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THE Vermont Journal

AUGUST 14, 2024 | WWW.VERMONTJOURNAL.COM

VOLUME 24, ISSUE 33

Ludlow Fire Department to hold second Five Alarm 5K

BY BRIDGET CUNNINGHAM

The Vermont Journal

LUDLOW, Vt. – This upcoming Labor Day weekend, the Ludlow Fire Department will be hosting the second annual Five Alarm 5K. Last year, 135 participants ran/walked in the 5K. The goal for the association is for this to become an annual event for Ludlow locals and those in neighboring communities, so the participation can continue to grow each coming year.

To preregister for the road race at a discounted rate, visit www.pinnaclestrive.com. Day-of registration begins on Saturday, Aug. 31, at 7:30 a.m.,

with the race starting at 9 a.m. With every registration, the participant will be given a T-shirt to wear during the race. The registration fee goes to the Ludlow Firefighters Association to aid the local volunteer fire department in maintaining the safety of our local communities. The money gained from this event will also help aid the department in the recruitment of firefighters, purchasing new and up-to-date safety equipment, as well as retaining the volunteers they currently have.

The Ludlow Firefighters Association is hosting this road race in place of the auction that has been put on in years past. The goal the department is hoping

to reach for this year's race is 150 participants involved in the 5K. Each runner will be placed in an age category, where awards will be given in each category for different placements. The race will also be professionally timed, with each participant being given their respective time as they cross the finish line. Along with the monetary benefit towards the fire department, they would also like to promote a close sense of community through events such as these that allow families to spend the day outdoors together and engage with other members of the community who are participating.

Music in the Meadow

CHESTER, Vt. – The 20th Music in the Meadow fundraising concert to benefit the Susan G. Komen Foundation will be held on Saturday, Sept. 7, from 11 a.m. – 7 p.m., at the Motel in the Meadow, Route 11 West, Chester, Vt.

This year's amazing entertainment is performed by local musicians who donate their time and talent. This year's lineup is James Joel, Better Days Band, John Sullivan, The Illusion, Bear Mountain Boys, Mark Shelton, and Intercept.

Back for 2024 will be the very popular silent auction, with donations from many local businesses and residents. Hot food and cold drinks will be available to purchase, as well as T's Boba Tea Pop Up Shop with her custom-made refreshing beverages. This year we are planning to have a cornhole tournament, family games area to keep your kids busy with our skee ball station,



Music in the Meadow 2023.

PHOTO PROVIDED

frisbee golf, and several other games. Raffle tickets will also be on sale for the grand prize queen quilt, hand made by Sue Ashe and Sue's Quilt Studio, with additional items on the day of the concert. The drawing will be at the end of the concert, Sept. 7, at approximately 7 p.m.

The past 19 concerts have raised over \$115,000 in support of Komen's mission to "save lives by meeting the most critical needs in our communities and investing in breakthrough re-

search to prevent and cure breast cancer." All proceeds collected go to the 2024 Komen Vermont More Than Pink Walk, which will be held in Manchester, Vt., on Oct. 5.

Bring a blanket or your lawn chair, or join us under the tents in the meadow for a great day. Hope to see you there.

For more information, feel free to contact us at Motel in the Meadow, 802-875-2626, or find us on Facebook at Music in the Meadow.

Londonderry prioritizes RIVER project grant proposals

BY SHAWNTAE WEBB

The Vermont Journal

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – At the Aug. 5 meeting, the Londonderry Selectboard heard from two representatives of the Windham Regional Commission, Alyssa Sabetto and Meghan Arpino, to go over the town's initial project proposals to apply for the hazard mitigation grant through the Resilience Initiative for Vermont Empowerment and Recovery (RIVER) project.

The commission is looking at the feasibility and eligibility requirements, along with the urgency of each project. "What projects make a difference in terms of flood mitigation?" Sabetto posed to the board. Eligible project examples include floodplain restoration or dam removal, up-sizing bridges and culverts, floodproofing of municipal or commercial buildings, structural elevations, road relocation or elevation, and buyouts.

Sabetto reported that at this time they are gathering information in order to create conceptual designs for the projects that the town wants to move forward with. The RIVER project will only award a few projects per town. She also confirmed the funds would be distributed throughout the state, so they would likely be in competition with other towns for grant funding.

Town administrator Shane O'Keefe suggested the board sit down with FEMA to see what would be approved by them for funding or partial funding. Arpino cautioned that projects that had already been started, completed,

or approved for funding by another federal agency, would not be considered by the RIVER project for grant money.

Board member Martha Dale expressed that the proposed list of projects seemed "granular" compared to what needed to be done after the flooding last year. Sabetto agreed, adding that grouping items into one larger project might help make their project more competitive for approval rather than "one culvert here and there."

Board chair Tom Cavanagh urged the importance of getting Cobble Ridge Road Bridge replaced, though FEMA had already denied that project. Sabetto expressed they may continue to "see that repetition" of denial from other organizations. Cavanagh pressed that in the event of an emergency, the only way they would have been able to access those properties would be by helicopter, saying, "The fact that no one realizes this [importance] is a joke to me." An alternate access would be the second option for this project, to get access for life-saving emergency responders. "That's people's lives," Cavanagh said.

The board also discussed how FEMA won't pay for construction of a new fire department building. Arpino suggested they use the commission's resources to get that project off the ground, though they may not be able to complete it. Cavanagh said he'd rather use the grant funding for more urgent projects, since the town already has land for the building.

It was suggested to elevate

the entire strip of Main Street, referring to the Town Plan analysis performed by Stevens & Associates. Resident Chad Stoddard noted that there are 11 properties along Main Street, and the buyout would cost \$7.1 million. The Town Plan document that the commission was using as a reference for projects has since been removed from the town's website. "The document needs to be put to bed," stated Stoddard. Cavanagh confirmed the document was on the site for two years before it was taken down, adding, "I think everyone had a chance to see how ridiculous it was."

After more deliberation, the board agreed to prioritize their top three projects, respectively, in the order of culvert replacements, Cobble Ridge Road Bridge replacement or alternate access, and North Village floodplain.

The board moved to discuss interviews for the planning commission applicants. They voted to reduce the size of the planning commission to five members, and if they determine they need to add more seats, they will use the recommendations from the newly appointed members. Dale suggested screening for backup options or replacements if necessary.

The interviews took place on Wednesday evening, Aug. 14.

The Londonderry Selectboard meets on the first and third Mondays of each month, at 6 p.m.

Chester Selectboard talks Julian Quarry violation enforcement

BY NICK GIBERTI

The Vermont Journal

CHESTER, Vt. – On Aug. 7, the Chester Selectboard held their regularly scheduled meeting in the Chester Town Hall. Chief among their concerns for the evening was the enforcement of two structure violations against Julian Materials LLC, who operate a quarry near Gassetts commonly known as the "Julian Quarry."

Before the discussion of the quarry, however, the board met in their capacity as water and wastewater commissioners, to increase water and sewer rates. Town manager Julie Hance noted that Chester has not increased rates in several years, and was therefore "playing catch-up" with the current increases. The board approved a water base rate increase of \$3, and a water consumption rate increase of \$0.25. There was no increase to the wastewater consumption rates at this time.

Moving on to the discussion of the Julian Quarry, planning and zoning administrator Preston Bristow briefed the board on two structure violations, and sought permission to proceed with enforcement action against Julian Materials. The structures in question were described by Bristow as "a house that is partly in floodplain,"

and "a shed...that doesn't meet setbacks." Bristow explained to the board that Julian had agreed as part of a notice of violation appeal several months ago to remediate these violations, but had yet to do so. Because taxpayer money would inevitably need to be spent to enforce these provisions, Bristow needed to come before the board and seek approval to proceed with legal enforcement of the violations.

The board was generally in agreement that enforcement was needed, and gave Bristow approval to proceed. Hance noted that, if possible, town attorney Jim Carroll will seek to recover his legal fees as part of any case against Julian, though she was not certain that this was possible in environmental court, where the Julian case will be heard.

While the quarries have been the subject of ongoing concern from residents over noise and pollution, some of which is allegedly in violation of their use permits, Bristow explained to the board that "structure violations are much clearer to enforce than use violations." Hance also noted that Carroll felt the other violations not relating to the structures were less legally clear-cut, and riskier to attempt to enforce in terms of their probability of success in court.

Mike Leclair, a resident of Gassetts who said he has been dealing with the quarry situation for several years, rose to address the board, unsatisfied that

they were only enforcing certain provisions of the previous agreement, and not its entirety. He claimed that Julian was still trucking materials between their two quarry properties, as well as operating the quarry after 5 p.m., both of which he said are also violations of the previous notice of violation settlement. "We can't afford to give them one inch, because they take a mile," Leclair emphasized to the board.

Board Chair Arne Jony-nas sympathized with Leclair, and expressed frustration with the fact that, while Julian can act with "total disregard for the law," the selectboard must follow all laws and procedures necessary to avoid "compound[ing] and making things worse."

Finally, Hance reviewed the town's quarterly financial reports, during which time she noted that, of about \$2.5 million in flood-related expenses stemming from the July 2023 flood, Chester had received only \$400,000 in reimbursement. She conceded that this is a statewide issue, though she was confident that Chester would eventually see the full amount it was owed. "It will get reimbursed, it's just that [FEMA's] timing is less than desirable," Hance told the board.

Opting to skip their second meeting of the month unless an urgent issue arises, the Chester Selectboard's next scheduled meeting will be held on Wednesday, Sept. 4, at 6:30 p.m., at the Chester Town Hall.

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Springfield Library book sale donations

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Friends of Springfield Town Library (FOSTL) will accept book sale donations on the following Saturdays during library hours: Aug. 17, Aug. 24, and Sept. 7. FOSTL members will be in the Flinn Room from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. on these days. Please note that only the following items in great condition will be accepted at the Library during their

open hours. Members will review donations before accepting them. Acceptable items include all genres of fiction except paperback romances. Non-fiction donations are limited to biographies, history, and animals. All children's books in great condition will be accepted. Preference is for picture books and chapter books. Please do not bring any media –

no DVDs or CDs, etc. Why is there a review process? FOSTL will only be able to use the front rooms of the Springfield Armory this year. Therefore, space is very limited. Thank you for being understanding. The book sale will be on Saturday, Sept. 14, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., at the armory.

Treasures on the Green postponed to Sept. 7

WESTON, Vt. – Treasures on the Green, the town-wide tag sale that benefits local nonprofits, hosted by the Weston Women's Club, was postponed from the scheduled date of Aug. 10, due to the heavy rain and high winds that prevented setup on the afternoon before. The rescheduled date is Sept. 7, 10 a.m. – 4

p.m., on the Weston Green, bigger and better with the addition of raffle prizes and even more merchandise. "One man's junk is another man's treasure" does not apply. Junk goes to the transfer station. We're talking about items of quality – some utilitarian, some decorative, some for the home, and some for the garden – that are simply

not being used. There will be furniture, cooking implements, housewares, garden decor, artwork, and more. The sale items have been augmented by two wonderful raffle prize baskets donated by the generosity of the Vermont Country Store. Join us on Sept. 7, find a treasure or two, and benefit your community. We look forward to seeing you.

Exciting changes at the Westminster Institute and Butterfield Library

WESTMINSTER, Vt. – Libraries around the State of Vermont and the country are retooling themselves to meet the changing needs of today's society and their local community. So, too, is the Butterfield Library. In many small Vermont towns that have lost their general store, the library has become the focal point for the community, providing a space to gather, connect with neighbors, and have a sense of place. In an effort to meet our community's changing needs, the board of directors of the Westminster Institute/Butterfield Library held a community forum in 2017 to gather input and ideas about the future of the

institute and the Butterfield Library. The community forum was followed by several strategic planning sessions with an outside consultant. The final strategic plan made recommendations for physical upgrades to the building to support new program directions, improve rental spaces, and transform the library space. Many of the facility upgrades have been completed. The one remaining space to focus upon is the library. The vision for the library is as the centerpiece of all future development. With a new design and focus as a community gathering space, it will be the driver of generating and hosting community activities of all types for all ages. With the hiring of our new librarian, Alison Baitz, and building upon the work of our previous librarians, some exciting things have begun over the past few

months. These include collaboration with Westminster Cares to bring reading materials to those in the Meals-on-Wheels program; a summer reading program where people of all ages track the fun they have in order to be eligible for prizes; a Friends of the Institute group, led by new board member Jen Perry; review of our overall book collection to make room for new purchases; redesigning the main floor to maximize space for books; converting some of the downstairs into space for educational and craft classes; rearranging books to best suit patrons' interest; enhancing the children's collection area on the second floor with improved lighting and comfortable furniture; a monthly column in the Gazette discussing what's going on at the library; meetings with folks from other libraries to gather and share ideas,

resources, and grant information opportunities; chatting with patrons and trustees about what kind of future events we can sponsor; and we're happy to announce that a new elevator is being installed to create easy access from floor to floor. These are just a sample of the exciting things that are happening. Sometimes things get messier before they get better, as with any changes. Baitz and others are working hard to make things happen this summer, with the hope of having many changes in place by our Centennial Celebration on Sept. 14. We ask for your patience and support, and hope you'll stop in to say hello. The library is open Monday, Tuesday, and Thursday, from 1-6 p.m.; and Saturday, from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m.

Get your windows measured for insulating inserts

ROCKINGHAM, Vt. – If your house or apartment is cold and drafty in the winter, we can help you be more comfortable and save money on fuel. The Rockingham Energy Committee will be building low-cost, insulating window inserts for local residents this fall, for the fourth year in a row. The WindowDressers program is run by a nonprofit in Maine, and costs are kept low by assembling the inserts at an all-volunteer community workshop. The workshop this year will be held from Oct. 11-16, at the St. Charles Social Hall, 25 Cherry Hill Street, Bellows Falls, the same site we used in past years. Everyone receiving inserts is expected to volunteer for one or more building sessions; you can choose which task(s) you want to do, and training is provided. Community members not

getting inserts are encouraged to help at the workshops also – it's fun to build things with your neighbors. If you're interested, call or text 802-444-1860, or email rockinghamvtenergy@gmail.com, and we can set up a measuring visit. Two volunteers will come to your home to measure your window frames with a laser measuring tool so the inserts can be custom made for your windows. All measuring must be done by Sept. 9. Typical windows cost \$50-60 per insert, but special pricing is available for low-income residents. For more information, visit www.windowdressers.org/insulating-inserts.



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Window Dressers preparing inserts. PHOTO PROVIDED

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The Fillebrown family of Baltimore and Cavendish

BY RON PATCH

802-374-0119
ronpatch27@gmail.com

The following history was written by Jim Zimmer of Cavendish. Much of Jim's information comes from "Genealogy of The Fillebrown Family."

Today, Jim and his wife Cathy live in the circa-1840 James Fillebrown place. Their home is pretty much original. It is very welcoming. You shift to a lower gear as you enter. Notice the cat peering down at you from high atop the cupboard.

You can find more stories written by Jim Zimmer in my latest book, "Stories of Us." It's available at The Framery of Vermont, Stone House Antiques Center, and Lisai's in Bellows Falls.

James Fillebrown
"James Fillebrown born 1786 was a smuggler during the 1807 embargo with Canada. After the embargo was lifted, he married

Weltha Piper, daughter of Noah Piper, early settler in Baltimore, Vt. Both James and Weltha possessed the pioneering spirit and built a strong log cabin on the summit of Hawks Mountain about two miles above their relatives in Baltimore.

"They soon had altercations with the wild beasts of the forest, bears and wild cats ate the crops James and Weltha planted and threatened the family as well.

"James had learned the craft of brick-making from his father and between farming seasons left the mountain to mold and fire bricks at various building sites.

"Weltha, like all stalwart pioneer women, cared for the cabin and the children (their first two daughters), while James was gone. One night, Weltha hearing strange noises descended the ladder from the sleeping loft to dispatch a porcupine which had worked its

way under the foundations into the cabin.

"James spent much time clearing forest for his fields. One day, when he failed to come home to dinner, his wife found him white and faint from loss of blood. With great difficulty, Weltha managed to get him back to the cabin and set off down the mountain to get the doctor...

"In 1822, the family sold the Hawks Mountain property and moved across the Black River to Cavendish. Probate papers were signed at the Dutton Tavern (the tavern was moved and restored to become part of Shelburne Museum.) [Author's note: Years ago I sold to Shelburne Museum a well-documented Windsor armchair belonging to Emily Dutton. The chair now resides at Shelburne in the Dutton House, aforementioned as the Dutton Tavern.]

"Today the Fillebrown

family home in Cavendish is the house that sits at the intersection of East and Brook Roads. Turn at Belnaps.

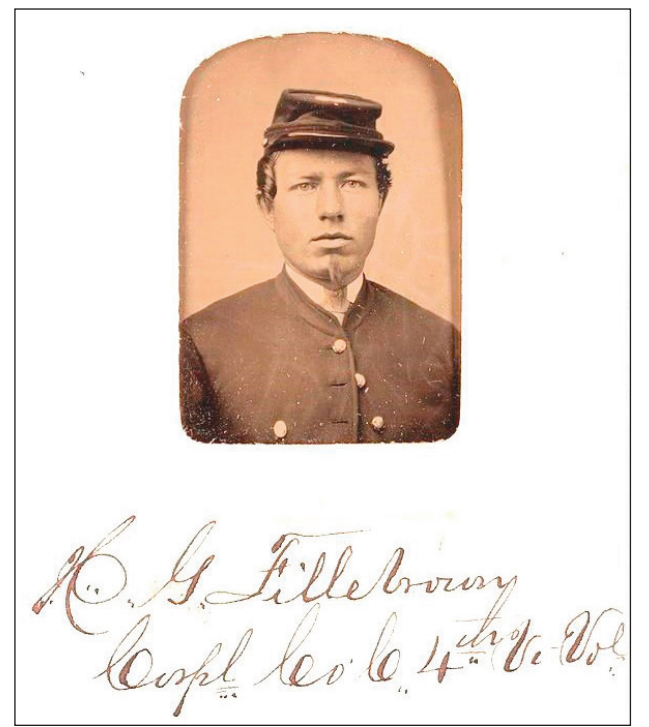
"Following the move from Hawks Mountain to Cavendish, the Fillebrowns had no more confrontations with wild animals. Their corn and apples went unmolested.

"James made bricks for the first meetinghouse and the first store in town. In addition to farming and brick-making, James cleared his land and built stonewalls along property lines, most of which survive to this day.

"James and Weltha are buried at the Cavendish Cemetery on Center Road. They had nine children in all."

Henry G. Fillebrown
"Henry Green Fillebrown, 1843-1865, was son of James and Weltha.

"On April 2, 1865, the 1st Vermont Brigade broke



Autographed H.G. Fillebrown tintype CDV. PHOTO PROVIDED BY LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

the Confederate line of entrenchments at Petersburg, Va., at the end of a lengthy siege. The war ended one week later.

"Corporal Fillebrown was in every engagement with the 4th Vermont Regiment. He was on furlough on April 2, but would not permit his regiment to go into battle without him. He was mortally wounded in the assault, and is buried with his comrades-in-arms at the Petersburg Military Cemetery."

Peck's Roster

I checked "Peck's Roster," "Vermont Soldiers and Sailors in the Civil War," for Henry Green Fillebrown's company C history, and found:

"Windsor County furnished a larger number

than any other for the Fourth, being company C [Henry Fillebrown's company]...

"Its original aggregate, as regiment, was 1,048, of whom it is believed less than forty deserted, some of whom returned. The most numerous desertions were from companies C and K.

"The smallest losses, B, E, F, I, and K, and of these, ten in B was the least. Four companies - A, C, D and G - each lost over twice that number."

Do you remember going to a fondue party? This week's old saying I sometimes use when someone bids me farewell. It is me playing with words, "Fondue, to you too."

Memoir workshops with Pam Bernard

WALPOLE, N.H. - are among the many literary journals that have published her work. Visit Bernard's website at www.pambernard.com. For more information, including dates and times, email pambernardwriter@gmail.com (preferred), or call 603-756-4177.



A previous memoir workshop. PHOTO PROVIDED

There are almost always two versions of the writer on the page: the adult narrator who is telling the story, and the previous version of the writer - a previous, younger adult, or a child - who is a character in the story being told. Both need to be heard and to be revealed. To add to the complexity, each iteration of a writer's former self also has a past. That self does not exist simply in the moment. Even a small child has an emotional history, no matter how unformed. These so-called craft considerations form the basis of Bernard's approach to teaching how to shape a vivid and moving personal narrative.

Above all, developing an authentic, believable voice defines the memoirist's core task. When writing about personal experience, a writer must locate that voice in order to tell her story with authority, but also the kind of vigor that brings experience to life. Katherine Clarke, professor emerita at Antioch University New England, said, "Pam's special gift is listening for the authentic voice of a writer to emerge. Her groups are designed to welcome and nourish this voice. When I began to write from my life, she heard me before I did."

Bernard, a writer, painter, teacher, and writing mentor, is the author of four books, the most of recent a verse novel titled "Esther." She received her Master of Fine Arts in creative writing from Warren Wilson College Program for Writers, and bachelor's degree from Harvard University. Her awards include fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Massachusetts Cultural Council. Nimrod, Cimarron Review, and Valparaiso

Finding family histories at Rockingham Library

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. - Wayne Blanchard will demonstrate how to navigate the expanding resources available online to find full-text copies of family and local town histories on Thursday, Aug. 22, at 10:30 a.m., at the Rockingham Library. Bring your own laptop to explore on your own.

Discovering online book collections can be a way to find family history. For those exploring their genealogy, family histories could be a way to help unlock secrets

of the past and lead to a way to expand the family tree. Especially for those with some New England heritage, many town histories also contain brief genealogies of the families who lived there. See what people in the past have put in print.

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arts & entertainment

Springfield Community Players to hold auditions for “Pumpkins of Peril”

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Community Players will hold auditions for “Pumpkins of Peril – A Halloween Murder Mystery,” by local playwright Thomas Compos, on Wednesday, Sept. 25, from 6-7 p.m.; and Saturday, Sept. 28, from 1:30-2:30 p.m.; or by appointment by calling director Patty Greene-Pawelczyk at 802-289-4325 or emailing pagreene113@gmail.com. The performance will be held on Oct. 26, from 6-10 p.m., at The Hartness House, 109 Front Street, Springfield, Vt.

This is a cold read audition. The script will be

available audition nights, no preparation needed. We need nine actors. The play is written for seven males and two females, however, three or four roles could be played by any gender. Actors should be 18 years and older.

Parts open for audition are: Professor Al Ucard, a notorious night owl; Penfield, the professor’s assistant; Mina Parke, a florist who has caught the professor’s eye; Harry Talbot, who suffers from selenophobia, an irrational fear of the moon; Doctor Proctor, town skeptic, here to debunk any paranormal

claim; Perry “Cowboy” Pokis, who was actually born in Passaic, N.J., but dresses like an Old West gunslinger; Esme Deamon, who prefers to dress all in black, and believes she can cast “the evil eye” on her enemies; Jack O. Landrum, head of the local ghost-hunting group; and Leonard Skully, private eye.

The readthrough will be held Oct. 2, from 6:30-8 p.m.

The rehearsal schedule is Mondays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays, from Oct. 5-23, with a Friday, Oct. 25, dress rehearsal.

Myra Flynn on the Bandwagon Stage

PUTNEY, Vt. – The Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series presents Vermont native indie/soul singer-songwriter Myra Flynn, on Saturday, Aug. 17, at 6 p.m., at Cooper Field, 41 Sand Hill Road in Putney, Vt.

Flynn spends her career embracing dichotomy. Half Irish and half African-American, her original indie/soul songs blend soulful vocals with a lyrical delivery that doesn’t let one get too comfortable. As New England Deli Magazine puts it, “Her vocal influences have as much in common with Ani DiFranco and Shawn Colvin as they do with Rihanna and Jill Scott.”

“We love being able to present Vermont-based artists, and Myra has been on her way to building a national name for herself. As a regular at the Flynn’s Jazz Festival, Myra’s name is getting around for anyone interested in soul, funk, R&B, and beyond,” says Keith

Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts. “Myra’s range as an artist is a model for how Vermont artists can tackle a national stage. Her presence as part of the series is an opportunity to ensure that southern Vermont knows the power and presence of Myra Flynn.”

Flynn spent her Vermont childhood clad in leopard print and platform shoes, singing and dancing atop anything that looked remotely like a stage. These days, not much has changed. She has since shared stages with Ivan Neville (Dumpstaphunk), Mike Gordon (Phish), Gabrielle Gordon (Natalie Merchant), Sonya Kitchell, Rayvon, Res, Alexa Ray Joel, Slick Rick, Anais Mitchell, and Lee “Scratch” Perry.

Myra’s latest album, “Shadow Work,” was released in the summer of 2023. Margaret Grayson of 7days describes “Shadow Work” as “...five songs

deeply concerned with relationships of all kinds. Flynn, who splits her time between Vermont and Los Angeles, sings of mothers and daughters, romantic relationships gone wrong, and the people who get us through the hardest times. She considers big questions about how a person ought to be in the world, but she conducts her case studies on the most intimate of stages. In certain moments, she questions herself, wondering if she’s doing enough for the people she loves; other times, she offers full-throated declarations of her own worth in the world. The same song can hold both sentiments, and Flynn’s ability to capture complicated, conflicting emotions in her lyrics swept me away.”

Tickets are discounted in advance at www.nextstagearts.org; kids under 12 are free. For more information, visit the website or call 802-387-0102.

Support for the Bandwagon Summer Series is provided by M&T Bank, Lawson’s Finest Liquids, Oak Meadow, The Porch Cafe & Catering, Brattleboro Reformer, The Commons, and We Clean Heat Pumps.

Grant Peeples and Fred Gillen Jr. at Stage 33

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Grant Peeples is darkly hilarious and dead serious, often at the same time. Fred Gillen Jr. is a globetrotting, truth-telling troubadour. Each takes a different path to the same destination.

Grant tours coast to coast and is a regular performer at The Woody Guthrie Folk Festival, the 30A Songwriters Festival, and The Florida Folk Festival. He’s the recipient of the Focus Foundation Award for Creative Excellence, which cited the “humor, compassion, and wisdom of his songs,” and their “unflinching social insight and cultural acuity.” He’s credited with 11 studio albums. He’s published three books of poetry.

Tallahassee born and raised, life started mostly simple, and then got increasingly complicated. He started writing songs. He moved to Nashville. He left Nashville a year later. He got himself a

nightclub and booked everyone from BB King to the Judds, The Temptations to George Strait, Jerry Lee Lewis to Dionne Warwick, Bonnie Raitt to Jerry Jeff Walker. He went broke in the nightclub business. He moved to a remote island in the Caribbean off the Miskito Coast of Nicaragua, and stayed there for more than a decade before getting the itch back. He got a \$100 guitar, and he’s been playing every day and writing songs ever since. A self-described “tree-hugger that watches NASCAR,” Grant is known for his axe-sharp socio-political tunes, raucous humor, and heart-gripping ballads that keep an ever-critical eye on American culture and identity.

Fred Gillen Jr. has released 11 acclaimed full-length albums, and has performed all over the U.S. and Europe. His live performances are spontaneous and full of storytelling, and he enjoys audience participation. His songs have been featured on ABC’s “All

My Children,” NPR’s “Car Talk,” and CMJ’s New Music Marathon Sampler. His version of Woody Guthrie’s “I Ain’t Got No Home” was featured on “Pete Remembers Woody,” a collection of Pete Seeger’s spoken stories about Woody Guthrie. Besides playing with his heroes like Seeger, he’s opened for such artists as Merle Haggard, Todd Rundgren, and the David Bromberg Big Band. His songs incorporate elements of a huge swath of folk, rock, roots, and Americana music, and though he covers a wide variety of lyric topics, his overarching message is simple: “we’re all in this together.”

Grant Peeples and Fred Gillen Jr. will perform at Stage 33 Live, 33 Bridge Street in Bellows Falls, Vt., on Aug. 18, at 6 p.m. Tickets can be purchased in advance through www.stage33live.com, or at the door. Only 40 tickets will be sold; advance tickets guarantee entry. The event will be recorded and filmed.

Blue Flames concert and community picnic

WESTON, Vt. – On Saturday, Aug. 24, from 4-6 p.m., everyone is invited to come to Weston’s Town Green for a special Blue Flames Steel Band Concert, to benefit the Weston Community Association. The rain date is Sunday, Aug. 25.

Bring a picnic, family, and friends, and come listen to some wonderful music by the enchanting Blue Flames Steel Drum Band, who, for the 15th year, are donating their talent, good will, and support, this year to benefit the restoration of our beloved Playhouse and museums, still recovering from last year’s floods.

One-hundred-thirty-eight years ago, nine



Blue Flames.

PHOTO BY PAUL MYERS

pioneer women turned a smelly frog pond and muddy swamp into what is now called the most beautiful Town Green in Vermont. The “Ladies of the Green,”

in the spirit of their ancestors, welcome all to join in sharing their spirit of community, and help provide some assistance to our neighbors in need.

Soles of Duende on the Bandwagon Summer Stage

PUTNEY, Vt. – The Next Stage Bandwagon Summer Series presents dance trio Soles of Duende on Saturday, Aug. 24, at 6 p.m., at the Pun-

tey Inn, 57 Puntney Landing Road.

Bonded by their deep love of music, their crafts, and their true connection, Soles of Duende is on a lifelong mission to elevate the joy and music of true collaboration across disciplines, and the celebration of the forms they practice. Based in the sounds of tap, flamenco, and Kathak, Soles of Duende’s

fire is the spirit that lives within each of these women to celebrate their connection given their beautiful differences, and to uplift the forms that made them.

“Live music meets dance from three different ethnic traditions sounds like a perfect way of exploring culture while seeing virtuosic talent,” says Keith Marks, executive director of Next Stage Arts. “This group has been getting a lot of attention in New York, and while they’re on the rise, we wanted to bring them to southern Vermont. There is so much about Soles of Duende that deserves attention – talent, merging of dance and live music, and the fact that these women are exploring connections of culture through dance is worth noting.”

Tickets can be purchased in advance at www.nextstagearts.org, and kids under 12 are free. For more information, visit the website or call 802-387-0102.

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arts & entertainment

DiTrani Brothers on Tavern Lawn

PUTNEY, Vt. – Twilight Music concludes its 21st Twilight on the Tavern Lawn series of bluegrass, folk, rock, world beat, jazz, pop, and zydeco summer concerts on Sunday, Aug. 18, with roots, ragtime, and jazz quartet DiTrani Brothers. The concert begins at 6 p.m., in downtown Putney, on the Putney Tavern lawn – bring a lawn chair or blanket – or at Next Stage, at 15 Kimball Hill, in case of rain. Copresented with Next Stage Arts Project, the series is sponsored by the Town of Putney, The Mockingbird Tavern, Rod's, and many other Putney-area businesses and organizations. The concerts are free to the public, donations are accepted, and food will be available. For more information, call 802-387-5772 or visit www.twilightmusic.org.



DiTrani Brothers.

PHOTO PROVIDED

DiTrani Brothers, by way of bent melodies and driving rhythms, play perilous tunes for the hopeful, with elements of Balkan music

and early American jazz and swing. They deliver both wistful and raucous performances at venues ranging from The House of Blues in New Orleans to DIY backyard stages. Originally from North Bend, Wash., brothers Bobby and Walker DiTrani began writing songs together while traveling across the country, playing music on the streets. Since then, they've recorded two albums, and toured throughout the U.S. with drummer Eddie Gaudet. Now a quar-

ter with acoustic bassist Benjamin Richards, they recently released their third album, "Dust Harvest."

Saxtons River Sunday concert series

SAXTONS RIVER, Vt. – Music comes to the Saxtons River Park in a series of free, outdoor, late-summer Sunday concerts.

On Aug. 18, at 4 p.m., The MoonDogs will perform a "quirky blend of folk, blues, and gypsy jazz," with original tunes by group founder and guitarist Dante Corsano, Charlie Laurel on bass, Dave Sullivan on violin, and Drew Kovach on washboard. The rain date is Aug. 25.

The MoonDogs can be heard busking on Main Street in Brattleboro on Saturdays, and

during the monthly Gallery Walk.

The concert on Sept. 15, at 4 p.m., features Swing Low, who describe their style as "jazz standards and pop classics with mesmerizing vocals and swinging grooves." The four-member group includes Nick Scalero on saxophone, Ashok on bass, Maryann McArdle on keyboard, and vocalist Ajlan Beer. The rain date is Sept. 22.

Swing Low performs regularly in venues around the southern Vermont area.

The series rounds out Sept. 29, at 3 p.m., with the Main Street Arts String

Band under the direction of Jill Newton, offering traditional French Canadian, Celtic, Scandinavian, and American fiddle tunes. In case of rain, the concert will move across the street to Main Street Arts.

The String Band meets at MSA every Wednesday, from 5-6:30 p.m., and welcomes players to sit in on their sessions.

The Saxtons River Park Committee is sponsoring the series, which is open to all.

Notice of cancellation and rescheduling will be posted on the Saxtons River and Saxtons River Park Facebook pages.

"Finding Hope Within" art exhibit at Rockingham Library

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – "Finding Hope Within" is the theme of a collective art exhibit on display at the Rockingham Library until the end of September. All of the featured artists are women currently incarcerated in Vermont's Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility.

Born out of frustration during a Covid lockdown at the prison, Heather Newcomb of Vermont Works for Women, which is based at the facility, decided to offer a challenge to the prisoners: create an artwork that expresses "finding hope within." What started as a small seed of an idea grew into a full art exhibit, including collage, poetry, drawing, and fiber art. This exhibit is now touring through Vermont, primarily displayed in public libraries.

Per the facility's regulations, art materials were limited. Artists could only sign their initials to their art, and their artwork cannot be returned to them after being publicly exhibited.

Cocurators of the exhibit are Heather Newcomb of Vermont Works for Women and John Vincent of A Revolutionary Press. Vermont Works for Women helps women transition out of Chittenden Regional Correctional Facility into gainful employment and develop the necessary skills to live independently and to connect to the community. A Revolutionary Press, located in Middlebury, Vt., is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit

printing press which aims to spread radical and revolutionary ideas. A lot of what the press is currently doing is focused on issues of incarceration.

On Sept. 28, Rockingham Library will host a discussion circle exploring the realities of life while incarcerated, the challenges of re-entering society afterwards, and the meaningfulness of creating art during these life adjustments.

The art exhibit and the discussion are both free and open to the public. For more information, email programming@rockinghamlibrary.org, call 802-463-4270, or stop by the Rockingham Library at 65 Westminster Street in Bellows Falls, Vt.



"What Healing Means to Me."

PHOTO PROVIDED

The Brass Connection returns to SOTH

WESTON, Vt. – The Sundays on the Hill (SOTH) Concert Series Committee is so excited to have the Brass Connection return to perform in the Old Parish Church, on Route 100 in Weston, Vt., on Aug. 25, at 4 p.m. This brass quintet will take the audience on a musical odyssey.

Formed in 2000, the Brass Connection is an exciting group whose members collectively have over 100 years of musical experience entertaining audiences at the world's concert halls, churches, music festi-



The Brass Connection.

PHOTO PROVIDED

vals, bandstands, and gazebos from Austria to Mexico, and from Florida to Maine. They appeal to a wide audience and have performed over 300 concerts, includ-

ing an appearance on National Public Radio's "All Things Considered." The members have performed with groups ranging from the Boston Symphony Or-

chestra and Boston Pops, to the Ice Capades. They perform many styles of music, including classical, ragtime, Dixieland, blues, patriotic, swing, Broadway show selections, and the Tijuana brass.

The concert on Aug. 25 will be a pops-style eclectic program drawing from some of these genres. Admission is still very reasonable for adults. Children 12 and under may attend at no charge. The doors open around 3:30 p.m., and there are no reserved seats, no advance tickets, and admission is paid at the door. For more information, visit www.sundaysonthehill.org.

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health & community

Ludlow Dental Center moving to Chester

LUDLOW, Vt. – Ludlow Dental Center announces its relocation to Chester, Vt., combining services with Chester Dental. This transition follows a successful trial period that forced Ludlow Dental Center to close after the devastating flooding in July 2023. Effective Sept. 3, all patients of Ludlow Dental Center will be seen at Chester Dental Center, located at 55 Route 11 West.

The trial period of combined operations from June-November 2023 demonstrated that merging services allows for streamlined operations, cost savings, and improved delivery of dental care. The organization wants to underscore that it will maintain the same capacity to serve dental patients, ensuring that appointment availability and services will not be reduced.

As the region grapples with the effects and uncertainty of extreme weather, moving dental operations to Chester protects from future flood risks. The past two years have shown that historic flooding is becoming more frequent, a reality we must all face. The relocation mitigates some risk from the effects of flooding, and is a more central location within North Star Health's service area.

Patients can be assured that they will still see all the familiar faces at the new location. Dr. Michael Foster, DDS; Debra Yurek, dental hygienist; and Siobhan Nadler, dental hygienist, will continue to share smiles and provide the exceptional care patients have come to expect. "We are optimistic about relocating to Chester and uniting the North Star dental team under one roof.

This move consolidates duplicative operational costs, which will allow us to explore service offering expansion at Chester Dental," said Barbara Hodgkins, RDH, director of dental services. "Our dedicated team remains committed to our patients' health and wellness." Joshua Dufresne, CEO, acknowledged, "We understand that patients who are used to visiting our Ludlow

location may need some assistance to adjust to this change. Our community health team is ready to support you if you need access to transportation or other services to make this transition as seamless as possible." Questions about the move or scheduling appointments at the new Chester Dental Center can be directed to 802-875-2878.

Grace Cottage wins awards in all categories

TOWNSHEND, Vt. – Grace Cottage was a big winner in this year's Brattleboro Reformer Readers' Choice Awards poll. The winners were announced by the Reformer on Saturday, Aug. 3.

Grace Cottage won in every category for which it was eligible, including Best Hospital, Best Pharmacy, Best Place to Work, Best Physical Therapy, Best Emergency Care, Best Doctors (Dr. Ewa Arnold, runner-up Dr. Moss Linder), and Best Pediatricians (Cynthia Howes, CPNP, runner-up Dr. Elizabeth Linder).

Commenting on these awards, Grace Cottage CEO Olivia Sweetnam said, "I have worked in many hospitals and other organizations throughout my career, but I have never experienced an organization as unique and with employees as caring as at Grace Cottage. I am constantly impressed and amazed by the fact that everyone at Grace

Cottage goes the extra mile to help patients, coworkers, and community members. There really is no place like it." Grace Cottage has consistently won awards in this contest over the years. This is the eighth year in a row that Grace Cottage has won

Best Place to Work and Best Physical Therapy, and the sixth year in a row for Best Hospital, Best Emergency Care, Best Doctor, and Best Pharmacy. For more information about Grace Cottage, visit www.gracecottage.org, or call 802-365-9109.

Best Place to Work and Best Physical Therapy, and the sixth year in a row for Best Hospital, Best Emergency Care, Best Doctor, and Best Pharmacy. For more information about Grace Cottage, visit www.gracecottage.org, or call 802-365-9109.



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Mountain Valley Health Council Board message

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – For 46 years, the Mountain Valley Health Council Board of Directors has focused its efforts on first building, then operating, the Mountain Valley Health Center in Londonderry. In 2014, the board recognized that small, independent rural health centers were no longer a financially viable, sustainable model. A realignment took place when operations of the Mountain Valley Health Center were turned over to what is now North Star Health.

Over the past 10 years, the board has continued to raise funds to support Mountain Valley Health Center by providing the facility essentially rent-free to North Star Health, covering the cost of maintaining the grounds and building, and supporting some staff costs. North Star has added new staff and services to the health center to serve the increasing vol-

ume of patients. Modifications to the facility that accommodated this increase in patient volume were paid for by the council. As both organizations move forward navigating the complexities of the current nonprofit health care system, the council board has made a strategic shift in its future direction, and will become purely a grantmaking organization. The council will use the reserve funds to support the Mountain Valley Health Center as needed, and leverage their fundraising expertise to bolster North Star's fundraising initiatives.

This change takes place as longtime Chair Michael Morfit steps down, and newly elected co-Chairs Skip Raymond and Barbara Ardel take over as of July 1. Said Morfit, "I leave knowing that we are in good hands with North Star Health. It is important that all of us who have supported the center

over the years continue that support for North Star. They have earned our trust."

As the board moves forward, Denis Pinkernell is retiring from the board, having served on it since 2010. Jim Wilbur, who re-joined the board in June of 2023, is taking on a new role, serving as a director on the North Star Health board representing the interests of the Mountain Towns area. Bill Sinsigalli, a resident of South Londonderry, who joined the Mountain Valley Health Council in January of 2024, will replace Jim as the new Treasurer. Bonny Johnson continues to serve as the council's secretary, with Elsie Smith and Esther Fishman continuing their invaluable service. All of these moves will ensure a smooth transition of board operations, and a responsive, caring, and financially viable health care system in place for our local residents.

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