



the bridge

Local, independent
journalism for
Central Vermont

Bridging the Gap

**No city, no community,
no democracy is complete
without a vibrant and
independent local newspaper.
As too many of us scatter
across a littered landscape
of social media, glowing
screens, and bad ideas,
maybe a little newspaper,
The Bridge, can bring us
all a little closer together.**

**– BRYAN PFEIFFER,
writer, biologist, and
former journalist**

The Bridge: A Trusted Resource

The Bridge is a trusted resource, providing in-depth reporting on diverse, vital topics while connecting the people and communities of Central Vermont. Within its pages readers engage with political and business leaders, investigate the region's most important issues, meet their neighbors, share opinions on big decisions, and celebrate home-grown achievements.

Through its 30 years The Bridge has been independent, non-partisan, and local.

At a time when community papers everywhere are disappearing at an alarming rate, The Bridge must not be taken for granted. This non-profit service needs your added support now more than ever.



Making Headway on Today's Challenges

The pandemic and increased competition for ad revenue from national media platforms like Google and Facebook have hit The Bridge hard. Cutbacks in staff and publishing frequency helped balance the budget in 2020 and 2021, but also limited its capacity to cover stories and keep the community up to date.

However, thanks to the donations from hundreds of local readers, staff hours are rebounding and the paper is back to its twice monthly schedule. Each issue is distributed for free pick-up around the area and every residence with a 05602 address now gets The Bridge delivered to their mailbox at no charge.

Be a Leader in Bridging the Gap

Although The Bridge is free to readers, it takes money to produce it. Ongoing expenses for the small staff, printing, postage, distribution, and professional services are all rising fast due to inflation. Meanwhile, ad revenues are still below pre-pandemic levels. Even with donated office space, volunteers contributing time and energy, and its no-frills operation a critical gap remains between income and expenses.

To stabilize and sustain the paper we are asking committed supporters like you to increase your annual contribution.

The 2022 Bridging the Gap fundraising goal is \$30,000. We greatly appreciate your past donations and hope you will consider stepping up to a higher level this year.

The Bridge is one of the unique voices and resources that makes Montpelier and surrounding towns a capital region all Vermonters can be proud of.

This is your newspaper and we couldn't do it without you!

Local newspapers such as The Bridge build community and protect democracy, values that are core to my beliefs and my life. So I am more than happy to donate as a way of supporting those values.

– AUGUST BURNS, artist, former nonprofit director

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By the Numbers

2022 Budget highlights

- **Ad sales provide 88%** of The Bridge's **revenue** (the bulk comes from print ads).
- **Personnel** (including legal and accounting services, staff, and freelance writers) **totals 70%** of The Bridge's **expenses**.
- **Printing and delivery** costs make up **25%** of expenses
- Number of **Newspapers Mailed** Each Year **163,536**
- Number of **Newspapers Printed** Each Issue **10,300**
- **Percentage** of Our Survey Respondents that **Read Every Issue** **85%**
- Number of **Volunteer Hours** Per Issue **75**

What's Ahead?

There is so much more The Bridge wants to do — both in print and online.

Increasing local news coverage, broadening readership, updating its web site, and expanding distribution are all ways to better serve our community.

Editor Cassandra Hemenway, part-time staff and a core group of volunteers are constantly spread too thin to shine a light on all the issues that affect us. A separate effort is underway to hire a full or part-time reporter, lower the editor's job stress, and free up time to address the long-term health of the paper.

Increasing ad sales for The Bridge web site, promoting subscriptions in towns outside the 05602 mail delivery, reducing mailing costs, and grant requests all offer potential to help close the gap.

With your commitment, we can assure The Bridge has the financial stability it needs to put these steps in place.

We are fortunate in Vermont to still have some very dedicated and independent journalism. That's where The Bridge shows up in a big way. As a long-time business owner in Montpelier I value its well-rounded, in-depth, independent coverage of local topics.

— **JEFF FOTHERGILL**, partner,
Fothergill, Segale & Valley,
Certified Public Accountants

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We can't take this community gem for granted.

The Bridge is among a dwindling number of local newspapers in this country — published daily, weekly, or less frequently — working hard to keep high-quality, independent journalism alive. A staggering 1,800 local newsrooms in the United States have closed in less than 20 years. The absence of these trusted news sources opens the door for spreading misinformation through social networks, public forums, and websites masquerading as legitimate reporters.

To learn more about how philanthropy is creating a new business model for journalism, read Vermont Community Foundation's report *The News Front: Three Ways to Help local media outlets survive and thrive*. <https://bit.ly/38Tr6qd>

Give Generously • Contribute Boldly

Send Your Contribution Today to

Friends of The Bridge

P.O. Box 1641 Montpelier, VT 05601

friendsofthebridge18@gmail.com

Donate online: <https://montpelierbridge.org/donate/>

The Friends of The Bridge is a 501(c)(3) organization.

Your donation is tax deductible to the full extent allowed by law.

Friends of The Bridge. Following the lead of other community newspapers across the country, Friends of The Bridge formed in 2018. This 501(c)(3) tax-exempt organization leads fundraising efforts to assure the ongoing viability of this valued community treasure. Donor support, grants, and benefit events are all essential in closing the gap between advertising revenue and operating costs.

**Central Vermont's Free, Independent
and Local News Source Since 1993**

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