy Family Parish Springfield Vermont. Streaming is available five minutes before the service starts. For more information, go to www.stmaryjoseph.com.

United Methodist Church, 10 Valley St.

Sunday worship is 9:30 a.m. Everyone should wear masks and physically distance themselves from others. For more information, call 802-885-1916. Everyone is welcome.

WALPOLE, N.H.

St. John's Episcopal Church, corner of Westminster and Elm St.

As the weather turns colder, worship services have returned to Zoom Sundays at 10 a.m. For more information, go to www.stjohnswalpole.org.

First Congregational Church of Walpole UCC, 15 Washington Sq.

Sunday service are at 10 a.m. via Zoom. For links and more information, go to www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalWalpoleNH.

All services online at www.VermontJournal.com.

TAKE A BREAK!

Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

	7				4	9	2	
		8		6			5	
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	4	6	9				8	
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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ♦♦♦♦

♦ Moderate ♦♦ Challenging ♦♦♦♦ HOO BOY!

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King Crossword

ACROSS

1 Opening
4 Cartoon frame
7 Vend
8 "Dallas" matriarch
10 Sleep problem
11 Court hammers
13 1998 Bruce Willis thriller
16 Shock partner
17 Hoodwinks
18 Water tester
19 Gum flavor
20 Roll call reply
21 Fry lightly
23 Belted area
25 Cooking fat
26 Uttered
27 Chemical suffix
28 Up and about
30 Quilters' get-together
33 Wimbledon champ of 2008
36 Wife of Jacob
37 Edition
38 Nodded off
39 D.C. baseball team
40 Picnic crasher

DOWN

1 Category
2 Sir Guinness
3 Enthusiastic approval
4 County of Ireland
5 Graceland idol
6 Fibs
7 Gush
8 Pharaoh's land
9 Upper crust
10 Docs' org.
12 Bull's sound
14 Ancient letter
15 "My word!"
19 Wet dirt
20 Secreted
21 Less loony
22 Sports venues
23 Banshee's cry
24 Delta, for one
25 Actress Tyler

41 Ram's mate
26 Long-legged shorebird
28 Wan
29 Used a broom
30 Butter up the turkey
31 Flightless birds
32 Compass pt.
34 Bruins' sch.
35 Caesar's "vidi"

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Publisher, Robert Miller
publisher@vermontjournal.com

Assistant Publisher / Ad Designer, Shawntae Webb
ads@vermontjournal.com

Editor, Amanda Wedegis
editor@vermontjournal.com

Calendar Events / Staff Writer, Sharon Huntley
calendar@vermontjournal.com

Billing Department, Sharon Huntley
billing@vermontjournal.com

Corporate & Production Office:
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COMMUNITY NEWS

opinion

Dear Editor,

The Springfield Town Democratic Committee commends Republican Gov. Phil Scott for his courage and integrity in being the first Republican governor to speak out against the president and asking him to resign or be removed. The country watched – the world watched – as a violent mob attacked the U.S. Capitol. This

mob was incited by Trump not just on the day of the insurrection, but by four years of his divisiveness and lies. There was no voter fraud. We all must defend the truth. In the words of our Vermont governor, “The fabric of our democracy and the principles of our republic are under attack by the President. Enough

is enough. President Trump should resign or be removed from office by his Cabinet, or by the Congress.” Thank you, Gov. Scott. Sincerely, Char Osterlund, chair Springfield Town Democratic Committee

Dear Editor,

Last Wednesday, Jan. 6, we saw a sharp contrast between Legislative life in Vermont and in the Congress in Washington, D.C. This contrast couldn’t have been more stark – one, unusually quiet, orderly – historic but subdued, and the other – noisy, chaotic, and shockingly violent. One affirming and one rocking our firm faith in the sanctity of our democratic process. In Vermont, the Legislature gathered in a hybrid of in-person and Zoom attendance to be sworn in for a new biennium of public service. I was one of 19 Senators who went up to the Statehouse in Montpelier to be sworn in live in the Senate Chamber. Our other 11 colleagues attended remotely, and we could see them up on the big screens in the Chamber. When we take this oath of office, all of us swear to uphold and defend the constitution of our state and of our country. For the first time in my Legislative life, the Statehouse was practically empty on this normally exciting first day of a new biennium. It is usually a crush of families and friends coming to celebrate their loved ones being sworn in and to experience the moderate pomp and circumstance of the launch of a new biennium. Despite the fact that few were physically present in Montpelier, there was a palpable sense of the historic nature of this new biennium. Not only were most members of the General Assembly sworn in remotely, via Zoom, but for the first time in Vermont history, the Legislative

leadership is entirely female: Speaker of the House, President Pro Tempore of the Senate, and both the Majority Leader in the House and the Senate. In addition, the new Lt. Governor is female. I am delighted to have been elected the Senate Majority Leader and am excited to see what this leadership team will accomplish. While the Federal Legislature was sworn in Jan. 3, both the state and federal Legislatures had one job in common Jan. 6. Both bodies had to begin the process of certifying the votes of the General Election. Vermont’s Canvassing Committee – made up of House and Senate members – was appointed in the morning and met with the Secretary of State and his election team that afternoon. After reviewing the vote cast and tallied for each state wide official – Governor, Lieutenant Governor, Secretary of State, Treasurer, Auditor, and Attorney General – the committee voted to accept the Elections Report from the Secretary of State and to recommend to the Joint Assembly the following day that we accept the report and certify the vote. On Thursday morning, the Joint Assembly voted, in a tri-partisan fashion, to accept the report and certify the vote. By contrast, the Congressional effort to certify the vote of the Electoral College was interrupted by a terrifying mob storming the Capitol. The business of the House and the Senate was delayed for many hours by this unprecedented breach

of the Capitol building. Both the Congress and the Vermont Legislature managed to finally certify the vote Jan. 7 – one just before 4 a.m. after an angry, chaotic day and the other at about 10:30 a.m. after a straightforward presentation and vote. The first order of business in the Vermont Senate was to pass a Joint Resolution, which condemned the violent storming of the U.S. Capitol Jan. 6, 2021 as a direct attack on our democracy. With this Joint Resolution, our tri-partisan Legislature voted, with only a few dissenting voices, to support the values and ideals that anchor our democratic foundation. You can read the resolution here: www.legislature.vermont.gov/bill/status/2022/J.R.H.1. The contrasts were stark. Our Vermont work didn’t make headlines, but it managed to affirm “business as usual.” In this extraordinary year, “business as usual” provides both relief and hope. I appreciate hearing from you. I can be reached by email at aclarkson@leg.state.vt.us or by phone at 802-457-4627. For more information on the Vermont Legislature, and the bills that are being debated now, those that have been proposed and passed, visit the Legislative website: www.legislature.vermont.gov. Sincerely, Sen. Alison Clarkson Windsor County

Dear Editor,

We wish to send a sincere thank you to our children Greg, Judy, and Verlene, our extended family, and our many friends, neighbors, and acquaintances who helped us celebrate our two special birthdays and our anniversary during 2020. We enjoyed and



Al and Karnie DeCell celebrate.

PHOTO PROVIDED

appreciated the many great cards, calls, parade of tooting horns, Facebook messages, and memories. The connections that we have with everyone have kept our spirits high, and we are making out quite well. Our sincere best wishes for great health in 2021. Love to all, Al and Karnie DeCell Weston, Vt.

Dear Editor,

Jan. 6 and 7, 2021 have been memorable days. Wednesday morning, Jan. 6 started with the convening of the 2021-2022 biennium of the Vermont State Legislature. The first action was a roll call by the Secretary of State Jim Condos. Each member was required to acknowledge their presence. I was asked to say, “This is Leslie Goldman, and I am here.” These words were more moving than I expected. Reflecting on what “I am here” meant led me to realize that “I am here” with my colleagues to serve the people of Vermont. “I am here” means I am present in this moment with awareness of the needs of those in Windham-3, as well as the needs of our environment and of our world. There was a real sense of responsibility and awe in those three words. We then nominated and elected our new speaker of the house, Representative Jill Krowinski of Burlington, who spoke eloquently on the need to “chart a course that leaves no Vermonter behind.” This is a very important aspi-

ration and an inspiring way to begin our work. Next item on the agenda was the oath of office. Once again I had no idea I would be so moved by reciting this oath. In fact, I became tearful. Making a commitment to uphold the Constitutions of Vermont and of the United States is so important – shockingly evident to me in contrast to the backdrop of all that has happened in the last four years with the members of our federal government who clearly have not lived up to their oaths. Committee assignments were then announced. I have been assigned to the Healthcare Committee, which makes sense given my background as a family nurse practitioner for 37 years. Most of our work as a representative is done in our committees where we delve deeply into issues and create legislation to solve problems. I am very excited to be working on healthcare topics, and I’m very interested to hear about your experience of healthcare especially in the time of Covid. Sadly, the day took a very dark turn with the events in Washington during the count-

ing of the electoral votes. I was so glad to see that our institutions held, the insurrection was rebuffed, and the election was certified. Gov. Scott made a powerful statement calling for the president’s resignation or removal from office, and Thursday, Jan. 7, the Vermont House supported him in a resolution condemning his actions. It was an honor and a privilege to add my name to that resolution. The full work at the House starts the week of Jan. 12. Of course, we are on Zoom, which has its own unique set of challenges. But I believe we are beginning to move through these dark times. We have cared for each other and learned a lot about what really matters. I know we will take these lessons into the future as we aim to “leave no Vermonter behind.” Please contact me at lgoldman@leg.state.vt.us or call 802-869-2989 with your questions, thoughts, and ideas. Also, you can sign up for my newsletter at my website or lgoldmanvt@gmail.com. Sincerely, Rep. Leslie Goldman Windham-3

Rockingham Library discusses Vermont’s flash floods

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Join the community conversation about Vermont’s flash floods Monday, Jan. 25 at 5:30 p.m. with Rockingham Library via Zoom. An excellent way to prepare for this program is by viewing the documentary film “Flood Bound: The Uplifting Story of Pittsfield, Vt.” Flood Bound brings the devastation Irene left behind in Vermont front and center, along with the invaluable help neighbors gave to neighbors during and after this disaster. This film is available from the Rockingham Library website, www.rockinghamlibrary.org/events/flood-bound-the-uplifting-story-of-a-small-town-facing-of-a-natural-disaster, and on YouTube. This film discussion is just one of a series of programs to consider lessons learned from natural disasters, just in time for the 10th anniversary of Tropical Storm Irene in August 2021. We will think together about Tropical Storm Irene, learn what we can from others, and consider how to prepare for another climate-related emergency in the future. Laurel Green, chair of Sustainable Rockingham, will facilitate this

discussion. To receive an invitation to this Zoom discussion, email programming@rockinghamlibrary.org or call the library at 802-463-4270. Leave your phone number and email address. Please note: This program will not screen the film “Flood Bound.” Participants are encouraged to watch the film beforehand. For those who do not have a computer, there is an alterna-

tive method of joining Zoom through a phone call. Please note that there might be a phone charge for this. A number of organizations, local and national, are sponsoring this program: American Library Association, Sustainable Rockingham, Rockingham Help & Helpers, Rockingham Conservation Commission, Saxtons River Historical Society, and Bellows Falls Historical Society.



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Visiting Nurse and Hospice virtual community webinars

WHITE RIVER JCT., Vt. – As the pandemic continues, it is important for people to feel connected and lessen the feeling of social isolation. Last fall, Visiting Nurse and Hospice for Vermont and New Hampshire began partnering with various community organizations to bring topics of interest to our community.

The series, “Let’s Talk,” has already brought several webinars to the community. These webinars focused on charitable tax breaks, dementia, and grief through the holidays. Throughout the year, VNH will continue to work with organizations to bring timely topics to the community. Some upcoming topics are substance misuse among seniors, heart

health, changes in caring for an infant, and mindful eating on a budget. To find out about upcoming webinars, visit our Facebook page www.facebook.com/VNHcare. If you are interested in viewing past webinars, please visit www.vnhcare.org/families-community/educational-presentations.

Ryan M. Gurdak, CPA PLC
Tax and Accounting Services

Ryan M. Gurdak

PO Box 27
Proctorsville, VT 05153

802-236-6852
ryan@rmgurdakcpa.com



LETTERS TO THE EDITOR: Subject to space. May be edited for clarity, grammatical errors, and libelous statements. Must be kept under 400 words. Must include name and town for publication. Viewpoints do not necessarily reflect the views of The Vermont Journal & The Shopper.

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featured pets



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Springfield Humane Society
401 Skitchewaugh Trail, Springfield, Vt.
802-885-3997
www.spfldhumane.org

sports

This & That

BY BILL MURPHY

The Vermont Journal & The Shopper

Happy New Year! I mean those words in so many ways each and every year. Here's hoping whatever wishes or resolutions you have expressed for 2021, you don't abandon – even if you have already decided to do so. It is so difficult to stay the course with our lives disrupted in all the manners it has been in the last 10 months, but show your strengths to those you love, including yourself, by jumping back on the horse to what you believe will make your year a success.

Generally this space doesn't spend any time addressing politics. Truly, it has never seemed worth it. However, the state of high school sports in Vermont is so confusing over the past month, it is tough to know which way to turn.

From the time I began to understand the local sports scene, which was probably about the mid-'60s until sometime in the '80s, the Headmasters ran high school athletics. Then one day, after they had received an incredible amount of criticism for so many years, they made a name change to the Vermont Principals Association. It was basically only a change in name; but amazingly, people for the most part became less critical and sports somehow flowed more smoothly. The transition was basically a re-branding that worked.

Move forward to the year 2020, and where do the people go to express themselves if they are frustrated with the present state of Vermont high school athletics? The honest answer is nowhere. Or more exactly, there is nowhere to really get any answers or direction.

The Vermont Principals Association does exist, and they are the governing body of high

school athletics, but the Vermont state government – the governor's office, the Vermont Department of Health, and the Office of Human Resources all have a part among possibly others – has control of whether they feel the time is right for student athletes to compete during the Covid-19 pandemic. In normal times, when there are procedures and policies permanently in place to seek out answers, there would be much more uproar. But if you tune into the Tuesday and Friday state updates and see Gov. Phil Scott and Health Commissioner Mark Lavine turning three weeks older between each conference, you realize what they are dealing with – unfortunately leaving no further time for high school athletics debate in the present. However, what I would like to see them do is coordinate a little better with the VPA's Bob Johnson before making public announcements.

On Dec. 22, when they announced high school sports could begin in four days, almost every Vermont school was about to shut down for the holiday break, custodial schedules were all set – most slated for vacation – and schools were not prepared for athletes and parents clamoring for play the day after Christmas. That caused more outrage than the four weeks the athletes had patiently waited on the sideline since being delayed from Nov. 30.

They should have just told the VPA they were ready to move to the next stage and let the organization figure out what works for the masses. Imagine the disappointment faced in some towns where those athletes thought they had received a great holiday gift and haven't even had a practice yet because the logistics couldn't be worked out.

Having said that here's letting you know where things presently stand locally.

High school sports began in earnest in some New Hampshire venues Tuesday, Jan. 12,



High school basketball teams face challenges with Covid-19. STOCK PHOTO

but no one knows where the games will end up in either state that borders the Connecticut River. All five area high school athletic directors have been prepping hard to give their student athletes the best active experience possible with what Covid-19 protocols will allow them to do. I salute all the local school leaders and school boards who are putting their hearts and souls into attempting to plot the best way forward while an invisible virus challenges such efforts. No one loves sports more than I do, but this is the first time ever I hesitate about the games going on.

Fall Mountain is the only area school with a clear direction about competition at the moment. They begin play next week on Monday when the Lady Wildcats host Newport at 5 p.m. and the same two teams will meet again on Thursday at 6 p.m. in Newport. The boys' teams from the same two schools hook up on Tuesday at 5 p.m. in Langdon and on Friday at 6 p.m. in Newport. Both schools field Unified Co-Ed Basketball teams, and they will compete on Wednesday, Jan. 20 at 3:30 p.m. in Newport. Most New Hampshire schools are playing schedules meeting the same school twice in a week to support contact-tracing and limiting athletes' outside school exposures each week.

Fall Mountain AD Gordon

Danserau says, "Most schools will not allow spectators. There will be no spectators for Fall Mountain home games. Hanover, Lebanon, Mascoma, and Sunapee also will allow no fans. Stevens is allowing two fans for each senior athlete competing for both home and away teams. Newport is allowing three fans for each Tiger senior athlete, but no away fans." It appears Vermont games will not have fans at all.

Every area team is attempting to stream their home basketball games to give the opportunity for all fans of their school an opportunity to see their games this winter. Danserau tells me Fall Mountain will use the Hudl program, and the games will run live on the school website. Danserau added that the school's boys' and girls' cross-country ski programs began their practices outside back in December and will stage their first competition at home Jan. 23 against Hanover and Lebanon. Each school will do their runs separately on the same course with the placements decided by time when everyone has completed their effort.

On the Vermont side of the river, the governor's press conference Dec. 22 announced all practices could begin with a fundamentals base and no contact beginning Dec. 26. Although this was tremendous news for the student athletes, it was a problem for the majority

of the schools throughout the state because most were in remote learning mode. Custodial staff, which is crucial in controlling Covid-19, were in either vacation mode or working very limited hours, not expecting anyone in the buildings. This created numerous conflicted situations throughout schools as they scrambled to do the best they could do to get the athletes in action as soon as they reasonably could.

Although all four Vermont area schools have begun or have scheduled their opening practices by now, it is not clear when the games will begin. Each school presently has their schedule, but the original slates called for games to begin back on Monday, and the governor's office had not allowed players to advance to the scrimmage stage as of the Tuesday, Jan. 12 press conference. Those supposedly in the know are wishing and hoping for games to begin by Jan. 25 or Feb. 1 at the latest, but everyone is in a "wait and see" stage.

Springfield AD Rich Saypack says, in his opinion "It's all about how the holiday surge plays out. We could be okay, but..." and he went silent. Cosmos basketball teams didn't begin their practices until last Friday. In their case they couldn't play a game until they complete 10 practice days or seven practice days after contact is allowed.

Another winter sport for the Cosmos will be bowling. Saypack was worried for a while, wondering if and where the team could play because the local Up Your Alley Lanes were closed, but he was able to work out an agreement for the building to open for limited hours to accommodate the program. If competition were held, it would be virtual. Dance began practicing on Monday.

Cosmo fans will have two separate places they will be able to pick up their hoopsters in action. They will be able to tune in the games on either the Cosmos Athletics Facebook page or the Cosmos Athletic YouTube channel. Saypack has

announced that the streamed games would be offered free of charge but that there would be a place for viewers to make donations.

Bellows Falls will be another school utilizing Hudl to bring the games. The school's only sport this winter will be the two basketball teams. There are two ways to pick up these games, according to Athletic Director Ian Fraunfelder. He told us Fact TV will be televising the games live. For those who aren't connected to the cable, which carries the channel in Bellows Falls, he says, "You can also access it on the Fact TV website." The Terriers began practicing Dec. 31.

Both Green Mountain and Leland & Gray had not begun practicing before this week, but the Chieftains took the floor Monday. Hopes are the Rebels can begin next Tuesday, but they still won't be practicing in their own building as the school is expected to keep its doors shut until Feb. 9. AD Marty Testo has arranged for the use of Jamaica Elementary School's multipurpose room for practices when both hoop teams take the floor next week. In the meantime, Testo and the coaches have offered on-line conditioning and in-house drills including working on shooting form sitting in a chair. If and when games do begin, Leland & Gray will also utilize Hudl and the games will be able to be found on the schools website and activities calendar.

In addition to the boys' and girls' basketball teams, Green Mountain AD Todd Parah related that the Chieftains would be providing rock climbing. Although no competition is planned in the sport at this time, opportunity for student athletes to engage will be presented. Green Mountain hopes to work with Okemo Valley TV to offer presentation of their games if the state of Vermont moves to the competition stage. Presently, all practices are emphasizing conditioning drills and fundamental skill work at all schools. No actual physical playing of the sport is allowed.



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Mark Mitchell Ken Duffy

Winter sports schedule, Jan. 14-23

MONDAY, JAN. 18 –

Girls Basketball
Newport at Fall Mountain, 6 p.m.

TUESDAY, JAN. 19 –

Boys basketball
Newport at Fall Mountain, 5 p.m.
Springfield at Mount St. Joseph, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, JAN. 21 –

Girls basketball
Fall Mountain at Newport, 6 p.m.
Green Mountain at Windsor, 7 p.m.
White River Valley at Bellows Falls, 7 p.m.

THURSDAY, JAN. 14 –

Girls basketball
Rutland at Bellows Falls, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 16 –

Boys basketball
Bellows Falls at White River Valley, 2:30 p.m.



Be ready for your next game. STOCK PHOTO

FRIDAY, JAN. 22 –

Boys basketball
Fall Mountain at Newport, 6 p.m.
Windsor at Green Mountain, 7 p.m.

Girls basketball
Mount St. Joseph at Springfield, 7 p.m.

SATURDAY, JAN. 23 –

Boys basketball
Mount Anthony at Springfield, 12 p.m.

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community

IRA and retirement plan limits for 2021

REGION – Many IRA and retirement plan limits are indexed for inflation each year. While some of the limits remain unchanged for 2021, other key numbers have increased.

IRA contribution limits

The maximum amount you can contribute to a traditional IRA or a Roth IRA in 2021 is \$6,000, which is unchanged from 2020. The maximum catch-up contribution for those age 50 or older remains \$1,000. You can contribute to both a traditional IRA and a Roth IRA in 2021, but your total contributions cannot exceed these annual limits.

Income limits for deducting traditional IRA contributions

If you are not covered by an employer retirement plan, your contributions to a traditional IRA are generally fully tax-deductible. If you're married, filing jointly, and you're not covered by an employer plan

but your spouse is, your deduction is limited if your modified adjusted gross income is between \$198,000 and \$208,000, and eliminated if your MAGI is \$208,000 or more.

For those who are covered by an employer plan, deductibility depends on your income and filing status.

If your 2021 federal income tax filing status is single or head of household, your IRA deduction is limited if your MAGI is between \$66,000 and \$76,000. Your deduction is eliminated if your MAGI is \$76,000 or more.

If your filing status is married and filing jointly, your IRA deduction is limited if your MAGI is between \$105,000 and \$125,000 combined. Your deduction is eliminated if your MAGI is \$125,000 or more combined.

If you're married but filing separately, your IRA deduction is limited if your MAGI is \$10,000 or under and is eliminated if it is more than \$10,000.

Income limits for contributing to a Roth IRA

The income limits for determining how much you can contribute to a Roth IRA have also increased.

If your filing status is single or head of household, you can contribute the full \$6,000 to a Roth IRA if your MAGI is \$125,000 or

less. If you're married and filing a joint return, you can make a full contribution if your MAGI is \$198,000 or less. Again, contributions can't exceed 100% of your earned income.

Employer retirement plan limits

Most of the significant employer retirement plan limits for 2021 remain unchanged from 2020. The maximum amount you can contribute to a 401(k) plan remains \$19,500 in 2021. This limit also applies to 403(b) and 457(b) plans, as well as the Federal Thrift Plan. If you're age 50 or older, you can also make catch-up contributions of up to \$6,500 to these plans in 2021.

The amount you can contribute to a Simple IRA or Simple 401(k) remains \$13,500 in 2021, and the catch-up limit for those age 50 or older remains \$3,000.

If you participate in more than one retirement plan, your total elective deferrals can't exceed the annual limit – \$19,500 in 2021 plus any applicable catch-up contributions. Deferrals to 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, and Simple plans are included in this aggregate limit, but deferrals to Section 457(b) plans are not. For example, if you participate in both a 403(b) plan and a 457(b) plan, you can defer the full dollar limit to each plan – a total of \$39,000 in 2021, plus any catch-up contributions.

The maximum amount that can be allocated to your account in a defined contribution plan in 2021 is \$58,000 plus age 50 or older catch-up contributions. This includes both your contributions and

your employer's contributions. Special rules apply if your employer sponsors more than one retirement plan.

Finally, the maximum amount of compensation that can be taken into account in determining benefits for most plans in 2021 is \$290,000, and the dollar threshold for determining highly compensated employees remains \$130,000, unchanged from 2020.

Article written by Huntley Financial Services. For more information, contact Mark Huntley at 888-922-1035.

REAL ESTATE/AUTOMOTIVE

Ford of Claremont acquires John C. Stewart and Son Inc.

CUTTINGSVILLE, Vt. – Christian Gomes, owner of Ford of Claremont, has announced the acquisition of John C. Stewart and Son Inc. of Cuttingsville, Vt., effective Jan. 1, 2021.

In making the announcement, Gomes noted, "We are very excited that we have added this family-owned business and that Michael Stewart will be joining the Ford of Claremont family. Mike will be a great addition to our sales department and will continue to service

the customers that John C. Stewart and Sons represented for over 105 years. Although the dealership in Cuttingsville will no longer be open, Stewart will be available at Ford of Claremont and can be reached directly at 802-353-8304."

In making the decision to acquire the dealership, Gomes was particularly impressed that it was a family-run business. Ford of Claremont is also a family-run enterprise, which made the decision easier for both families.

"Deciding to sell was a tough decision," Stewart

shared. "Selling to another family business made it much easier for our family and Ford of Claremont had the atmosphere and commitment to customers that was important to us. I'm excited to be part of Ford of Claremont and I am impressed with the way Christian and his team have established Ford of Claremont into the community and the region. In addition to having an extensive inventory available, their service department is top shelf with customer satisfaction its primary goal."

Fraud Watch Network: Current scams

REGION – As usual, December was an active month for scammers. Scam charities looking for "donations" seem to multiply in numbers. Scam pet adoptions, scam gifting, scam job offers, scam investments. With the holiday now in the past, it is not the time to let down your guard.

On average I receive between 5 and 10 email questions or scam reports each week. During the month of December, that number has jumped to between 8 to 12 a week, and here are some of the issues that are very current.

Home Improvement or Maintenance

Several readers contacted me about roving "contractors" who offered to plow driveways or shovel roofs. In one situation, elderly residents were approached about clearing snow from their roof. When the job was complete, the bill was \$900 – maybe a fair price for a roof the size of a football field. In such situations, some may consider this to be price goug-

ing while others see it as a scam.

Regardless, it is a situation that calls for some clear steps. Unless there is an emergency situation, step back and consider your options. Predators will attempt to create crisis and overstate the problem in order to frighten the potential victim. An overhang of snow becomes a sign of imminent roof collapse; an ice or snow-covered driveway becomes an injury and lawsuit waiting to happen. This is the stuff of scams!

Before committing to any work, ask for an estimate on the cost. Request local references to verify fair pricing and work quality. Also, don't let anyone work on your property unless they can provide written proof of insurance with respect to the work and liability.

Finally, you may want to check with whether the business is registered with the state. If you feel you have been scammed, gouged, or victimized, report the situation to the Attorney General's office and to local law enforcement if a crime was committed. In situations like

this, restitution is more likely as the perpetrators tend to be more local.

Electrical Power Shutoff

There has been a marked increase in scam telephone calls notifying intended victims that electrical service will be shut off "at midnight" if a delinquent bill is not paid. Rest assured, state law prevents this from happening unless utility companies follow a strict set of rules involving time periods and written notices governing this kind of action. Another sure giveaway that this is a scam comes when the offer is made to take payment in the form of gift cards. Utility companies do not accept iTunes cards in payment!

The Fake Invoice Scam

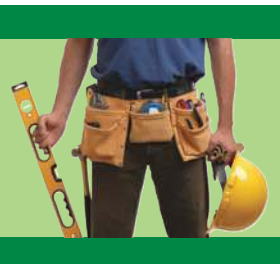
The intended victim receives a statement in the mail or by email for an item purchased online. The "invoice" looks authentic, including product name and stock number, price, date ordered, and shipping date. There is also a phone number to contact the company if necessary. In one case, the following appeared on the invoice: "Your account has been debited with \$799.99

and the charges might reflect within 48 hours. For any query or assistance please reach out to us @ +1 (555) 555-1234." Note the grammar. A call to the number has the intended victim informed that the order can be canceled by simply providing a credit card number to reverse the charge. The criminal seeks to obtain the credit card number, expiration date, and security code and then use the card for purchases. Ignore the invoice and report the incident to your Attorney General's consumer office.

The common thread in these examples is creating a sense of panic on the part of the likely victim. Panic, an emotional response, can cause individuals to act without thinking or using common sense – exactly what the criminal desires. Stepping back, thinking, verifying, and consulting others in whom you trust can steer you clear of the traps.

AARP Fraud Watch is offering a series of programs on a variety of topics from mid-January through mid-March. For a complete list of topics and times or for comments and questions, please contact Elliott Greenblott at egreenblott@aarp.org.

Elliott Greenblott is a retired educator and coordinator of the AARP Vermont Fraud Watch Network. He hosts a CATV program, Mr. Scammer, distributed by GNAT-TV in Sunderland, Vt.



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Lori Muse,
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This home has seen many upgrades including siding, windows, decking/stairs/railings, paved driveway and much more. Designed originally to be a home with in-law apartment, the property is currently being utilized as a single family. First floor includes a full/functional kitchen, newer 3/4 bath, 2 bedrooms, laundry/storage room, living/dining combination. Upstairs offers family room, four more bedrooms, pantry area and full bath. Both levels offer access to a covered porch with views overlooking the town and storage rooms. Detached shed for added storage. Situated on close to a half acre within walking distance to amenities. **\$110,000**

Cottage with acreage! This property has much to offer. The cottage offers a rustic interior with open concept living space, 2 bedrooms plus a loft area and a front porch. The 26+/- acres is mostly wooded and could potentially be subdivided. Located in Weathersfield a short distance to paved roads, close to trails and recreation. **\$220,000**

Located near Route 11 West in Windham, This Saltbox Style home is situated on 2.34+/- acres with long road frontage and Williams River Branch to the rear one gets the sense of accessible privacy. The home has been well cared for inside and out, bright interior includes a heated mudroom/entry, spacious functional country kitchen, formal dining room, Large living room, first floor office/bedroom and a full bath. Upstairs offers two large bedrooms, full bath and a walk-in hall closet. Large useable full basement, attached garage with overhead storage. A nice level yard with beautiful stone fireplace/sitting area with close proximity to outdoor activities and points of interest. **\$299,900**

Located on the outside corner of an established North Springfield neighborhood, this lovely two bedroom ranch style home is a charmer. A good sized eat-in kitchen, formal dining room, spacious/sunny living room and full bath. Executive layout gives it character with beautiful hardwood floors, archways and built-ins. The walk-out basement has high ceilings and offers great storage space. Breezeway connects to an oversized one car garage. Nice level side yard. Just **\$129,900.**

outdoor

A successful year for Vermont deer hunters

MONTPELIER, Vt. – Final deer harvest numbers will not be available for a few more weeks, but the Vermont Fish & Wildlife Department says the final tally will be around 18,000 deer, the second highest total since 2000. Those deer will provide approximately 3.6 million servings of local, nutritious venison.

The archery season harvest, which will be close to 5,800 deer, will be a new all-time record for that season. Several changes to archery hunting regulations took effect in 2020, including a longer season, allowing the use of crossbows by all archery hunters and an increased bag limit.

These changes were intended to increase archery participation and the harvest. However, some of the increase was likely due to a spike in participation related to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Hunters weren't quite as successful during the regular firearm and muzzleloader seasons,



Nick Mayer of Lincoln, Vt., with the 190-pound, 14-point buck he took in Addison County in 2020.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY NICK MAYER

but final harvest numbers for those seasons will be close to or above average for the past 10 years.

"Fewer bucks were harvested than in the previous four years, but the final number will be near or above the 10-year average of 8,857," said Nick Fortin, the department's deer project

leader.

"Hunting conditions were challenging this year. Weather conditions, food availability, and possibly other factors limited deer movement in November and December and made it difficult for hunters to locate deer. The new one buck annual limit likely also contributed to the lower buck harvest."

The primary goal of Vermont's deer management strategy is to keep the deer herd stable, healthy, and in balance with available habitat. "Maintaining an appropriate number of deer on the landscape ensures deer and the habitats that support them remain in good condition and productive," said Fortin.

The 2020 White-tailed Deer Harvest Report with final numbers will be on Fish & Wildlife's website in early March. Beginning in late March, department biologists will be holding informational hearings to share biological information and to listen to any information people wish to share.

Hunters take 6,136 turkeys in Vermont in 2020

MONTPELIER, Vt. – A preliminary report from Vermont Fish & Wildlife shows that hunters brought home 6,136 wild turkeys during 2020, including 627 turkeys taken during the April youth weekend hunt, a total of 4,791 gobblers taken during the regular spring season, and 718 birds during the fall.

"Although 2020 will undoubtedly be remembered as the year of many challenges, at least one thing remained the same – Vermont hunters took to the woods to enjoy some restorative time afield and were again rewarded for their efforts," said Vermont Fish & Wildlife turkey biologist Chris Bernier. "Second only to 2010, a near record number of turkey licenses were sold during 2020, resulting in an impressive turkey harvest that closely tracked the average harvest reported over the past 10 years."

Hunter success rates remained high with 20% of resident hunters taking birds during the spring hunt, and 32% of those successful hunters taking a second bearded bird. Youth hunters also enjoyed a remarkable 29% success rate during the April youth weekend season.

"The 6,136 turkeys represent an estimated 140,000 servings of locally sourced, free-range, wild turkey meat as well as countless memories and an enduring connection to the land," added Bernier.

Turkeys were hunted statewide and were harvested in 241 of Vermont's 255 towns. The northern Lake Champlain Valley and the Connecticut River Valley continued to be productive regions for turkey hunters with the highest harvests again recorded in these parts of the state.

"Vermont's long history of careful and considerate management of wild turkeys has positioned us to maximize the benefits we all receive from this remarkable bird. Beyond the simple enjoyment and sustenance people get from watching and hunting wild turkeys, these birds play a critical role in the environment as an important prey item and influence the populations of many other species."

Conservation of wild turkey

habitat continues to play a key role in the health and vitality of their population. Bernier notes that a patchwork of fields and forests provide most of what a turkey needs to survive. He says the efforts to protect and manage habitat by private landowners and volunteer-based conservation groups like the National Wild Turkey Federation help ensure Vermont has a sustainable and abundant wild turkey population for the future.

Everyone can help support conservation and good habitat for wild turkeys and other wildlife on state Wildlife Management Areas by purchasing the 2021 Vermont Habitat Stamp at www.vtfishandwildlife.com.

“What’s happening under all that snow?”

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – On Monday, Jan. 25, 2021 at 7 p.m. the Londonderry Conservation Commission invites you to “What’s Happening On (and Under) All That Snow?” – a virtual presentation with wildlife biologist Tom Rogers from the Nature Conservancy. Rogers will lead us through a photographic journey of winter

in the Green Mountain State, immediately followed by a question and answer session.

We'll answer: How does Vermont's wildlife make it through our cold, snowy winters? What's going on under all that snow? How is climate change affecting all of this? And, what can we do to help wildlife make it through the winter?

To register for this Zoom pro-

gram, go to www.tinyurl.com/Zoom-LCC where you'll find complete instructions for joining by computer or telephone.

If you would like to be added to this mailing list, please email andie.fusco@gmail.com. If you missed a recent presentation, we have recordings on our YouTube channel, “Londonderry Vermont Conservation Commission.”

CCCD accepting orders for 2021 Conservation Plant Sale

WALPOLE, N.H. – The Cheshire County Conservation District is currently accepting orders for its annual Conservation Plant Sale. This year the district continues their partnership with Fedco of Maine to bring you a wide range of top-quality plants and Wichland Woods to bring you locally grown mushrooms. Order deadline is Feb. 26, 2021.

Continuing again in 2021, customers are invited to choose from plants listed in the Fedco “Trees, Shrubs & Perennials” catalog only. Please note that seed orders are not a part of this plant sale. Many of the plant species offered are native, attractive to pollinators, and drought resistant. For this reason, they are healthy, hardy plants adapted to our local growing conditions and beneficial to both the grower and wildlife. Once established they require less watering, fertilizers, and pesticides, saving you time and money.

To view the Trees, Shrubs, & Perennials catalog and print order forms, visit the CCCD website at www.cheshireconservation.org/plant-and-seed-sales. Please order early to avoid out-of-stock items. The longer you wait to submit your order form, the more likely it is your plants will be out of stock. Prior to submitting your order, please review an up-to-date list of out-of-stock items online at www.fedcoseeds.com/trees/avail-

ability.

All orders and payment must be received by the Conservation District no later than Feb. 26, 2021. Checks should be made out to “CCCD” and mailed to 11 Industrial Park Dr., Walpole, NH 03608. Hard copy catalogs available upon request. Socially distanced Plant Sale Pick-Up Day is scheduled for Saturday, April 24, 2021 at Alyson's Orchard in Walpole. Please contact the CCCD if you anticipate needing an alternate

pick-up option.

All proceeds of the plant sale help to cover operating costs of the CCCD and will benefit conservation efforts in Cheshire County. Thus, in addition to improving your landscape, you are helping fund conservation projects in your local community. For more information and to receive order forms or hard copy catalogs, contact the Conservation District office at 603-756-2988 ext. 3011 or email lola@cheshireconservation.org.

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<u>Okemo Mountain Resort</u>	13 / 20	24"	0" (1/12)
<u>Stratton Mountain</u>	9 / 11	15"	0" (1/12)
<u>Sugarbush</u>	9 / 16	48"	0" (1/12)

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JAN. 15 –
BRATTLEBORO, Vt. – Hooker-Dunham and Rock River Players present SOLOs "Episode 3: From Paradise to Hell on Earth," a video montage of monologue and songs, Friday, Jan. 15 at 7:30 p.m. Filmed by Brattleboro Community Television, this premieres simultaneously on BCTV and on YouTube. For information, email info@hookerdunham.com or info@rockriverplayers.org.

JAN. 18 –
CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – The

Charlestown Senior Center is having a mask sale Jan. 18, from 9 a.m.-1 p.m. We have adult and children's masks. All proceeds go to benefit the Charlestown Senior Center.

JAN. 19 –
LONDONDERRY, Vt. – Esther Fishman, recycling coordinator for the Londonderry Solid Waste Group, will join Neighborhood Connections Tuesday, Jan. 19 at 3 p.m. for a Zoom talk on expressing yourself through collage. During this hour-

long workshop, Esther will demonstrate her technique using bits of material such as birch bark, cornhusks, and colored, textured papers. The medley results in an assemblage that represents a stunning landscape or pleasing abstract montage. Call 802-824-4343 if you would like to register for this event.

JAN. 26 –
REGION – AARP Vermont is offering a series of free virtual presentations on consumer fraud. On Jan. 26 is "The

Weapons of Fraud: Anatomy of the Crime," an overview of the leading scams, techniques of con artists, and discussion of the steps to take to avoid victimization. Presentations are offered at 10 a.m. and 7 p.m. Pre-registration is required. Contact Elliott Greenblott, AARP Vermont Fraud Watch Coordinator, at egreenblott@aarp.org.

TUESDAYS –
BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Come check out TOPS – Take Off Pounds Sensibly. We are a

nonjudgmental, affordable, and supportive weight loss group. The first visit is free. We are taking Covid-19 precautions so a mask is required while attending the meeting. All are welcome; youth must be at least 9 to attend and have parental permission. Meetings are every Tuesday at St. Charles Education Center located at 39 Green St. in Bellows Falls. Weigh-ins start at 6 p.m. Handicap accessible.

WEDNESDAYS –
BRATTLEBORO, Vt. – Advanced

directives: Where do I find the forms? Who should be named as my healthcare agent? Who do I give the completed form to? How do I talk with my family about my healthcare wishes if I'm unable to speak for myself? Every Wednesday at 10 a.m., Taking Steps Brattleboro is offering Advanced Care Planning informational meetings via Zoom. To receive the Zoom invitation, call Dan Freeman at 802-257-0775 ext. 101 or email don.freeman@brattleborohospice.org.

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