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BF Atkinson and School Street traffic study

BY JOE MILLIKEN
The Shopper

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – In order to improve pedestrian and student safety at the intersection of Atkinson Street and School Street in Bellows Falls, several interested parties recently participated in a meeting to discuss potential solutions, including members of the town selectboard and school district, the Windham Regional Commission, and the Bellows Falls Downtown Development Alliance.

Several potential recommendations to improve the conditions included additional flashing lights, overhead signs, speed bumps, even a roundabout. The study is currently being led by Cierra Ford, a transportation planner with the South Burlington engineering firm Vanasse Hangen Brustlin Inc. (VHB).

“I am leading the intersection scoping study project at the Atkinson Street/School Street intersection in Bellows Falls,” Ford said in a recent interview. “We had an alternatives presentation meeting last week, where we discussed a suite of options to improve safety and mobility at the intersection.”

Ford has already indicated that a roundabout would probably be out of the question for multiple reasons; there is not enough space at the location, a roundabout would affect historical properties in multiple areas, and, in the end, would not effectively improve overall pedestrian safety.

“The intersection is heavily used by foot traffic, especially for school children, being located between two local schools and in a dense residential area. The safety concerns seem to derive from a lack of visibility at the intersection.”

It has been suggested that one of the biggest concerns with the intersection is that not all motorists come to a complete stop at the intersection, as well as the need for additional lighting at night as to increase visibility. With these and additional factors in mind, Ford is coming up with various recommendations, with the next public meeting

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Springfield talks Cheshire Bridge Project

BY PAULA BENSON
The Shopper

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Selectboard heard from Springfield Housing Authority executive director Laura Ryan during the first of two public hearings held on Monday night, Feb. 12. Ryan reported on the replacement of the ventilation system at the Huber Building at 80 Main Street, a nearly completed, grant-funded project.

The town had received \$525,000 in funds from the state under the Vermont Community Development Program (VCDP), and were required to hold two public hearings informing residents of how the money was spent.

“After 50 years without a ventilation system, we now have an efficient system

with improved air quality,” Ryan stated. The project was nearly 100% covered by the VCDP program.

The second public hearing was in regards to the proposed rewording of an ordinance concerning non-motorized vehicles on town streets. This revision would permit people who wish to use skates or scooters as transportation to do so.

The board received no public opposition, or even much discussion, on either hearing item. The revision to the Non-Motorized Transportation Ordinance was unanimously approved by the board.

Board Chair Kristi Morris called the regular selectboard meeting to order, starting as always with the Pledge of Allegiance.

The Cheshire Bridge, or “Toll Bridge,” Project was introduced to the board by David Scott, the in-house

design chief of the Bureau of Bridge Design for the New Hampshire Department of Transportation.

Hardesty and Hanover project manager Kim Smith took the board through a detailed presentation of the project, targeting deteriorated and corroded sections of the bridge, and including repairs, replacement of faulty sections, and painting. Originally built in 1930, the bridge is a section of Route 11, crossing the Connecticut River between Springfield, Vt., and Charlestown, N.H. Smith reported that the bridge received “some rehab” in 1992, and was part of a bridge preservation project in 2015 that replaced the deck expansion joints.

Senior highway engineer Stephanie Micucci reviewed the traffic control plan, which will span 34 weeks of

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New owners at New England Outdoor Furnaces put family first

BY PAULA BENSON
The Shopper

NEWPORT, N.H. – Matthew and Sarah Pikus are finding the hands-on learning experience of being new business owners intriguing, especially since the company’s product was completely unfamiliar to the couple until recently.

The Pikus family moved from Minnesota to Vermont in 2020, and last year made the decision to purchase New England Outdoor Furnaces, a business based in Newport, N.H., selling Central Boiler outdoor furnaces. The inspiration first came to Matthew when he passed the company’s sign and thought, “What the heck is an outdoor furnace?”

Sarah relayed that she and Matthew are avid home improvers, “DIY-ers” who are always going back and forth to Home Depot for one project or another. It was on one of those trips that Matthew saw the sign and decided to further investigate.

“Matthew is very into energy efficiency,” Sarah explained. “So, learning about outdoor boilers was right up his alley.”

It was last May when they met with the former owners, and were trying to figure out how to make the deal work, but someone else was interested, and the business went under contract. “We thought, ‘well, it was a fun idea while it lasted,’” Sarah said.

When that contract fell through, the Pikuses were given a second chance.

“When we heard the news, we really felt that we were meant for this life,” Sarah remarked.

They needed to be financially creative, and consider



New owners of New England Outdoor Furnaces Sarah and Matthew Pikus, with office assistant Ellen. PHOTO BY DANIELLE GOODWIN

their family’s needs before signing, but ultimately felt motivated to take on the new challenge.

As the father of four young daughters between ages 1 ½ and 7, Matthew noted, “It pays to be efficient when you can be.” His economical approach to supporting his family and leading a more sustainable lifestyle easily translated to the promotion of outdoor furnaces.

“I believe in the product,” he stated. “They are over 90% efficient, clean, easy to run, and conserve fuel. In Vermont and New Hampshire, wood is local and abundant, and many people have the ability to cut their own. In a relatively short amount of time, the boiler pays for itself.”

With the rising cost and finite supply of fossil fuels, a wood-burning, outdoor central boiler with the capacity to heat an entire house, garage, barn, workshop, and pool, can save the household a lot of money. “And the nice thing is,” adds Matthew, “unlike an indoor fireplace or woodstove, the wood and mess stay outside.”

Sarah explained that the

boilers are designed to dry out the wood using “Fireball technology,” a swirling vortex of smoke and gas that creates a centralized flame, which burns about half the amount of wood as traditional woodstoves. “For instance,” Sarah detailed, “if you normally use seven cords of wood per winter, you might use three instead.”

The Pikuses want to expand the business within the community, and find ways to give back. Installation of the boilers needs to happen during the warmer months, when the ground isn’t frozen, and Matthew said he plans to host some community events this spring and summer to create awareness and educate people about the product.

“The units are between 1,500-3,000 pounds,” Matthew pointed out. “So, we won’t be taking them on the road.” But the Pikuses would like to spread the word about this renewable source of heating a home, which many people have never heard of or considered.

Sixth graders explore nature in Bellows Falls

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – During a busy morning at Bellows Falls Middle School, a group of sixth-grade students, led by science and social studies teacher Josh Ferenc, set off on an outdoor field study. Ferenc, full of enthusiasm for nature-based education, welcomed the opportunity to add observers to the exploration.

Walking to the Riverfront Park, students wondered out loud if they would also be going into the woods today, or down to the river, other areas of green space that are part of science studies for Ferenc’s sixth graders.

“The benefit is amazing – some of our students may only explore outside when they are in my class. One of my goals is to ensure they are comfortable in nature; they know how to engage not just in playing outside, but in learning outside. They can be in nature safely and with boundaries, but with space to learn with independence and curiosity.”

The organized chaos and “playful with a purpose” approach seems a hallmark with Ferenc as he guides students through his expectations without hovering over them.

In a district known for its integration of nature-based learning, Ferenc explained how the Middle School has been accessing natural spaces. “In Bellows Falls, we have to search out natural spaces – you couldn’t call us ‘urban’ but it does physically take longer to access green spaces close to our school site, which is different than some of the other schools in our district.” And despite time



Sixth grade students explore Riverfront Park in Bellows Falls. PHOTO PROVIDED

limitations, it is well worth it. “For those students who struggle with behavior, some time in a new atmosphere with new ways to connect with the curriculum is needed,” Ferenc explains, as it can reduce stress and allow students to reengage back in their classrooms. For students who are already highly engaged, it’s a new way to stretch their learning muscles beyond the classroom lessons.

With help from teaching colleague Cristal Farnsworth, and through coursework provided through the Wilderness Institute, Ferenc has developed a science curriculum that builds in Vermont-based connection, and leads students through a process of “engage, explore, elaborate, and evaluate.” Today’s field study would translate into classroom lessons on bird identification, vocabulary expansion, and reflective journaling.

Ferenc likes to remind his students that they live in a special place with so many opportunities for biological and ecological studies, and while they don’t have the grandeur of Montana, they do have the Connecticut River. “It serves as a superhighway for migrating geese;

our students can study along its banks; they can do water studies in the spring. They are learning about the wider world, but in their backyard.”

Outdoor activities like building life-sized shelters, inspired by the curriculum’s reading of “Hatchet,” by Gary Paulsen, exemplify the school’s cross-curricular approach to teaching and learning at the middle school. In the book, the main character creates a shelter from the elements. After reading the book, students reexamined the detailed passages about how Brian made the shelter, and then had the opportunity to do the same. The investment that the sixth grade teaching team has made to create outdoor opportunities for learning, and to connect across all the subject areas, is what makes teaching and learning meaningful and engaging for students.

And as encouragement to other teachers to continue the momentum of nature-based educational opportunities, and in an ode to “don’t overthink it,” Ferenc says. It can be done without a lot of fuss, to help students connect with and learn from their community and the natural world, one outdoor adventure at a time.

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Introduction to Town Meeting in Rockingham

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – “Introduction to Town Meeting: How to Participate” is a public education event to be held Saturday, Feb. 24, from 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., at the Rockingham Library second floor meeting room.

The key steps for taking part in this aspect of our local government will be explained. Representatives

from the branches of town government will take part, and there will be time for questions and answers.

To spice it up, we will present a nonbinding mock article to be decided by the people present. “Introduction to Town Meeting: How to Participate” is open to any interested person. You do not have to be a registered voter,

or even of voting age, to have your say on the mock article.

The actual Rockingham Town Meeting will take place on Monday, March 4, at the Bellows Falls Opera House Main Theatre, beginning at 7 p.m. You must be a registered voter to participate – see the town clerk.

Learn about AI at Springfield Library

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – What do you know about artificial intelligence (AI)? What do you want to know? Join us on Thursday, Feb. 22, at 6 p.m., for an exciting and thought-provoking event called “Artificial Intelligence: Good? Bad? Let’s Play.” This program will take place on the second floor of Springfield Town Library.

Kristen Wilson, informa-

tion technology instructor at River Valley Technical Center, will help us better understand artificial intelligence and its impact on our lives. Is AI a force for good, or does it pose potential risks? Explore hands-on activities that will shed light on the various aspects of AI. Together, let’s unravel the mysteries and discover some of the potential of this rapidly evolving field.

Seating is limited. Sign up as soon as possible at www.bit.ly/3uArt-Intel, or by calling the library at 802-885-3108. A waitlist will be enabled if it fills. Please call us if you find you cannot make it once you have registered.

STUDY

From Page 1

slated for the spring, before the recommendations are presented to the Rockingham Selectboard.

“The public had a favorable response to installing ‘bump outs’ at the intersection to provide traffic calming, restrict the width of the crossing of U.S. Route 5 for pedestrians, and increase visibility. The next step is to pursue the preferred alternative that came out of this meeting, and present it at another public meeting for another round of feedback in the spring.”

Kurn Hattin receives Keene Lions Club grant

WESTMINSTER, Vt. – The Keene Lions Club has awarded New England Kurn Hattin Homes for Children a \$500 grant to support the installation of new flooring on the main level of the Mayo Memorial Center, the Homes’ academic building.

According to facilities director Adam Hallock, “The high volume of foot traffic in the school build-

ing has caused the current flooring to wear down over the years. Replacing the existing floor with high-quality, durable materials before it becomes a safety issue is our number one priority.”

The Keene Lions Club grant will contribute greatly to the costs of flooring materials and professional installation services. This facility improvement will also enhance the aesthetic appeal

of the school, and create a welcoming environment for students, staff, and all visitors.

The Keene Lions Club is dedicated to supporting local initiatives that positively impact the community. By investing in this facility improvement project, they are directly contributing to the future success of the children who live and learn at Kurn Hattin Homes.

Make Tracks for Health at Grace Cottage

TOWNSHEND, Vt. – Enjoy the beauty and joy of winter, while helping

Grace Cottage Family Health and Hospital in its mission to provide vital health care to our communities. Grace Cottage will host its first annual Make Tracks for Health event at the Stratton Resort’s Nordic

Center on Saturday, March 2, from 1-3 p.m.

Participants can choose to snowshoe or cross-country ski on the Nordic Center’s beautifully groomed trails. Rental equipment is available for an additional charge by advance registration. Afterward, reward yourself with treats by the fire. It’s sure to be fun for

the whole family.

Make Tracks for Health is sponsored in part by Stratton Resort, Solstice at Stratton, Rawsonville Market, and Von Barga’s Jewellery.

To sign up, visit www.gracecottage.org/events. For more information, email info@gracecottage.org, or call 802-365-9109.

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conservation organizations to avoid disturbing aquatic plants and other species.

Additionally, after the completion of the archaeological survey, it was determined that the Cheshire Toll Bridge is eligible for listing on the National Register of Historic Places.

Construction is scheduled to begin in spring 2025, with an estimated construction cost of \$6.26 million.

“New Hampshire and Vermont share almost every bridge, but this bridge is 100% owned by New Hampshire,” Scott said, prompting a small cheer from Morris.

Sue Skaskiw with the Vermont Volunteer Services for

Animals was at the meeting to attain a permit to hold their annual rabies vaccinations clinic on March 2, in the parking lot of the Riverside Middle School. The board approved the request, and Skaskiw mentioned the event could use more volunteers.

Prior to adjourning the nearly three-hour meeting, the board welcomed Alexander Moreau, a cameraman new to SAPA TV who was covering the meeting for the first time.

Moreau asked, “Are the meetings always this long?”

Board member Michael Martin responded, “No, usually they’re longer!”

The remark elicited laughter from the room.

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Building a sod house

BY RON PATCH

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Last week I wrote about a Bank of True Love valentine from Marjorie Boynton Cross. Below are the sod house and Bondville blizzard letters I mentioned.

Sod house

“Sargent, Custer County, Neb. May 3, 1885

“You wonder how a house can be built of sod. The ground here in places is covered very thickly with a coarse grass and the soil which is a black clay is filled with roots which make it very tough – there is no gravel or stones in it. They break it about 4 inches thick and 14 or 16 inches wide then cut with a spade about 2 feet or more in length.

“The door and window frames are made and set up the same as for a brick house and then the sods laid up around them as they lay up brick – breaking joints and filling in all the spaces with

dry dirt. The walls are usually anywhere from 26 to 30 inches in thickness then the roof is made in a different way. Ours is covered with boards then tarred paper and a thin layer of sod over that which makes it warm in the winter and keeps from freezing and on account of the thickness of the walls and the sod on the roof it keeps cool in the summer.

“Then the inside they plaster over with a white clay taken out of the hills here and when done you could not tell inside the house that it was built of sod. Ours is not plastered yet but we have the inside lined with newspapers so you cannot see the sod. Some plaster their house over the outside and then white wash it so one could not tell there was any sod about it.

“They are by no means handsome and I guess would look funny to you, the dirt is so black that they all look nearly black and

everybody’s house is the same color and also their stables, graineries and hen houses. In town at Sargent the houses are all frame houses and some quite respectable ones – nice little cottages. We are so far from the RR that lumber is very high and it is quite an advantage that the sod is suitable for building as otherwise people could not afford to settle here and build at all.

“Now I will tell you about our fuel. At present we are burning corn stalks principally. The corn is husked in the field and then the cattle run in and eat off the leaves and husks which leave the stalks nearly all bare. They are so dry that they burn well but it keeps one busy with stove stuffing them in. A stove full will not last more than 5 minutes so it takes a good deal of time to tend the fire. We shall burn cobs usually but have to get along the best we can this year. In the winter we burnt a good

deal of corn and if we have a good season we hope to raise plenty of our own to burn next winter and not have to buy. It is as cheap to burn corn as to buy coal.”

Bondville blizzard

“Bondville March 28, 1888

“My Dear Sister
“Do you think I am never going to write again, well we have been snowed in but the mails run again now. Oh dear what a winter we have had.

“I never saw so much snow before, I mean in one winter but it does seem as though it must be warmer soon but it will take a long



Sod schoolhouse in Norton County Kansas, circa 1880s. PHOTO BY RON PATCH

time for all of this snow to go off.

“I mean to come over and see you next summer if I have to come alone, so you may look for me if the snow ever does go off. Harriet has not been down here for ever so long, she and Cephas and Maude and her little girl got snowed

down here and had to stay a few days. Before the big storm of March 12 & 13 we were not quite covered but now some of our windows are all covered and we can not see over the drift at the front door.”

This week’s old saying: “Temptation calling.”

SEVCA’s VITA income tax return preparation

WESTMINSTER, Vt. – Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA) is once again offering free tax assistance via the Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA). This year, in-person services will be provided at eight locations in Windsor and Windham counties. New and revived VITA locations include sites at the Old Firehouse in Wilmington, the Winston Prouty campus in Brattleboro, the Springfield Town Library, the Ludlow Community Center, Townshend Town Hall, and St. Paul’s Episcopal Church in White River Junction. Appointments and drop-off services can also be found at SEVCA’s main office in Westminster, the Spring-

field Library, and the Windsor Resource Center.

SEVCA’s efforts are led by Emily Strasser, VITA program coordinator, who was a VITA volunteer last year when all the returns were prepared remotely. “I am glad we are able to return to meeting with people in person, and that we can do it in new locations that make it easy for people to find us. It is important to me that everyone understands their taxes and then can make informed decisions about things like how much is being withheld from each paycheck. For some people, this is an easy way to save up a large amount of money – but for others they could be taking home more money on payday.”

In-person services are preferred by people using VITA, and are preferred by volunteer preparers. Strasser reports, “Most people are interested in learning about their taxes, and for the volunteers this educational process is so rewarding. It is a lot easier to do this when working together on a return.” VITA services are available to people who generally make \$64,000 or less; persons with disabilities; and limited English-speaking taxpayers.

“I’m thrilled that we’re able to offer in-person services again, and that we’re expanding the number of VITA locations. We want to make this program as easy for people to access as possible,” reported newly appointed SEVCA executive director Joshua Davis. “Emily has done a tremendous job getting us ready to support as many people as possible, maximizing their tax return through the VITA program.”

VITA volunteers come from all backgrounds and undergo a comprehensive training program. Tax preparers must pass annual certifying exams to prove their understanding of relevant tax laws and proficiency of e-filing and tax preparation methods using IRS-approved software.

If you are interested in having your taxes prepared by a VITA volunteer, more information about VITA locations and how to make an appointment can be found at www.sevca.org, or call our direct line to the VITA program at 802-428-3032.

TDS Telecom local fiber upgrades

REGION – TDS Telecommunications LLC (TDS) has completed fiber upgrades in several Vermont communities to bring lightning-fast internet connections to more residents and businesses.

Speeds up to eight gig are now available in communities including Baltimore, Cavendish, Ludlow, Perkinsville, Plymouth, Weathersfield, Northfield, and Roxbury. The upgrades are the result of an expansion of fiber internet services – known as the “gold standard” of residential connections – to about 7,700 addresses in Vermont.

“This private investment of millions of dollars is bringing better connections for residents and businesses. As a longtime provider of telecommunications services in Vermont, we’re excited this future-proof technology will continue serving our communities for years to come,” said Drew Petersen, TDS senior vice president of corporate affairs.

With speeds up to eight gig, files of any size can be uploaded or downloaded nearly instantly. For businesses, TDS offers dedicated connections up to 10 gig.

TDS has done business in Vermont since 1970. In addition to private investment, TDS leveraged Alternative Connect America (ACAM) funds to expand and improve broadband service in rural areas.

For more information, including how to sign up for service, visit www.tds telecom.com/local/vermont.html.

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Water bill assistance program ending

REGION – Do you need help paying an overdue water or sewer bill? The Low Income Household Water Assistance Program (LIHWAP) can help. Eligible households have until March 15 to apply.

The LIHWAP program pays for overdue water and/or sewer bills, including back charges and fees associated with the outstanding balance. In addition, the program may be able to provide a one-time future payment. Payments are made directly to your water/sewer provider.

To be eligible, you must be a customer of a public drinking water and/or wastewater utility. In addition, gross household income must be below 60% of the state median income based on household size. For a household of four, this would be \$66,396.

Renters are eligible for this program.

To apply, mail the application and your current water/sewer bill to Economic Services Division, Application & Document Processing Center, 280 State Drive, Waterbury, VT 05671. The application can be found at www.dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/hwa, or by calling 800-339-6433.

This program is administered by the Vermont Department of Children and Families (DCF) using funding provided by the federal government during the Covid pandemic. So far, the program has paid over half a million dollars in water

and sewer bills, and there are still funds remaining. However, all funds must be spent by the end of March, or they will be returned to the federal government.

The application deadline is March 15, 2024. Find more information about the program at www.dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/hwa, or call 800-339-6433.

The Vermont Rural Water Association is a non-profit that supports public drinking water and wastewater systems, and promotes public health and clean water protection through technical assistance, training, advocacy, and outreach.

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<p>2016 Kia Sedona Minivan Leather Fully Loaded</p>	<p>2017 Infinity QX-60 AWD Fully Loaded Leather</p>

opinion

CHURCH SERVICES

Dear Editor,

Over this first weekend in February, I came across an article in the Rutland Herald written by Mr. Ben Koenig of Plainfield, Vt., concerning Dorothy Canfield Fisher, and how the Vermont Department of Libraries had removed Ms. Fisher's name from a long-standing award presented for years in her name. The Dorothy Canfield Fisher Children's Book Award was a mainstay in recognizing authors and their contribution to children's literature for over 60 years.

Mr. Koenig appropriately points out in his article that someone like Fisher, who contributed so much in the literary field, should not be stripped of her recognition. True, Ms. Fisher may have some peripheral association with the Vermont Eugenics Movement, and her writings may have used some language that was acceptable in her day, but it does not mean that a lifelong contribution to the literary world should be torn down. Too often, people want to go back and rewrite history, but history is history; we cannot change it. However, we can learn from history and how people talked, acted, and carried on in their lives in those times. We can ensure that things done in the past do not happen again. That being said, if you go online, you can read Mr. Koenig's article that I found in the Rutland Herald and the Barre Times Argus. I think you will find

it most interesting. Mr. Koenig's article supports this worthy author. Anyone with a little curiosity can Google Dorothy Canfield Fisher and find several articles concerning her life, and the Vermont Department of Libraries' belief that her name is no longer relevant to young people. If we did not see George Washington on the \$1 bill, or hear about Ethan Allan, would their names no longer be relevant? Now it is time for the Vermont Department of Libraries to do the right thing: restore Fisher's name to the award, recognize the modern authors who contribute significantly to children's literature, and get out of the "Golden Dome" of politics.

Sincerely,
C. William Mattoon
Springfield, Vt.

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.

CAVENDISH

Cavendish Baptist Church, 2258 Main St.
Sunday services are 10 a.m. online or in person. Online services are on Facebook at 10 a.m. Go to www.facebook.com/Cavendish-Baptist-Church-25881489. More at www.CavendishBaptist.com or call 802-226-7131.

CHARLESTOWN

North Charlestown United Methodist Church, 471 River Rd.
Worship is Sundays at 9 a.m. Holy communion is celebrated the first Sunday of every month. Go to www.facebook.com/UMCOofNorthCharlestown for more information.

Charlestown Congregational Church, 71 Main St.
Sunday service starts at 10 a.m. All are welcome. For more information, call 603-826-3335.

LUDLOW

United Church of Ludlow (UCC and Methodist), 48 Pleasant St.
Sunday services are held in person and streamed online at 10 a.m. Email unitedchurch@tds.net for more information. Visit www.unitedchurch.us to receive updates on services and meetings.

Ludlow Baptist Church, on the Green, 99 Main St.
Weekly worship services are in-person. Sunday school is at 9:30 a.m. for all ages, and Sunday worship is at 11 a.m. and 6:30 p.m. Wednesday's prayer meeting is at 6:30 p.m. For more information, go to www.LudlowBaptist.org.

SPRINGFIELD

Springfield United Methodist Church, 10 Valley St.
Worship begins at 9:30 a.m. on Sundays. Springfield United Methodist Church welcomes everyone! The church can be reached at

802-885-3456.

St. Mark's Episcopal Church, 33 Fairground Rd.
Sunday Services 8:30 a.m. – Holy Days as announced. Services alternate between Clergy Officiated, Traditional Rite I and Contemporary Rite II, Holy Eucharist, and Licensed Lay Led Rites I and II Morning Prayer. All are invited regardless of religious affiliation. Call David at 802-885-2972 with questions.

St. Mary's Catholic Church, 10 Pleasant St.
Sunday mass is at 9 a.m., followed by coffee hour as well as weekday services. 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.

Unitarian Universalist Church, 21 Fairground Rd.
Sunday Services are at 10 a.m., in person and on Zoom. For more information, go to www.uuspringfieldvt.org.

WALPOLE

St. John's Episcopal Church, corner of Westminster and Elm St.
Sunday services are 10 a.m. in person or via Zoom. For more information, go to www.stjohnswalpole.org, email pastor@stjohnswalpole.org, or leave a message at 603-756-4533.

First Congregational Church of Walpole UCC, 15 Washington Sq.
Sunday services are at 10 a.m. in the sanctuary, or via Zoom. For Zoom links, please call 603-756-4075. For more information, go to www.walpolenhucc.org or www.facebook.com/FirstCongregationalWalpoleNH.

POLITICAL LETTERS

Due to the volume of political letters we receive during elections, and the increased cost of adding pages to the paper to print them all, as of March 2023 we are charging a fee for political letters at the rate of \$75 for 200 words, and \$0.50 per word thereafter. Political letters include electioneering for a specific candidate, party, or article that may impact one's vote.

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yellow page BUSINESS DIRECTORY

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Pet Portraits w/ Mindy Fisher 2/24/24
Raku Workshop w/ Andrew Berends (2 part) 3/2 & 3/9
Pine Needle Basket w/ Irene Dizes 3/8/24 & 3/9/24
Wire-wrapped Pendant w/ Thomas Alyxander 4/6/24
Flowers in Texture & Color w/ Julie Crabtree 4/27/24 (04/24/24 - TFN - 13)

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Okemo Valley TV

LOCAL PROGRAM HIGHLIGHTS THIS WEEK

- Legislative Update with State Rep. Tessa Buss
- Local Weather Forecast
- New Story Times from local librarians
- Mocktails with Abby
- Local church services

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arts & entertainment

Classic Movie Night at Rockingham Library

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – The Friends of the Rockingham Free Library invite all to their sponsored viewing of the Fred Astaire and Ginger Rogers’ 1934 musical “The Gay Divorcee,” Wednesday, Feb. 21, at 7 p.m., at the Bellows Falls Opera House.

Based on a Broadway play, this film pairs the famous dancing duo for the second time. Released during the Great Depression, it pro-

vided much needed relief for moviegoers, and started a dance craze based on “The Continental.” It also introduced Cole Porter’s beloved classic “Night and Day” in a stunning dance sequence.

The Friends of the Library hope you’ll join us on Feb. 21. Several of us will be available in the lobby before the movie to sign up new members. For the first 20 paid new memberships at any

level, an added incentive: the Hunter Art Studio has again generously donated a free Triple Up (soda, popcorn, and candy package).

Feeling up for a night of comedy, romance, and music? The Classic Wednesday offering of “The Gay Divorcee” on Feb. 21, at the Bellows Falls Opera House may have you dancing in the aisles.

Curator Series talks

PUTNEY, Vt. – Next Stage announces the return of the NXT Curators Series, offering an opportunity for audiences to hear from curators in various arts and humanities fields.

On Sunday, Feb. 18, join Angelina Lippert, the chief curator of Poster House (the country’s first museum dedicated to the art and history of posters) for “Art Deco: Commercializing the Avant-Garde,” an evening discussing the fascinating history of Art Deco advertising. From the Paris Exhibition of 1925 to the 1939 New York World’s Fair, this talk covers everything from the Great Depression up through the Great Gatsby. Discover the true meaning behind the definition of “Deco” and how it became the first global art movement.

On Wednesday, March

20, join “Historical Grooves: Archiving the Sounds of the Jewish-Muslim Relationship,” an interactive musical conversation. Professor Christopher Silver will detail his efforts to amplify a set of twentieth century North African Jewish and Muslim voices, which for too long have remained silent in the historical record. Through selections from his first-of-its-kind archive of early 20th-century shellac records from Morocco, Algeria, and Tunisia, he will draw our attention to the sublime sounds of the artists whose music shaped and spoke to an era of profound change and remarkable resilience.

Finally, on Sunday, April 21, join Tim Medland for a vibrant discussion of his latest exhibition “We Tried to Warn You! Environmental Crisis Posters, 1970–2020.”

Recently receiving a full-page, incredible review in the New York Times, this show chronicles how graphic designers from around the world have attempted to tackle issues of environmental activism – and how they’ve both succeeded and failed at changing public consciousness. You will walk away with not only a deeper understanding of how we got to the level of climate crisis we are in today, but also with hope for the future regarding what can actually be done to counteract man-made environmental devastation.

Next Stage is located at 15 Kimball Hill in downtown Putney, Vt. All talks are free, but donations are appreciated. Advance registration is available at www.nextstagearts.org. For more information, call 802-387-0102.

Queen of Hearts Drag Ball

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Join drag queens extraordinaire Anita Cocktail and Friends for the Queen of Hearts Drag Ball on Saturday, Feb. 24, at the Moose Lodge, 59 Westminster Street in Bellows Falls, Vt. Dress to impress as your favorite Alice in Wonderland character. Prizes for best costumes, as well as the chance to win two tickets to the Bianca Del Rio: Dead Inside Tour at the Paramount Theatre on March 4.

Andrews Inn founder John Moisis originated the Queen of Hearts Ball at the Andrews Inn in the 70s. In a 2017 interview with Moisis, he recalled, “It was a three-day holi-

day weekend with Washington’s birthday. What are you going to say? It’s Washington’s birthday? Boring. So we made it the Queen of Hearts and it just took off like a rocket.”

The evening will celebrate several birthdays and surprise announcements, the ticket giveaway to the Bianca Del Rio: Dead Inside Tour at the Paramount Theatre, and recognize Bellows Falls resident Carl Anhalt and Windsor resident Roger Barraby for their medals in track and field and water polo at the Gay Games Guadalajara last November. Tickets can be purchased individually, or at a group rate for a table of six. Purchase online at www.rampvt.org by clicking on the

“Donate” button and noting “Drag Show” in the note line. If not sold out, tickets can be purchased at the door by cash or check made payable to “Bellows Falls Pride.” Reserved seating for tickets purchased in advance. Doors open at 8 p.m., show at 9 p.m. This show contains adult content, and is for those 18 or older. There is an ATM on site; cash only at the bar. The venue is wheelchair accessible. Bring your own picnic or order food delivery. The Rockingham Arts and Museum Project is fiscal sponsor for Bellows Falls Pride. For more information, email bellowsfallspride@gmail.com or visit www.bellowsfallspride.com.

Raku Pottery Workshop at Gallery at the VAULT

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Gallery at the VAULT is happy to offer a Raku Pottery Workshop with Andrew Berends on two consecutive Saturdays, March 2 and March 9, from 1-5 p.m. each day. Register by Saturday, Feb. 24.

Berends will be teaching the exciting Japanese firing technique known as raku. Raku is a 16th-century technique developed in Japan for making tea ceremony ware. It has been developed in this country to produce really


interesting pottery. The firings take about an hour, and you get a finished piece at the end. Raku is a really fun technique where pots are fired to 1,840 degrees and pulled out of the hot kiln and manipulated with sawdust and water to change the look of the glazes. The glazes can be metallic, and/or have a crackle effect, making each piece truly unique and one-of-a-kind. We will also fire pots with a new technique known as “horse hair” raku, which creates really interesting designs on the clay. The raku firings can be done indoors or outdoors, depending on the weather.

The class will include wheel throwing, slab making, as well as extruding instruction. The first day will include making all types of clay work, and the second day will be glazing and firing all the pots in the raku tradition. Emphasis will be on learning the basics of pottery, including making the work, glazing, as well as firing. The class is geared towards teens through adults, and limited to five students.

Berends has been a master potter for over 30 years, with a Bachelor of Fine Arts from the New York State College Of Ceramics at Alfred University, as well as an Master of Fine Arts from Montana State University. He worked with a Spanish folk potter for a year, and was also a guest artist-in-residence at Anderson Ranch in Snowmass, Colo. Upon moving to Vermont in 1988, he became a professional production/art potter, where he exhibited internationally as well as being represented by over 180 galleries nationally.

The class fee is discounted for VAULT members, and includes 25 pounds of clay, glazes, and firing costs. Wear old clothing and bring pottery tools if you have them. Directions to Berends’ studio in Springfield will be given at registration.

The VAULT is located at 68 Main Street in Springfield. For more information, call 802-885-7111, email galleryvault@vermontel.net, or visit www.galleryvault.org. The gallery is ADA accessible.



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