Montpelier's Independence Day Fest Revs Up

By Carla Occaso

Montpelier’s largest annual festival celebrates the United States declaring independence from Great Britain and is just around the corner. Organized and promoted by Montpelier Alive, the action-packed afternoon and evening is scheduled to begin Monday, July 3 at 3 p.m. This year’s theme is "resilience."

Family-friendly activities such as FamilyFest begin on the Statehouse lawn at 3 p.m. and will include dance, movement, face painting, and henna tattoos. Other activities will be music and bouncy houses. Also on hand will be Big Nazo and the Providence Drum Troupe. Big Nazo has dancing monsters, a three-eyed robot percussionist, mountain trolls, and more, according to bignazo.com.

And, food trucks will line State Street, including The Blooming Onion, Woodbelly Pizza, and Mo’s Backyard BBQ. Also serving food will be Butler Baked Potatoes, Doug’s Fresh Gyro, Fried Dough, Gracie’s Tamales, and The Skinny Pancake. To cool you off, Sisters of Anarchy and Kingdom Creamery are scheduled to sell ice cream, while lemonade can be obtained from Joan Peter’s Lemonade Stand. Also for sale will be glow sticks and gifts. In all, 30 vendors are set to offer eatables and other items from 3 to 10 p.m.

The downtown Montpelier Mile road race will begin at 6 p.m. followed by the parade at 6:15 p.m.

Joining in the parade is an array of musical, theatrical, and otherwise entertaining participants. Included are the award-winning Catamount Pipe Band (which won a first place trophy at the 2022 Glasgow Lands Scottish Festival), All Together Now puppets, and Emily Lanxner’s Honeybee Steelband of Hard-

By Cassandra Hemenway

Earlier this month students at Montpelier High School were rattled to learn that someone had painted a swastika with feces on the wall of the gender-neutral bathroom. But according to students and at least one parent, that incident is not isolated. It also happened at a time when reported antisemitic incidents in New England are at an all-time high, per the Anti-Defamation League, and attempts to pass a bill standardizing Holocaust education for Vermont students grades 6 to 12 have stalled for three legislative sessions in a row.

Also notable: although an annual full day educators’ workshop sponsored by the Vermont Holocaust Memorial has been offered to Vermont educators since 2018, no teacher from Montpelier schools has attended during that time, according to the organization’s president and co-founder Debora Steinerman.

The Hitler Youth Group Chat During a unit on the Holocaust taught as part of a Montpelier High School see Antisemitism, page 17

Montpelier not the only Antisemitic Incident in Schools

The Bridge Newspaper

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Community and Business News in Brief

Montpelier City Pool Delays Opening

The Montpelier city pool is awaiting a new part for the pool motor, delaying its opening date. The part – ordered back in April – is currently held up in manufacturing, causing the Recreation Department to delay the pool’s opening until the part can be installed, Arne McMullen, the city’s director of recreation and senior services, says the part is expected to be shipped at some point during the week of June 18.

“We’re hoping to start filling the pool as soon as the part ships so we can install it and open up as soon as possible,” McMullen said. The city will announce the pool’s anticipated opening date on its website, montpeliervt.org, as soon as more information is available.

—press release

Local Grads and Honors

The following students at the Community College of Vermont were named to the spring 2023 Dean’s List.

Barre
Taker Hall
Jasmine Mied
Riley Simon
Leonard Warwick
East Montpelier, Michael Abel
Middlesex
Wyler Gluck
Tegwen Vonculin
Montpelier
Mackenzie Naylor
Mackenzie Pierce
Raine Towns
Northfield, Orrin Price
Plainfield, Kimlinh Debona
South Barre, Abigail Violette
Waterbury Center, Kendal Laurent
Worcester, Caitlin McGinley

The following students at the Community College of Vermont were named to the spring 2023 Dean’s List at Norwich University for the spring 2023 semester.

Barre
Tyler Boutin
Caitlin Emerson
Abigail Geno
Autumn Lewis
Madison Pembroke
Nathan Romeo
Alaina Rueda
Richard Schottfield
Matthias Tchantouridze
Ariana Thurber
Brittany Weston
Lydia Brown
Anthony Castellaneta
Aren Cobb
Oliver Couture
Lindsay Gerrish
Cassandra Graves
Franklin Jensen-Moore
Hailey Lafaille
Lindsay LaPan

The following students at the Community College of Vermont were named to the spring 2023 President’s List.

Barre
Ashley Fraser
Madison MacDonald
Kadyona Striker
Berlin, Logan Riddle
Cabot, Abigail Scribner
East Montpelier, Owen Myka-Smith
Middlesex, April Davis
Montpelier
Kesia Benoit
Talyn Brown-Wolf
Samuel Colburn
Lourdes Macias

—Bridge staff

Country Club Road “Actionable” Report

The Phase One report about potential development of the city of Montpelier’s Country Club Road project will be reviewed by city councilors at their regular meeting, Wednesday, June 28, 6:30 p.m., at city hall.

Consultants Dave Salcido, transportation planning engineer at VBH, and Stephanie Clarke (White & Burke Real Estate Advisors) are requesting the city council adopt the Actionable Master Plan, “which will enable the city staff to move to Phase 2 and plan which steps and recommendations to follow,” they wrote in a cover memo to the council.

The visions and concerns of Montpelier residents, businesses, organizations, and city staff have been invited through a nearly year-long process of town hall meetings and public surveys.

The final draft of the Phase One Master Plan can be viewed here: montpelier-vt.org/1296/Country-Club-Road-Site-Property-Development.

The city council meeting can be attended in person at city hall, or virtually via ORCA: montpelier-vt.org/258/city-council-mayor.
New Farm Stand Slated for East Montpelier

A farm store and residence may soon appear along U.S. Route 2 in East Montpelier Village. Construction has begun and signs are up. According to zoning permit number 22-060 filed on Aug. 17, 2022, with the town of East Montpelier, Fontaine Meadows LLC is seeking to construct a 24-foot by 40-foot farm stand on U.S. Route 2. The Vermont Agency of Transportation greenlit a residential driveway to Marc Fontaine’s application on June 9, 2022, on the condition that it meets certain guidelines. The co-applicant is Sharon Bissell. Fontaine Meadows LLC is a limited liability company that was started on Aug. 10, 2022, according to Bizopedia.

Fontaine filed a more detailed zoning application Jan. 18, 2023 for a one-family dwelling and a commercial business, according to records. The application is to construct the above-mentioned farm stand in addition to a two-bedroom dwelling to be less than 1,200 square feet. It sits on a 45-acre lot with 1,470-feet of road frontage. The East Montpelier Design Review Board considered the application during their meeting Feb. 7, 2023. The farm stand will be on the lower part of the land while the house will be on the “upper plateau.” The property is zoned residential/commercial.

Todd Hill did the engineering. The farmstand and house will share water, wastewater, and a driveway. The board unanimously voted to approve the application on condition all necessary permits are obtained before construction begins.

Downtown Montpelier Water Shutdown Imminent

The Montpelier Department of Public Works has just installed approximately 80 feet of stormwater pipes, according to a recent report. While engaged in the work, they discovered an abandoned water service to 109 State Street that was no longer in service but still live at the valve. The valve configuration conflicts with the proposed storm line that is to be installed, however, and in order for the contractor to install the storm line at the proper elevation, a water shutdown will be needed. The tentative date for the water shutdown is Tuesday, July 11. Notices will be sent out to those who will be affected by the shutdown ahead of time. Crews will concentrate on getting everything ship shape for the Independence Day celebration — to include fixing/creating new sidewalks, curb cuts, and parking meters. People who want more information are urged to contact Evelyn Prim, the city’s communications coordinator, at eprim@montpelier vt.org.

Berlin Continues Discussing Encampment Policy

Berlin’s board of selectmen continued discussing an encampment policy aimed at dealing with people who are evicted from the Hilltop Inn but who have no place to go. No action was taken during their regular meeting June 19. The policy is based on one adopted by the city of Montpelier in September 2021. The topic generating the most discussion was what to do with property left behind when an encampment is abandoned, but no solution was reached. Selectman Ture Nelson said he knew of a business owner who reported someone had spent the night on their property. Selectboard member Flo Smith said she was concerned about storing stuff at the town offices for 30 days, but was open to discussion. She also noted that accounting for items would be necessary. Nelson said he was concerned about having the town “getting into the storage business,” but that the government should not take personal property. Also, Nelson noted, the property could be “potentially everything that these items would be necessary. Nelson said he was concerned about having the town “getting into the storage business,” but that the government should not take personal property. Also, Nelson noted, the property could be “potentially everything that these

Eduction has a deep history in the annals of Barre. In 1808 there were 10 one-room school houses throughout town, according to John W. Noble in his article, “Jacob Shedd Spaulding and the Barre Academy.” But by the late 1840s, Spaulding’s trustee also wanted secondary education. They set about fund-raising to pay for just such a venture.

By the mid 1800s there were two “flourishing” secondary schools in Barre: the Academy and the Seminary.

Barre’s Academy, built in 1852, was open for 35 years, with 28 of those years under the guidance of Jacob S. Spaulding, according to Noble. His pupils called him “Uncle Jake.” Spaulding, who lost his mother at the age of 4, and, as one of 13 children, was a stepson to at least two subsequent stepmothers, grew up in Massachusetts and met a girl (Mary Wilkins Taylor) who inspired him to further his education. He then got a scholarship and went to Dartmouth College, where he earned a master’s degree. He married Taylor and they moved to Vermont, where he became the head of the Barre Academy in 1852. Spaulding High School now stands where the old academy used to be.

The other school, the Goddard Seminary, was chartered in 1863 as the Green Mountain Central Institute, according to Charles Smith, who wrote about it in the Vermont Historical Gazetteer. The name changed in 1875 to Goddard Seminary, perhaps because the late Rev. Thomas Goddard of Boston contributed $10,000. As higher education was sought, Goddard became a junior college and then moved out of Barre in 1938, when its then-principal Royce “Tim” Pitkin moved it to Plainfield where Goddard College still operates. Pitkin remained as Goddard’s president until 1969, according to vermonthistory.com. The Seminary building, located where the Barre Auditorium now stands, was torn down in 1939.

Both the Academy and the Seminary educated males and females, and always “maintained an honorable and high position in the State as educational institutions,” according to Smith.

—compiled by Carla Occaso

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P.O. Box 1143, Montpelier, VT 05601 • Ph: 802-223-5112
Editor-in-Chief: Cassandra Hemenway
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Layout: Dana Dwinell-Yardley
Ad Director: Rick McMahon
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NATURE WATCH

Words and art by Nona Estrin

A wet summer week and the trees are heavy with leaves. Young fledged robins, cedar waxwings, and even a family of great crested flycatchers are visiting the shadbushes to inspect the berries, which, here, at 900 feet, survived the frost, but are late to ripen. Baby bird month, also late, but underway!
**Letters to the Editor**

**Hunger Mountain Co-op Sponsorship of the North Branch Community Garden**

The North Branch Community Garden recently announced that the Hunger Mountain Co-op is providing sponsorship support to help the garden address long-term needs for fencing and improving the water system in the garden.

With over 60 gardeners sharing space at the North Branch Nature Center, the Montpelier community garden provides food for scores of families who rent apartments or live in homes without appropriate places to grow food.

The Co-op sponsorship will help garden members confront two fundamental challenges this year: adequate fencing and having enough water through hot summer months.

The Co-op sponsorship will replace an inadequate plastic fence on the west end of the garden with a steel fence buried to prevent groundhog incursions and 6 feet high with higher wires to prevent deer from jumping over it.

Funding from the Co-op will provide a more powerful in-well pump connected to a solar generator to push water from the well to a storage tank that provides a gravity feed to access points in the garden.

Progress on fencing and the water system are made especially important with new developments at the garden’s host site, the North Branch Nature Center. The Nature Center is creating a teaching and learning garden within the community garden, partnering with a group of Indigenous community members to build a new Indigenous-led garden adjacent to the community garden, and growing corn and beans with the Abenaki Land Link Project.

“This grant will bring us much relief from natural pressures and help our community find more joy in our gardening endeavors. We are overwhelmed with gratitude,” said Emmanuelle Soumelhan, a member of the community garden’s leadership team.

Together with the Co-op, community garden members are dedicated to fresh organic local food and to equitable food access for local families. —press release

**On Banning Political Discourse**

To the Editor:

Someone recently posted on the local Front Porch Forum (FPF) online platform requesting that discussion concerning anything related to politics be banned from the forum, and there have since been some posts both pro and con posted on the subject.

It is my understanding that FPF already has established guidelines and rules about what is permissible when posting and, as long as those specific guidelines and rules are followed, one is free to post about anything of concern to the person posting as well as the community at large.

If what are considered to be politically related discussions were banned from FPF, who then draws the line and where does that line get drawn?

Why stop at politics?

How about religion or any other subject that might be considered controversial and someone might have an opinion about?

How about banning anything that might be considered potentially disturbing and upsetting or otherwise might require serious reflection and thought as well as what might bring about necessary dialogue and the seeking of answers to serious questions, such as — by way of example — better addressing as well as ending homelessness and so on?

You know what, let’s just forget about thinking and speaking freely for oneself and ask everyone to just shut up, because thinking or speaking freely for oneself could potentially cause disharmony for someone.

While we are at it, however, why not simply do away with the First Amendment of the federal constitution altogether? That ought to take care of it, no?

Banning discussion and the exercising of free speech on what is supposed to be a community forum is a rather slippery slope, in my opinion

Morgan W. Brown, Montpelier

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**Assessment Grievances Due by July 19**

Montpelier City Assessor Marty Lagerstedt has completed a two-year long reassessment of city property, and recently announced that the grievance process has begun. He posted the following on Front Porch Forum last week:

“Agreedly to the provisions of Title 32, Vermont State Statutes Annotated, Section 4111, notice is hereby given that the undersigned assessor within and for the City of Montpelier has this day completed the abstract of property owners as of the first day of April 2023. The assessor has this same day lodged the abstract in the office of the clerk for the inspection of taxpayers.

On the 5th day of July, 2023, at 9 a.m., the undersigned assessor will meet by appointment at City Hall, to hear appeals of the taxpayers aggrieved by actions of the assessor from whom timely grievances have been received. To be timely, such grievance must be in writing and received in this office at your hearing or by mail/email no later than the 19th day of July, 2023. At the close of grievance hearings, the assessor shall make such corrections in the abstract as were determined upon hearing or otherwise. Unless cause to the contrary is shown, the contents of said abstract will, for the tax year 2023, become the grand list of the city of each taxpayer named therein.

Signed at Montpelier, in the County of Washington, this 20th day of June, 2023

Marty Lagerstedt, Assessor, City of Montpelier”
June is the time for backyard BBQs, summer vacations, and outdoor adventures. Most of us are too busy enjoying the beautiful-but-fleeting Vermont summertime to attend a city meeting, catch up on the news, or write to our local representative about issues affecting our community. But no matter the season, your city is working hard to make sure you have what you need to thrive.

Making it easy to stay connected with your city is the mission behind our strategic initiative to communicate effectively. As we enter the second half of the year and our lives adjust to the rhythm of summer, we wanted to take a moment to highlight some of the ways the city is working to make our local government easier to engage with and more responsive to our community’s needs. After all, connecting people with what they need to know is what public service is all about.

What does it mean to communicate effectively? To understand what effective communication is, it’s crucial to understand what it does, and why it’s so important to our current strategic plan:

• **Effective communication brings people together.** When people from different communities come together, we become stronger and better able to solve problems. More diverse perspectives mean we’re more likely to come up with solutions that benefit more people.

• **Effective communication doesn’t just inform — it empowers.** When we connect people with information, it opens opportunities to contribute to our community. One of our greatest strengths as a city is our active and engaged community members. Our committee members — volunteers who are passionate and dedicated to serving our city — are a testament to the strength we hold collectively as a community.

• **Effective communication creates public value.** We all benefit from a thriving community because what we put in is an investment in our future selves. Communicating effectively means we’re getting a bigger return on our initial investment. It’s a positive feedback loop that grows stronger with every message.

Making communication accessible is part of what makes it effective. When we remove barriers to communication, we enable more people to participate in our democracy.

That’s why I’m excited to share the newest addition to our communications repertoire, our podcast, A Minute in Montpelier.

A Minute in Montpelier will feature one topic a month in a half-hour-long show available free on Spotify. Our Communications Coordinator Evelyn Prim will introduce a special guest or group who will discuss recent topics of public interest on each episode.

Episode 1 will feature our city assessor, Marty Lagerstedt, and will be available on Spotify starting on June 29. Marty will be talking about the current city reappraisal and answering questions submitted by the public.

Why a podcast? Several reasons:

• **Podcasts allow us to reach a wide audience.** People can listen to a podcast virtually anywhere thanks to smartphones, radios, and Wi-Fi.

• **Podcasts reach people where they are and don’t require a significant time commitment.** You can start and pause a podcast at your convenience, on your chosen device, on your own time.

• **Podcasts reach audiences who may have difficulty accessing visual or written communication, or who can’t physically attend a meeting.** Adding podcasts to our array of communication methods increases their diversity and capacity to better serve the needs of our residents.

In addition to our podcast, we’re working diligently to revitalize our website to have it serve as the central hub for all communications. Our website upgrade has been an ongoing project since it began in the summer of last year and has involved hundreds of hours of content analysis, user-interface adjustments, and systems and layout development.

Our team has been working diligently to remove content that is no longer useful and replace it with content that better serves our current needs. A few recent additions include:

• A communications page outlining all the ways to stay connected with our city. It also contains an archive of our monthly articles in The Bridge, such as this one, and links to our social media accounts,

• An up-to-the-minute “News Flash” carousel on our homepage where we post the latest and notable happenings around town,

• Montpelier Police Department updates and reporting data, including quarterly reports, media logs, and monthly raw data sets to keep our commitment to transparency and accountability.

Listening, learning from, and responding to our community is a top priority for all city staff. In addition to developing systems and structures for sharing information with the public, we’re also working to improve the way the public can share information with us.

Creating space for collaboration and dialogue helps us achieve greater outcomes than if either of us were to go it alone. City council meetings aren’t the only way you can participate — our committees also serve an important role in the way action items are triaged and how decisions get made.

Committee meetings are also a great way to share your ideas or thoughts on a particular topic that affects our city. Each committee has a city staff liaison who helps facilitate meetings and acts on the decisions made by the committee.

If you have questions about an activity or event, want to report an issue, or would like more information on a city project, we encourage you to reach out to us by email, phone, or stop by city hall during business hours. Contact information for every department is located on their respective webpage on our website, www.montpelier-vt.org

TELL THEM YOU SAW IT IN THE BRIDGE.
Darragh Ellerson Inducted into RunVermont Hall of Fame

By J. Gregory Gerdel

I f you look back at either photographs or results of running races in the 1970s, the striking observation is that the participants are almost entirely male. But if you look closely, you’re likely to spot Darragh Ellerson, especially in central Vermont events, but also in races across New England.

Darragh’s inspiring legacy as a runner has been evident in running event results over the past three decades. Running results these days typically show that the largest cohort of runners are females in their 30s; overall, the gender balance tends to be even. The current membership of the Central Vermont Runners includes 128 females, 132 males, and three who did not disclose their gender.

As part of last month’s RunVermont Marathon celebration in Burlington, Darragh has been inducted into the RunVermont Hall of Fame, joining fellow inductee Dot Helling in an expanding list of Central Vermont Runners recognized for their participation, coaching, or advocacy for running. The consensus among the running community is that in addition to persevering as an advocate and reliable volunteer for local running events, Darragh has been an inspiration for many.

At 92, Darragh regularly walks down — and briskly back up — the steep hill where North Street climbs to the prominent overlook where the home that she and her husband, the late Dr. David Ellerson, pediatrician, built in the early 1970s. Darragh designed the house herself, inspired by the years the Ellersons lived in Germany while David served as a physician in the U.S. Army.

Up, Down, and Beyond the Hill

Darragh explained that she “returned to running” at the age of 42, after working to support David through medical school and having five children. She did persuade her daughter Deirdre (then a recent college graduate) to run with her “so long as we didn’t go downtown,” Darragh recalled.

Sprints up and down North Street, with its spectacular views of the valley that channels the North Branch River and shelters the city, were a regular part of her routine — until she was counseled by Nordic Olympian Larry Damon, whom she had met at running events, “Don’t leave all your races on North Street!” She soon discovered she enjoyed longer races, first running up Route 12 to Worcester and back to town. Then, to Elmore and back; Morrisville and back; and even the entire loop through Stowe, Waterbury, and Middlesex well before ultra-distances became a thing.

“I was typically running 50 miles a week,” she said, with the qualification that people didn’t pay as much attention to mileage in those days.

“We didn’t have as many local races, or even that many races in Vermont, so we had to travel,” she said. In all, Darragh ran 17 marathons before she had a fall in which she broke her neck. While her recovery was considered successful, she decided to keep her racing distances shorter.

That didn’t mean she started taking it easy.

Sam Davis, a central Vermont native (Dr. Ellerson was his pediatrician) who shepherded Darragh’s nomination to the RunVermont Hall of Fame, notes that he first encountered Darragh the runner when he attended local fun runs and entered local races while he was attending U-32 High School and running on the track team. “She left it all out on the race course, always doing the best she possibly could,” Davis said.

That effort and perseverance had its rewards. On a trip for a race in Massachusetts, Darragh outkicked the woman considered the fastest in the area to win the event. The race records maintained by the Central Vermont Runners Club indicate that in races at many distances, Darragh consistently won her age group — and often would have been on the podium (among the top three finishers) for age groups decades younger.

Girls, Women, and Advocacy

Noting that when her eldest daughter, Deirdre, entered high school, sports options for girls were still limited, and running was not among them, Darragh explained.

“I had the good fortune of going to a private school where my parents were teachers; that gave me lots of opportunities to participate in sports,” she said. In fact, because she was so fast on her feet, she was recruited to the varsity field hockey team as a seventh grader.

Darragh’s field hockey coach was taken aback to learn that Darragh was running several miles to her home — after practice. The coach requested a meeting with her parents, who, apparently forward looking, responded to the concern by saying that if Darragh was enjoying running, she should continue to do it!

By the end of the 1970s the local group of runners, which often traveled to events in other states, collaborated to create more local events, including the popular Fun Run on Tuesday evenings during the summer and fall. In 1980 they established the Central Vermont Runners Club. Darragh initially served as treasurer, then vice-president, president, and as race director for several events as the club grew through the 1980s. She, her husband David, and their kids, regularly volunteered to support running events as timers, at water stations, or managing the finish line.

After David retired from his practice, Darragh reliably attended the weekly Fun Runs as the official timer when she stopped running them. The cadre of younger women, many of whom have become accomplished runners, regard Darragh as both an inspiration and a mentor. Fellow Hall of Fame inductee Dot Helling, who has run across the United States, Europe, Russia, and along the Great Wall of China, notes Darragh’s penchant for precise workouts. “You always had to do the exact, measured, and timed workout. No improvement! No changing routes or cutting out miles. She loved Route 2 out and back for exactness,” Helling said.

While Darragh certainly was a pioneer during the breakthrough in women’s running, Helling added, “More importantly, she carried this significance through a lifetime of supporting running whether she was out there herself or not. She and her husband David attended virtually every CVR event, he as a medical volunteer and she as a runner or race volunteer. They were the billboard couple, dedicated to running in central Vermont not as participants but as supporters for all.”
**After Being Accosted by Protesters at a Queer Poetry Reading, a Vermont Artist Fears for his Safety**

From VT Digger, by Auditi Guha

A Vermont poet and former Montpelier resident said he is distraught and concerned for his safety after being targeted by protesters at a queer poetry reading he hosted at Lyndonville’s public library.

“Unfortunately it seems that here in Vermont the BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, people of color) and queer community are definitely under attack,” said Toussaint St. Negritude, who is gay and Black.

In celebration of Pride Month, the 63-year-old Newark resident was hosting a poetry reading at the Cobleigh Library in Lyndonville on Saturday morning. Titled “All our queer voices,” it had been advertised on social media and on fliers around town.

An hour into the event, which St. Negritude described as “a very simple gathering … for anyone to bring a book and to read aloud your favorite queer poet,” library staff alerted him to a small group of protesters who were standing outside holding signs with religious slogans such as “Prepare to meet thy God.”

“They were chanting my name. I don’t know these people but they were literally publicly condemning me,” St. Negritude said in an interview Tuesday. It was horrifying to have to go outside.

He said the library staff decided to end the event. The attendees, most of whom were white, exited first through the back door. St. Negritude was escorted out the back door soon after, according to library staff.

As he exited, one of the protesters — an older woman — ran toward him chanting his name, he recounted.

“She had a bag beside her and had her hand in this bag holding something, something that could happen to be a gun. And she’s saying, ‘Toussaint, Toussaint, can I give you something?’” he said, describing the interaction as “absolutely terrifying.”

St. Negritude retreated back into the library, waited until the coast seemed clear and then a library staff member drove him to his car, which was around the corner.

Later that day, on his way to Jazz Fest in Burlington, St. Negritude decided to stop by a local thrift store. On his way out, the same woman accosted him on the stairs outside of the store, he said — she again had her hand in the bag and said she wanted to give him something.

“And that really freaked me out because you know this is not just in front of a library. They’re literally following me around,” he said. “And I just screamed at her to get away from me. I screamed at her a couple of times. She eventually backed off. Then I left and drove straight to Burlington.”

An African American poet, composer, and jazz bass clarinetist, St. Negritude has been living in Vermont for 14 years. In February, he was asked to perform the daily devotional at the Statehouse before the Vermont House began its proceedings. He is, however, no stranger to racial hatred in the Green Mountain State.

“I’ve had random cars drive by yell the ‘N’ word, tell me to go back to Africa,” he said. “It’s happened in front of the Flynn Theatre in Burlington. It’s happened in Montpelier. That’s the most consistent thing that seems to happen everywhere in Vermont.”

But he said he has never felt as targeted as he did on Saturday.

**‘Nervous’ and ‘dishheartened’**

Cobleigh Library Director Bryn Hoffman said the institution had not previously encountered anything like what happened on Saturday. Though they weren’t present at the event, their staff gave them an overview that matches St. Negritude’s account of what happened.

From photos taken by staff, they estimated there were about five people outside.

“Having folks show up in that manner won’t deter us. Those are not values that the library shares,” said Hoffman. “We will continue to hold programs here that celebrate and uplift queer voices and Black voices and other voices from within the community.”

Hoffman said they plan to meet with the library board of trustees next week to discuss further actions.

Lyndonville town and police officials said they did not know about the incident and that no complaints or hate reports have been filed there in the past three years.

“No calls were made to any law enforcement on Saturday for any issues at the library. No law enforcement responded, we are unaware of any incidents,” Municipal Administrator Justin Smith said in an email that copied Police Chief Jack Harris.

St. Negritude said he is considering filing a police report and requesting a restraining order against members of what he characterized as a local extremist religious family who he believes participated in the protest Saturday.

Christopher Kaufman Ilstrup, executive director of the Vermont Humanities Council where St. Negritude works as a community programs officer, called the incident “horrifying” but also “not at all surprising” given the rise of hate groups and attacks across the nation.

“So it’s sad that it’s here now but it’s not something that I think we can avoid. And we need to publicly address it and call it out for what it is, which is hate speech. And quite frankly, menacing and terrorism,” he said.

It’s tragic that hate groups are particularly targeting libraries that are designed to be inclusive spaces for all, particularly BIPOC and LGBTQ+ people, he added.

“We’re seeing calls being made to libraries all over the state and if you talk to libraries anywhere in Vermont you’ll hear from them that they’re quite nervous about the national situation coming to our local doors,” he said.

Hoffman also pointed to this trend in an email Tuesday. “At their best, libraries should be places of community building and liberation, where information is accessed freely and fear free,” they wrote.

“We will continue to strive to create a space that allows for this, and reject whatever ethos would lead someone to try to intimidate and terrorize a proud Black queer poet on the street outside a public library following a community poetry reading where it was expressly stated that ‘Everyone is welcome,’” they continued.

Founded in 2022, organizers of the Northeast Kingdom Rainbow Coalition, which is preparing for its first-ever Pride event in Newport, said they are “extremely disheartened.”

“We stand with Toussaint and hope that others will stand with us to show those who want to harm us that our pride is stronger than their hate,” co-organizer Alex Ladd said in a message.

**Hate is here in Vermont**

Three days after the incident, St. Negritude reflected on a growing wave of hate and intolerance nationwide, including in Vermont, and said he hopes that people can acknowledge it and address it.

In a Facebook post Tuesday shared by his friend, Theo Fetter, he described a litany of violent attacks and racist acts in Vermont “including being shot at, having the windshields of two cars bashed out, denied employment, denied housing, and regularly taunted by Vermonters yelling their favorite ‘n-word.’ My own mother has been threatened here, with neighbors yelling ‘white power!’

Vermonters have often invalidated his experience and told him he must have been mistaken, he noted in the interview.

“I would like people to understand that that denial is allowing this hatred not only remain but to grow, to blossom,” St. Negritude said.

“Hate is here in Vermont, as it is around the country, and hate is here as it has been since the founding of the state. But I would really like people to hopefully, once and for all, quit the denial from Vermont being so happy-go-lucky inclusive and face the reality that we have a very dark and threatening hatred here. Rather than waiting for funerals and waiting for marches after funerals, we need to seriously address it now, statewide,” he said.

As he prepare(d) to participate in June-tenth events [earlier this month], St. Negritude said he is notifying organizers that he is being targeted, in case they want to consider security.

“Vermont, where poets need security,” he wrote in his Facebook post. In an interview Tuesday, he was more blunt: “I really hope I don’t get shot.”

Editor’s note: The Bridge will occasionally be printing locally relevant stories from VT Digger as part of a story exchange between the two news organizations.
Free and Local Outdoor Summer Music

By Carolyn Grodinsky

Summer officially kicked off last week and we’re lucky to have a vibrant music scene in central Vermont … and so much of it is free!

Thursdays feature both a noontime concert and an evening concert this summer in Montpelier, starting July 13 with the return of the popular Hunger Mountain Coop Brown Bag Concert Series and Parkapalooza with an incredible mix of genres and musicians.

Fred Wilber coordinated the Hunger Mountain Coop Brown Bag Concert Series for many years, and while he didn’t know when the series started, he knew they had gone on for years. Initially the music centered on folk musicians and singer-songwriters, but he worked to stretch the boundaries of what was considered lunchtime music and added jazz, hip hop, and other genres. He noted that as he diversified the music, people were listening more.

Montpelier Alive’s current director, Katie Trautz, a well-known local musician, chose this year’s lineup, with music including African, Cajun, jazz, indie, and swing. Enjoy lunch from a downtown restaurant or bring your own lunches each Thursday from 12 p.m. to 1 p.m. from July 13 through August 24 in the courtyard of Christ Church (64 State Street). See the lineup here: montpelieralive.com/brownbag

Hubbard Park’s evening Parkpalooza returns on Thursdays from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. at the Tuning Forks Stage, next to the Old Shelter. The concert series runs from July 13 to August 24. Alec Ellsworth, Montpelier’s Parks and Trees Director, launched the series six years ago to give people another reason to enjoy Hubbard Park. Over the years park staff have made improvements to the event, including building a beautiful stage (using wood from the park), setting up a 100-foot slip ’n slide, and adding food vendors to every event. Park management requests concert-goers to walk or carpool whenever possible, as parking is limited. See the lineup at bit.ly/Parkapalooza.

The Capital City Band performs weekly concerts in front of the Supreme Court building on Wednesdays from 7 to 8 p.m. June 21 through August 16. Band members range in age from middle school students to retired folks. Some are professionals, others have only been playing for a couple of years. According to a 2017 Vermont Digger article by Paul Heller, the band goes back all the way to 1837, playing concerts on the Statehouse lawn since about 1876. Bring chairs, picnic blankets, kids, snacks, frisbees or croquet sets, even dancing shoes! All who are interested in playing are welcome, bring an instrument, chair, and music stand. You can reach the band at capitalcitybandvt@gmail.com.

The Montpelier Jazz Project plays a backyard concert each Wednesday at the corner of Loomis and Liberty streets. The music started in 2017 when organizer Rollin Tait moved back from Britain and put an ad on Craig’s list and Front Porch Forum. The group has been playing together for about four years (now with six musicians). Concerts were originally inside, however when COVID-19 hit, they moved outside in Rollin’s backyard. Bring a picnic dinner and enjoy jazz music on Wednesdays from 5:45 to 7:45 p.m. Music continues into September, up until the cooler weather returns.

Keep your ears tuned on your evening walk as informal porch concerts pop up throughout the city all summer long.

Carolyn Grodinsky is the events and marketing coordinator for Montpelier Alive.

Stepping out of the capital city? Check out these venues for free outdoor summer concerts:

• Camp Meade, Middlesex — Fridays and Sundays, mostly 5 to 8 p.m., next event is Mikahely on June 20: campmeade.today/events
• Middlesex Bandstand — Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. starting July 5 with Myra Flynn: middlesexbandstand.com
• Currier Park, Barre — Concerts start at 6 p.m., series runs on Thursdays from July to September (concerts start at 5:30 p.m. in September) starting with The Rustics on July 6: thebarrepartnership.com/curtier-park-concerts
• The Landing VT, Worcester, two concerts left in the summer series; coming soon is Tim Brick July 7: thelandingvt.com/concertseries-1
• Old Schoolhouse Common Gazebo, Marshfield, concert series Thursdays 6:30 to 8:30 p.m.

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Independence Day
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wick. The “Honeybee’ performers are made up of activist performers seeking to protect pollinators, according to their Facebook page. “Our work highlights the problem of toxic pesticides and other poisons that threaten the survival of bees and other pollinators worldwide — without bees, we will perish as well!”

Additionally, at the parade will be Hannaford’s Fife and Drum Corps, the Mt. Sinai Go-Karts, and two West African music and dance performers: Jen Kulo and Shidaa Projects, according to Montpelier Alive.

After the parade, revelers are invited to attend a performance by Chad Hollister at 7 p.m. And U-32’s Julia Fortin will sing “The Star-Spangled Banner” at 9:20 p.m. prior to the fireworks display at 9:30 p.m.

Questions about volunteering? Contact the volunteer coordinator Yasi Zeichner at volunteer@montpelieralive.org. Find out everything you need to know about attending Montpelier’s Independence Day Celebration at montpelieralive.com/july3-2023. Lead sponsors include Union Mutual Insurance, Community National Bank, and the National Life Group. Additional sponsors include North Country Federal Credit Union; Cody Chevrolet; UVM Health Network; Capital Community Church; The City of Montpelier; Casella; and Denis, Ricker, and Brown.

Montpelier’s first Independence Day celebration was held July 4, 1807, according to Daniel P. Thompson’s “History of the town of Montpelier from the time it was first chartered in 1781 to the year 1860.” That year people gave speeches on the foundation of the first Statehouse followed by a procession through town. State Street had been marked and surveyed, but not yet open to horse traffic. Nor was there a bridge across the North Branch, so people had to cross from what is now Main Street to the Statehouse by wading across the river.

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Other area Independence Day festivities include:

Barre:
A July 4 “Freedom Ride” will start at Wilkins Harley Davidson at 10 a.m., 663 South Barre Road, Barre, Vt. Safety briefing at 9:45 a.m. All makes and models of motorcycles welcome. Complimentary lunch upon return.

Cabot:
July 4 parade at 11 a.m. The parade, organized by the Cabot Fire Department, will award parade participants “The Cheesiest,” “Most Patriotic,” and best “Get Outside” theme. Pre-registration is not necessary. There will also be a rummage sale from 8 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Cabot School gym, music, and a farm market after the parade. On the rec field will be food vendors, bouncy houses, and field games.

Warren:
July 4 parade and festivities to include activities beginning at 8:30 a.m. The parade starts at 10 a.m. with the theme “Sounds of Freedom.” No need to register for the parade, just begin to assemble on Main Street by 9 a.m. (enter south of Main Street by the covered bridge). Fireworks at 9:15 p.m. at Sugarbush’s Lincoln Peak. Sponsors are Waitsfield Champlain Valley Telecom, Lawson’s Finest Liquids, WDEV Radio, rk Miles Lumber & Building, Mad River Glen, Sugarbush Resort, and A&J Recycling.

Worcester:
July 4 parade at 11 a.m. Participants line up at 10:30 a.m. Worcester Historical Society Open House, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (closed during parade). Food is available at 11:30 a.m. Food and activities including Woodbelly Pizza, Fred’s Ice Cream Truck, and Fried Dough. Also, from the community are sausage grinders, fruit cups, lemonade, and more. Games, races, and activities including a song circle begin at 12:15 p.m. A raffle will be held at 1 p.m., and at 1:15 p.m. there will be the dedication of a historical marker recognizing the White School. Then, at 1:30, “Reading Frederick Douglass” and more. Food and entertainment will go on into the evening to be capped off by fireworks at 9:15 p.m.

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Ellie Tobin Stubbs, CFP®, AWMA®, BFA™
Financial Advisor
802.622.8050
14 N Main St, Suite 2001, Barre, VT 05641
ellie.stubbs@ampf.com
ameripriseadvisors.com/ellie.stubbs
AR license #3762524

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Ellie Tobin Stubbs, CFP®
Financial Advisor
802.622.8050
14 N Main St, Suite 2001, Barre, VT 05641
ellie.stubbs@ampf.com
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“Act 39,” the Pushcart Productions play currently running at Goddard College’s Haybarn Theater, opens with Rob, one of the two main characters, blowing a bubble and then bursting it with the swing of a wooden baseball bat, as he notes its brief, fragile existence. That moment captures two sides of this excellent new autobiographical work by playwright Rob Mermin: taking a joyful, playful, and adventurous approach to life, while facing its fragility and human mortality.

The title itself, a reference to Vermont’s 2013 Patient Choice and Control Act at the End of Life Act, indicates that this is not a comedy; however, this is a life-affirming play that celebrates fun and friendship, even as it deals with end-of-life decisions. It is not until almost an hour in, near the end of the first act, that the audience learns that Bill, the second main character, is facing a terminal illness. The story is told from Rob’s perspective, with dream and memory scenes that bring Hercules, Sigmund Freud, and others to the stage.

Mermin was neighbors and best friends with Bill Morancy, a projectionist at Montpelier’s Savory Theater and a film expert, who with fellow film expert Rick Winston had presented more than 200 “Talking About Movies” programs on ORCA community television. In 2015, when he discovered he had stage four pancreatic cancer, Morancy asked Mermin to help him through the final months of his life. Rob, himself, had learned that he had Parkinson’s Disease the year before, a factor that adds greater poignancy to the story. The real-life Rob and Bill became the characters with the same names in the play.

Act 39 was still new, and like most Vermonters, at the start, neither Rob nor Bill knew anything about it. The play clearly explains the process that potentially allows terminally ill patients to end their life, with characters effectively arguing for and against doing so. But before getting that heavy, the play offers lots of fun — including Rob and Bill playing catch on stage, a Western-style duel with squirt guns, dowsing for cash, and lots of on-stage tricks (that you can do at home). Plus, ongoing jokes and witty banter run throughout the play.

Veteran actor and associate producer J.T. Turner plays Rob, and Donny Osman, who plays Bill, has worn too many Vermont hats to list them all. Among Maren’s roles, she plays Maren Langdon Spillane, Vermont’s touring summer circus for youth, in 1987.

Mermin was one of the world’s greatest mimes. He founded Circus Smirkus, Vermont’s touring summer circus for youth, and Bill became the characters with the same names in the play.

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MHS Students Paint Surreal Panels for Main Street Space

By Tom McKone

Art can be serious or fun, filled with meaning or just something that looks cool — and it’s always good for building community. Those views were expressed by some of the more than 20 Montpelier High School students who contributed to the 10 new panels recently installed on the open space next to the Drawing Board on Main Street in Montpelier.

“Art allows people to express themselves,” said Cooper Davis. “It also makes public spaces look better.” Davis said that his striking painting of a skeleton taking a bite out of a vinyl record is not intended to make a comment on records. Not one to miss a chance for irony, he wore a Buch Spieler Records T-shirt for the class photo with the panels.

“I imagined this sort of thing in ninth grade, and when this project came up, I thought I would make it,” said Davis, who has just completed his sophomore year. “I thought it would look cool.” (When a student’s grade is mentioned in this article, it is for the school year that was just concluded.)

A Manikin Protesting Conformity

Sophomore Georgia Tanner, on the other hand, had plenty to say about the meaning of the painting that she and classmate Grace Dostie made of a manikin controlled by strings, like a marionette.

“It was originally inspired by one of the little wooden manikins that you use for posing model artwork,” Tanner said. “You can interpret it however you want, but a way we’ve been interpreting it is being pushed to conform to society’s ideals, being micromanaged, being in the public eye and being watched all the time, being told what you should like, how you should act, and feeling controlled and stuck into a box.”

Tanner and Dostie said those are challenges of being teenagers as well as of confronting society’s views of what it means to be a woman.

A New Exhibit Replaces an Old One

The panels created by the MHS students were mounted on top of the faded and damaged translucent panels that were installed as a short-term work two years ago.

“Te work is painted with exterior latex paint on masonite panels,” said commissioner Rob Hitzig, adding “The Public Art Commission supplied the materials and let the students paint what they wanted, as long as it was family friendly.”

Calling the student work “positive and joyful,” he noted that immediately after the panels were installed, the commission applied an anti-graffiti coating.

Art teacher Colleen “Flan” Flanagan had worked with MHS students to paint “Perseverance,” the Black civil rights-themed mural facing the bike path and U.S. Rt. 2/Berlin Street from the back wall of the Montpelier Recreation Center, so Hitzig asked her if she had a class that might want to paint the panels.

Flanagan, who said she hopes school collaborations with the Public Art Commission continue, said the 22 students in her painting class selected surrealism as a unifying theme for the collection and worked mostly in teams. Surreal art may explore unconscious feelings and is characterized by fantastic imagery. Meeting with a reporter for The Bridge at the panels the day after they were installed, Flanagan’s class was clearly enthusiastic about the project.

How Is the Work Surreal?

Sophomores Russell Clar and Chen-Chen MacVicar-Ceckler and junior Abby Garland painted the colorful, dramatic panel closet to the bike path and Shaw’s Supermarket. Clar said the untitled piece is “compositonally fun” and that he enjoyed playing with the scale.

Asked how the work was surreal, Clar said, “You’ve got a person who’s a couple miles tall and there are some magical vibes … It’s like — what’s going on?”

Somerset Pierce and Maggie Kords, both juniors, said their painting of skeleton hands releasing butterflies that take the shape of a flower is about “focusing on the beauty of life and letting go of bad things.”

Juniors Ella Averbeck and Finley Martin-Torrens said their bright painting, which includes a floating turtle, was inspired by Manuel Esteban Paez Terán, an activist who was killed by state police near Atlanta in January. An indigenous, queer, and nonbinary environmental activist and community organizer from Venezuela, they were known as Tortuguita (“little turtle” in Spanish), and the circumstances of the killing have been very controversial. Martin-Torrens said that activism and change are important to people in Montpelier, and Averbeck said the rising sun in their painting represents hope.

Zoe Ayers’ painting is of flowers, space, and planets. Commenting that it is good to have a lot of art around, Ayers said the presence of art reflects the people who live here, and the surreal works in this collection reflect the personalities of the students.

The Artists Who Painted the Panels

Below is a listing of the ten panels and the students who worked on each. The leading phrases are sometimes official names and sometimes just descriptive phrases used to identify them.

- Woman with birds: Russell Clar, Chen-Chen MacVicar-Ceckler, and Abby Garland.
- Eye marionette: Grace Dostie and Georgia Tanner.
- Skeleton eating record: Cooper Davis.
- Gnome over Montpelier: Sophie Gustafson, Sienna Mills, Jada Lewis, and Molly McGill.
- Tortugita: Finley Torrens-Martin and Ella Averbeck.
- Butterfly vase: Somerset Pierce and Maggie Kords.
- Abstract hallway: Mira Pompei and Niko Stonorov.
- Outer space: Zoe Ayers.
- Deer in forest fire: Hailey Sheehan and Ava Andriolletti.

Montpelier High School art teacher Colleen “Flan” Flanagan and her class pose among the panels the students painted for the open space beside the Drawing Board on Main Street. Flanagan is in the front, second from the left, in a blue denim jacket. Photo by Tom McKone.
The Montpelier High School Ultimate team made the headline in the Times Argus sports pages when they defeated Central Valley Union High School to win the state championship on Saturday, June 10. Maybe your reaction to this newsflash was, “Ultimate … what?” The game, formerly known as Ultimate Frisbee, hasn’t been around all that long.

Vermont made Ultimate a varsity sport in 2017, the first state to do so, and in 2019, the MHS team became the first squad in the nation to win a state championship. Ultimate is now one of the fastest growing sports in the country but MHS senior Ethan Borland notes, “I don’t think people completely recognize how different a sport it is.”

The origins of Ultimate may go back to the 1940s and the old Frisbie Bakery in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Frisbie pies came in metal pie plates that nearby Yale students enjoyed tossing in the air, calling out “Frisbie” in the same way golfers yell, “Fore!”

In the late 1950s, the Wham-O company bought the patent for a frisbee-like plastic disc called the Pluto Platter, renamed it the Frisbee, and patented the name. Frisbees were an instant hit.

In 1968, high school students from Maplewood, New Jersey, developed a set of formal, if quirky rules, and called the game Ultimate Frisbee, which is now played by both men and women.

Teams of players (usually seven on a team) compete to score points by catching the disc/frisbee in the end zone. A player cannot run while holding the disc but has 10 seconds to throw it to a teammate. The idea is to keep the disc moving to an end zone, but no player may enter the end zone unless holding the disc. No physical contact is allowed.

The game stops when one team wins a predetermined number of goals, usually 15.

What makes Ultimate unique is the “spirit of the game,” an honor system that makes each player responsible for knowing the rules, and players are expected to call their own fouls. In the event of a disagreement or line call, the game stops until players resolve the issue. Except at the highest levels of collegiate plays, there are no referees.

This exercise in conflict resolution teaches players how to express their own perspective while listening to the other person’s point of view.

“I’ve learned to negotiate and engage in discussion,” said MHS sophomore Forrest Holloway. His teammate, Jasper Turner, notes, “I’m not the same person I was before. I’ve become part of a community and that’s a product of how the game is played. You’re expected to keep yourself in check.”

Montpelier High’s coach, Cam Mack, says, “Each team has their own identity and can express ‘the spirit’ in their own way.”

Players are expected to have a friendly attitude toward opponents at all times. Some teams may gather after a game in a “spirit circle,” sharing positive actions and skills they noticed in their opponents. Not surprisingly, “the spirit” builds mutual respect and trust even between opposing teams.

For Mack, Ultimate can be very competitive — or not.

“Players should bring their own intensity … It’s not so important that I win but that I have fun, and when you have fun, you win.” When Mack arrived at the championship game, he was wearing a pink unicorn outfit, one of several costumes he wears to the games.

He encourages self expression in his players as well. “Maybe they want to sing or just yell before starting a game.”

Montpelier High junior Andre Savard says “We play for fun … It’s a game for anyone and everyone.” Savard is already hoping to find a college that offers Ultimate.

Mack is a long time player himself and notes that “Ultimate became my identity,” but he refuses to claim credit for his team’s success. “I was the bystander,” he says.

Lillian Savard, mother of Rene, feels that Mack “is more than a coach. He’s such a good role model. He teaches them to be better human beings.”

Are all Ultimate players better human beings? Athletics were always supposed to teach the basics of fair play and good sportsmanship. The old British saying “It’s not cricket” referred to unsportsmanlike behavior in the game of cricket and eventually to dishonesty and bad behavior in general.

Then there’s the quote attributed to Vince Lombardi “Winning isn’t everything. It’s the only thing.” Although he eventually backtracked on this, it can feel like an American proverb.

A 2015 article in The Guardian suggested that things may be starting to change. The author, Beau Dure, applauds modern sports such as snowboarding and Ultimate, which avoid a “despise thy enemy ethos.” Dure notes that during the wildly popular show, American Ninja Warrior, contestants can be seen cheering each other on as if they’re all working together to defeat that punishing obstacle course.

If change is coming, it’s coming slowly. It’s satisfying to imagine, however, that “the spirit of the game” might take hold in our athletics and even in our culture. Perhaps some day, we may evaluate our political leaders on, among other things, their sense of fair play and their courtesy toward opponents.

Stranger things have happened.
Barre Baseball Legend Louis “Crip” Polli to be Honored July 8 in Montpelier
First Italian Born Ballplayer to Play in the Major Leagues

By Brian Zecchinelli

A celebration to recognize Louis Polli’s legendary baseball career and official designation by the National Baseball Hall of Fame as the first Italian-born ballplayer to play in the major leagues will take place Saturday, July 8, when the Vermont Mountaineers baseball team in Montpelier will host a Louis “Crip” Polli Night. This long overdue recognition will be a proud day for the Louis Polli family, the city of Barre, the state of Vermont, and Italians worldwide.

The Italian American Baseball Foundation will be recognizing the life and career of Louis Polli with a plaque commemorating his baseball achievements. A Barre granite plaque with a rendering of Polli, to be permanently displayed at Montpelier recreation field, will also be unveiled. The award and the plaque rendering will be presented to Polli’s family at the First Pitch Ceremony.

Born in Baveno, Italy on July 9, 1901 and raised in Barre, Vermont, Polli was a standout Spaulding High School player and transferred to Goddard Seminary prep school (still in Barre). During his senior year, Polli attracted national attention, striking out 28 batters in a ten-inning game against Cushing Academy on June 3, 1921. After a football injury at Goddard, his teammates began calling him “Crip,” a nickname that became known throughout the Italian community. Polli’s legendary baseball career began when he signed with the New York Yankees organization in 1927. He roomed with Tony Lazzeri for a short time, “He snored so hard that he kept me awake half the night,” Polli reported. During his off-the-field time, Polli enjoyed playing bridge with Lou Gehrig and his wife, Eleanor Grace Gehrig, among others. He also had fond memories of shooting pool and playing a lot of golf with Babe Ruth. Polli had major league stints with the St. Louis Browns (1932) and the New York Giants (1944).

During his professional ball-playing days, Polli’s wife Mary and daughters Mary and Margaret often traveled with him. During his long playing career, Polli played for teams in Harrisburg, Penn.; St. Paul, Minn. (New York Yankees); Louisville, Ky. (St. Louis Browns); Milwaukee, Wis.; Montreal, Canada (Montreal Royals); Chattanooga-Knoxville, Tenn.; and Jersey City, N.J. (New York Giants). During many of the off-seasons he would return to his home in Graniteville, Vermont, and work in the granite quarries.

Polli is considered one of the greatest pitchers in minor league history. He compiled a lifetime minor league record of 236 wins against 226 losses, and threw three no-hitters in his 17-year minor league career. In his last career start at the age of 42, the lanky right-hander was on the mound for the Jersey City Giants and threw a no-hitter against Newark, ending their 14-game winning streak in 1945.

In the Barre Industrial League’s 1948 official program, Lou Polli was credited as being, “Undoubtedly the greatest baseball player to represent Barre and Graniteville in organized baseball.” In the spring of 1948 Polli became the manager of a team in Halifax, Nova Scotia.

At the time of his death in the year 2000, Polli (then age 99) was the oldest living Major League Baseball player. There will be a permanent exhibit featuring photos and recognition plaques at the Mutuo Soccorso Italian-American Club on 20 Beckley Street in Barre. Baseball fans and the public are encouraged to visit the exhibit to learn more about Lou Polli’s professional baseball career. He was a member of the Mutuo Soco for well over 50 years.

A night out on the town with his Italian teammates in Milwaukee. Lou “Crip” Polli, in the center, with Lin Storti and George DeTore. Photo courtesy of the Polli family.

Brian Zecchinelli is a baseball fan and co-owner of the Wayside Restaurant, a sponsor of the Lou “Crip” Polli Night at the Vermont Mountaineers North Adams/SteeplesCats Game on July 8 in Montpelier.

Montpelier Mile
Monday, July 3rd | 6pm

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Perfect weather accompanied Montpelier’s first coordinated “Make Music Day” celebration, and likely not the last. The event premiered on June 21, organized by the Monteverdi Music School. Musicians of all ages and abilities were welcome to sign up for 20-minute slots at any of the four sites around town to perform. Above: Multi-instrumentalist Callum Robechek, a rising senior at Montpelier High School, performs original music and improv in front of the Monteverdi Music School. Photo by Dan Arber.
Take a Fresh Look at Your Finances

Submitted by Ellie Stubbs

Remember those financial resolutions you committed to at the beginning of the year? If they seem like a distant memory, the start of summer is an excellent time to reset and take stock of your progress. Follow the tips below to recommit yourself to your financial goals.

1. Start with a clean slate. Review your financial situation and recent spending patterns. Is your spending aligned with your financial goals? Re-evaluate any bad money habits that may be holding you back from making better financial decisions. Remind yourself that healthy financial behaviors can become part of your daily routine.

2. Commit to financial stability. It’s easier to do something when you are intentional. Just like you set aside an afternoon to clean out the garage, set aside a few hours to clean up your finances. During this time, reflect, organize, and make a conscious commitment to take responsibility for your financial future.

3. Create, update, or review your plan of action. A financial plan provides a roadmap for spending and saving and encourages you to allocate your money toward the items or experiences that matter most to you. Your plan should articulate how you intend to handle your day-to-day finances, while working to achieve your long-term goals such as paying off your home mortgage and confidently retiring on your terms. If a large expense comes along, you may need to re-evaluate your financial priorities. Adjust as necessary and then get back on track as soon as possible. Likewise, if you receive a raise or windfall, consider how the additional funds can be applied to your financial plan.

4. Spend within reason. Your plan can provide you with guardrails to keep long-term goals in sight as you satisfy near-term wants and needs. When you know your emergency fund, retirement, and other goals are on track, you can purchase tickets to the big game or plan a family trip without feeling guilty or worried that the costs will prevent you from achieving your larger financial goals.

5. Prepare for the unexpected. Life can throw challenging curveballs. Unexpected events such as unplanned medical bills or losing your job can greatly impact your bottom line. The only certainty is uncertainty, and that’s why it’s critical to assess your insurance policies to ensure you’re fully covered, and establish an “emergency fund” to cover surprise expenses. Consider reviewing your life, disability, health, home and auto insurance policies with a financial professional who can help you identify and close any gaps in coverage. If you’ve acquired artwork, collectibles, technology, or other valuables, make sure they are covered under your current home insurance plan. Also, use this as a time to update beneficiaries on your policies if needed.

6. Find joy in the process. The desire to keep your finances in good order is an admirable aspiration, and it has lasting impacts. Focusing on your finances today may help you to achieve a more comfortable financial future for you and your family tomorrow. Consider working with a financial professional to help create a plan to reach your goals. With renewed energy and a well-defined plan, you can feel good about your financial choices.

Ellie Tobin Stubbs, CFP®, AWMA®, BFATM is a financial advisor with Ameriprise Financial Services, Inc. in Barre, Vt. She specializes in fee-based financial planning and asset management strategies and has been in practice for 21 years. To contact her, ameripriseadvisors.com/ellie.stubbs. 802-622-8060.

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Sarah Strohmeyer, Middlesex Town Clerk and bestselling author of 20 books, has a new novel “We Love to Entertain,” published by Harper Paperbacks. Strohmeyer is her pen name and family name. In Middlesex she runs for election as Sarah Merriman, her married name.

She’s known for her earlier ‘Bubbles Yablonsky’ mysteries as well as young adult fiction. Now she’s moved on from those to her most recent nine mysteries. “We Love to Entertain” is set in Vermont where a town clerk is involved in a bizarre property dispute.

I interviewed her about her latest novel at Middlesex Town Hall, on a Friday when the office is closed. Whether it’s a dog tag or the municipal budget, she brings concern, curiosity and detailed knowledge to her job. These traits make her both a good town clerk and a good novelist. Any visit or meeting with Sarah begins with what’s going on in town. First, we talked about the missing person search in Middlesex the day before. Then we got down to her book.

I asked about her writing process. She sends a 20-page prospectus to her agent, who sends it on to her publisher. She uses the Scrivener writing program, which helps with editing and organization. It took her about a year and a half to finish “We Love to Entertain.”

Strohmeyer discussed the themes of “We Love to Entertain.” The first, she said, is “the claustrophobia of a small town.” Next is “the danger of social media.” The third is that “land brings out the worst in people.”

In the novel Kim Turnbull is town clerk of Snowden, Vermont. Kim knows a lot about everyone in Snowden and they about her. Her daughter Erika is personal assistant to Robert Barron, also known as “Robber Barron,” and his wife Holly Simmons. Soon readers learn that things may not be as they seem.

Kim says: “Her legal first name isn’t Holly, but Haylee. Haylee Dawn Beauregard versus Holly Simmons, as she’s known to her thousands of Instagram followers.” Holly and Robert live for social media. Their Vermont wedding and almost everything they do is on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook. Strohmeyer is good at satire. These two are over the top with social media, and make decisions on their home and their wedding based on the number of hits they get.

In their case, property brings out the worst. The couple acquired a rundown cabin in Snowden, Vermont at a tax sale. It’s a dump, but they start on a multi-million-dollar renovation and qualify to have it broadcast on a show called “The Manor Build.” If viewers choose Holly and Robert as the winners out of three contestants, the renovation is paid for. If not, they foot the bill. They are mortgaged to the max. There’s constant social media hype leading up to the show.

Sarah and her husband Charlie Merriman actually bought a cabin at a tax sale. Don’t worry; it was legal and legitimate. She did say that she wondered if there was “a way someone could game” the tax sale process.

Meanwhile in the novel, Gretchen and Zeke Strickland, the former owners of the cabin are thrown out. Now Gretchen lives in a rundown apartment with their two kids, while her volatile husband Zeke lives out of his truck. He’s angry and out for revenge.

The setting seems like Middlesex. There’s a Bear Swamp Road. A couple of characters have the same surnames as local families. But the fictional Snowden is set to the south of Rutland, somewhere on the edge of the Green Mountain National Forest.

Fast-paced writing moves the plot. Her characters are quirky. Strohmeyer weaves subtly sarcastic messages such as the $18,000 kitchen stove in Holly and Robert’s “energy efficient” home as a symbol of economic disparity. It’s a mystery with, irony social commentary and surprises right up until the end.

A visit with Sarah Strohmeyer is as interesting as her novel. This is a mystery that will appeal to any reader, but especially to Vermonters.

“We Love to Entertain”
Harper Paperbacks 2023
ISBN 978-0-06-322438-4
356 p $18.99
Swastika Incident Follow Up at MHS

While the administration at the Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools and Montpelier High School has been hard to reach due to vacations, an email that went out to the school community on June 14 said that despite reviewing video footage from the morning of June 2, school officials have not identified the responsible party. The email goes on to say:

“Our response has been to support our community members, both students and staff, including:

- Initial informational emails denouncing the act
- Community vigil
- We had a staff conversation and continued to monitor the halls and bathrooms and support students and staff.
- MHS continues offering support from counselors and social workers to help individuals.
- MRPS continues to offer Talkspace as a resource.

When we return in August, we will continue to work with Building Fearless Futures to educate students and staff on diversity, equity, and inclusion. As a district, we are beginning an equity audit with an outside consultant group and teaching all students about Hazin, Harassment, and Bullying. We recognize more work to do to create a healthy, safe, and community-based environment. And we recognize the urgency of this work to have students and staff feel safe.”

(MHS) world history class in the 2021–2022 school year, a student who asked to remain anonymous told The Bridge that a group of boys created a group chat on social media they dubbed “Hitler Youth.”

“The teacher said not to, but there wasn’t anything else besides that,” the student said, adding that they didn’t make a formal complaint because “the teacher already said something and that was all that happened. … They weren’t very sensitive about the topic.”

At the end of the school year, the student said, one kid in the class gave a Nazi salute to a group of students including a person of color, a Jewish student, and a queer student and “told them he loved Hitler.”

That same year, graffiti under the stairs by the main entrance featured “a bunch of slurs and different stuff, and a swastika. There was the N-word and other slurs.” The school painted it over eventually, the student said.

Neither MHS principal Jason Ginzgold nor Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools superintendent Libby Bonesteel were available to comment. Both of their emails had a vacation responder setup saying they were each out of office since the school year ended on June 15.

Antisemitic Bullying

A parent of a Montpelier High School student spoke to The Bridge, also on the condition of anonymity, about antisemitic incidents in Montpelier schools. One incident happened while the parent attended a class presentation at Main Street Middle School in 2018, the parent said, and the other involved her teen, who was targeted with antisemitism last year at MHS “to his face.”

“He asked [the students targeting him] to stop. They wouldn’t stop. He talked to the teacher. Nothing happened,” the parent said. Finally, her son made an official bullying report; the school investigated and confirmed the report. The parent did not know what consequences were put in place for the kids doing the bullying. But much like the case where a group of boys created a “Hitler Youth” group chat, simply talking to a teacher did not result in change according to those who spoke to The Bridge.

Similarly the same parent recalled an incident at the Main Street Middle School several years ago, when a school project asking students to present about a historical figure from the perspective of that person went horribly awry. A video of the incident showed a fifth grader presenting himself as Hitler, while offering false information that was never corrected by the teacher, even after the student ― playing the role of Hitler ― cheerfully said “I killed six million Jews! And I also did good.”

The parent complained, and the school held a “restorative circle,” the parent said, during which time it became clear the students did not understand why the parent was so upset.

“If that student had gotten up and done a different interpretation of Hitler the parent said (noting the objection was not about playing the role of Hitler, but about incorrect information). “But they didn’t. The adults in the room let it happen, and then didn’t react appropriately in the aftermath. It’s not the kid — the kid was 10. They didn’t know.”

So five years later, when students — but not parents, initially — received an email from Montpelier High School about the swastika on the bathroom wall, that same parent reported the incident to the Montpelier Police Department, the Anti-Defamation League, the Vermont Attorney General’s office, and the federal Department of Education Office for Civil Rights.

As a result of the swastika incident, the parent — a member of the Jewish community in Vermont and an administrator in higher education — started creating a professional development event in partnership with the Vermont Agency of Education for middle and high school teachers.

“From this incident, my hope is that we will get meaningful education and change. Make an effort to hire black teachers. Make an effort to put requirements that these things get studied. That the students learn about it. And maybe things will change,” the parent said.

The MHS swastika incident took place on June 2, just three weeks after the Vermont legislature adjourned, and — for the third time in three sessions — left two bills in committee that would standardize Holocaust education for grades 6 through 12.

Two Identical Bills

Although both bills are stuck in the House and Senate Education committees, Steinerman said she expects the identical S.87 and H.294 — the Vermont Holocaust Studies Act — to be picked up again when the legislature convenes in January 2024. Until then, Vermont remains the only state in New England without a mandate for Holocaust education.

“I’ve been frustrated by both legislative inactivity, and a sort of quiet avoidance on the part of school officials,” said Vermont Rep. Avram Patt, D-Lamoille-Washington, who introduced H.294 along with 18 other representatives in coordination with Sen. Ginny Lyons, D-Chittenden-Southeast, who spearheaded the Senate bill. “I’m not pointing specifically at Montpelier but this stuff happens. It’s taken as a one-off kind of incident, where the person, whoever did it, must not have understood what they were doing. We don’t know that.”

In past legislative sessions, Patt has introduced similar bills, he said, including one in 2022 co-sponsored by Rep. Becca Balint. “It didn’t go anywhere,” Patt said. “There was a cloak of silence. People were kind of hesitant to bring it up.”

About H.294, Patt noted, “it’s very clear in the bill that a major reason for doing this is … so people understand what genocide is and should recognize it when it’s happening now.”

The section on “Findings” in S.87 and H.294 in part states: “Education is key to combating hate. By learning about the Holocaust, students will understand how stereotypes, prejudice, and religious and ethnic hatred can escalate to atrocity. The lessons of the Holocaust not only teach about the past but also shape our future as a human race. Students must understand that it happened and it can happen again.”

Antisemitic Incidents at an All Time High (Except in Vermont)

While reports of antisemitic incidents in New England and across the country have spiked, the Anti-Defamation League’s annual Audit of Antisemitic Incidents found they decreased in Vermont from 2021 to 2022.

In 2022, the ADL recorded “a total of 204 antisemitic incidents of assault, harassment and vandalism in the New England Region (covering Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Vermont) in 2022,” a 32 percent increase from 2021 and the highest number of antisemitic incidents ever recorded in the New England region. “Virtually all the antidesemits incidents in 2022 were not mandated for Holocaust studies,” the report said. “For example, the ADL recorded 3,697 antisemitic incidents in 2022, the highest total since the ADL started tracking such data in 1979.”

The report goes on to say: “The number of antisemitic incidents remains at a historical high in New England, with all states other than Vermont recording an increase year over year. Throughout the other states in the ADL’s New England region, the ADL tracked 19 incidents in Rhode Island (up from 17 incidents in 2021), 6 in Vermont (down from 15 in 2021), 14 in New Hampshire (up from 7 in 2021), and 13 in Maine (up from 6 in 2021).”
**WEDNESDAY, JUNE 28**
Barre Farmers Market. 3-30 to 6:30 p.m. Depot Square, Barre. New expanded space. Lots of fresh produce, local meats, crafts, baked goods, and more. Call 802-477-2967 for more information.

**Capital City Band Concert.** 7 to 8 p.m. Statehouse lawn. Capital City Band Concert, a 100-plus year Montpelier tradition, free fun for the whole family. Every Wednesday throughout the summer. If you play a band instrument, come join us! All levels of ability welcome. Please bring your instrument, a chair, music stand, and we supply the music. For more information, email CapitalCityBandVT@gmail.com.

**Registration for Summit School of Traditional Music and Culture’s Trad Camp Weekend.** Orchard Valley Waldorf School, East Montpelier. July 28 through July 30. For kids 8–18 years old and their grownups. All experience levels are welcome! Tuition is $190 for kids/youths, $60 for caregivers. Full and partial scholarships are available. For more information and to register, go to summit-school.org.

**THURSDAY, JUNE 29**
“Act 39.” 7 p.m. Haybarn Theater, Plainfield. World premiere of Rob Mermin’s original play, “Act 39.” What do you do when your best friend, dying of cancer, asks you to help end his life? “Act 39” is the true story of what happened when Rob’s friend decided to use Vermont’s medical aid in dying law, known as Act 39. It is a soulful, humor-filled story of friendship, and exposes the vulnerability of the human spirit when facing mortality head-on. Tickets available at sevenadaystickets.com/organizations/across-roads-center-for-the-arts

**FRIDAY, JUNE 30**
“Act 39.” 7 p.m. Haybarn Theater, Plainfield. See details under June 29.

**SATURDAY, JULY 1**
Capital City Farmers Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 133 State Street, Montpelier. An average of nearly 60 vendors every week. A huge selection of produce, meat, cheese, mushrooms, pasta, honey, and baked goods, also prepared foods, botanicals, pottery and crafts, music, and more.

**Free Concert with Mallett Brothers Band.** 5:30 p.m. Highland Center for the Arts, Greensboro. As part of Greensboro’s Independence Day celebration we are having a free concert. Picnic dinners available for purchase. Good weather, the concert will be outdoors. Bad weather, it will be indoors. For more information, call 802-533-2000.

**TUESDAY, JULY 5**
Smirkus. 6 p.m. Fari’s Field, Waterbury. Vermont’s award-winning, traveling youth circus, where kids are the stars, featured in aerial acts, acrobatics, clowning, juggling, and so much more! Shows run approximately 2 hours. Adults ($19+), kids ($1–12), $10. Tour schedule and tickets at smirkus.org/about-big-top-tour.
There will be live music and entertainment. For more information, call 802-223-2518.

Barre Farmers Market. 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Depot Square, Barre. See description under June 28.

Myra Flynn in Concert! Food by Woodbelly Pizza. 6:30 p.m. Middlesex Bandstand, 433 Shady Rill Rd., Middlesex, next to the Runney School. For more information, go to middlesexbandstand.com or the Middlesex Bandstand Facebook page, or call Elliot at 802-272-4920.

Circus Smirkus. 1 and 6 p.m. Farr’s Field, Waterbury. See description under July 4.

THURSDAY, JULY 6
Currier Park Concert Series. 4 to 8 p.m. Currier Park, Barre. The Rustics start playing at 6 p.m. Food trucks available at 4 p.m. Bring a blanket or a chair, grab dinner, and enjoy the music. For more information, call 802-477-2967.

Circus Smirkus. 1 and 6 p.m. Farr’s Field, Waterbury. See description under July 4.

FRIDAY, JULY 7
Opening Reception: Exhibit of Multimedia Images by Diane Sophrin. 4 to 7 p.m. The Front gallery, 6 Barre Street, Montpelier. Acrylic and graphite on gessoed brown paper. For more information, call 802-552-0877.

Wine Tasting. 4 to 7 p.m. The Wine Vault, Elm Street, Waterbury. Free weekly wine tastings on Fridays. All tastings include a diverse selection of wines from around the world and close to home. Most wines are from small-batch wineries that take care and pride in their wine making. For more information, call 802-244-1111.

PREPOSTEROUS! A Happenstance Clown Circus. 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Highland Center for the Arts, Greensboro. A sophisticated, family friendly, pocket-sized clown circus in which charming vintage clowns play circus animals, sing as a human calliope, and execute a very satisfying slow motion number involving a pie! Tickets $5 to $15. For more information, call 802-533-9075.

Rabble-Rouser Open Mic Night. 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. 64 Main Street, Montpelier. Come witness and participate in a night of stage fright and creative expression. All types of performances and experience levels are welcome! For more information, call 802-225-6227.

SATURDAY, JULY 8
Capital City Farmers Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. 133 State Street, See description under July 1.

Love Without Limit, Life Without Fear. Noon to 4 p.m. Statehouse lawn. Join us for inspirational speaker Takai Signs as she shares examples of healing from her own life and professional practice of Christian Science. Live music with Ian Case, double neck acoustic guitarist, “one of the most creative and engaging fingerstyle guitarists in the world.” There will be three shows: noon to 1 p.m., 1:30 to 2:30 p.m., and 3 to 4 p.m. For more information, call 802-793-5414.

SUNDAY, JULY 9
Summer Nature Romp. 10 a.m. to noon. North Branch Nature Center, Montpelier. See description under July 2.

TUESDAY, JULY 11
Stand Up Paddleboard Yoga. 6 to 7:30 p.m. Wrightsville Reservoir boat launch area. For all levels; drop-in class. $20 with your own board, $45 with board rental. For more information, email chrisy@gratefulyogavt.com
Love your community? Want to earn a side income? The Bridge is seeking freelance reporters to cover city meetings, and write about local people, businesses and issues. Email editor@montpelierbridge.com for details.
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Union Mutual Insurance Company was recently recognized by the Vermont Department of Health and the Governor’s Council on Physical Fitness and Sports with a 2023 Governor’s Excellence in Worksite Wellness Award — Gold Level. This is the company’s fifth consecutive top-tier wellness honor. “The wellbeing of our staff is a top priority at Union Mutual, so the company is continually seeking meaningful and creative opportunities to enhance wellbeing,” Human Resources Manager Kristin Sweet said. “The Worksite Wellness Award provides recognition of the hard work and dedication of our employees who help the company maintain a solid approach to employee wellness.” According to the Vermont Department of Health, the annual Worksite Wellness Awards create a standard of excellence for worksite wellness initiatives and recognize Vermont employers’ efforts to enhance productivity, bolster a healthy environment, and improve employee wellbeing. The roughly 100-question survey addresses all aspects of an organization’s wellness program — from availability of healthy food options and onsite fitness opportunities to occupational safety and accessibility measures. Union Mutual has a robust wellness program, with offerings such as an on-site gym for employee use, wellness challenges throughout the year, a no-smoking campus, lunch-and-learn training events on a variety of topics from retirement readiness to healthy cooking, participation in an employee assistance program, and more.

Press release

Union Mutual Receives Gold-Level Worksite Wellness Award

Montpelier High School wants to extend a tremendous amount of gratitude and appreciation for all of the businesses, organizations, public agencies, higher education partners and individual mentors who have supported Solon students in their Flexible Pathway learning experiences during this 2022-2023 school year. In increasing numbers, Solons are seeking to personalize their learning experiences in alignment with their interests and aspirations on their way to finding agency, purpose, service and achievement as they journey toward graduation (and beyond). This year over 250 individual Solon students participated in over 300 supported flexible pathway experiences. It is through the incredibly generous contributions and commitments of our many community partners that so many students are afforded rich, personalized and truly meaningful flexible pathway learning experiences. Thanks!
Heeding Air Quality Alerts
by J. Gregory Gerdel

While Montpelier does not have a local, air-quality monitoring station, it does have the Department of Environmental Conservation (DEC) office that plans and oversees air-quality monitoring and reporting. The Capital Region was fortunate to be minimally impacted by smoke from the fires in Northern Quebec – until Sunday, June 25, when, by mid-afternoon the air was visibly filled with a brownish, smokey haze.

Vermont Alerts promptly provided notice of the concern, which was even greater in Burlington and the Champlain Valley. Bennet Lyon, DEC section chief for air quality planning, says that Vermont has four sites that monitor air quality: Burlington, Underhill, Rutland, and Bennington. At the national level, the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and the National Weather Service (NWS) collaborate to prepare air quality forecasts.

Not having local monitoring equipment in Montpelier, which is part of the Mountain Valley area east of the Green Mountains, the collaboration on releasing local alerts frequently rests with Lyon and Forecaster Dan Riley. Keeping an eye on where the wind is blowing is a key part of the decision process for issuing alerts in the Mountain Valley area, Lyon explained. “The air quality reporting system was initially set up for monitoring ozone, which primarily blew into Vermont from the west,” Lyon said. “Wildfire smoke events illustrate that the original system does not work as well for forecasting. We are working with the EPA to improve the display.”

Lyon confirmed that air quality problems are relatively unusual for central Vermont valleys. “In 2002 we had very similar conditions due to Quebec fires,” he said. In 2013 and 2021 smoke drifted east from the west. At that distance the particles (PM2.5) “stayed aloft and weren’t as concentrated.”

What you can do:
• Register with Vermont Alerts, which provides text alerts for any issues of public safety.
• Become familiar with resource websites: AirNow – airnow.gov and Smoke Map - fire.airnow.gov
• Understand the color-coded symbols and how they relate to your personal health and that of family members.
• Postpone outdoor exercise until the air quality improves.

NEWS FACT: When communities lose a strong local news organization, it accelerates the spread of misinformation, political polarization and reduced trust in media.

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FREELANCE REPORTERS

Love your community? Want to earn a side income? The Bridge is seeking to cover city meetings, and write about local people, businesses and issues. Email editor@montpelierbridge.com for details.
In case you missed it on MontpelierBridge.org

The Bridge posts stories on our website between print issues. If you want the latest local news, go to montpelierbridge.org. Here’s a sampling of our online news lately.

Former Barre Distillery Owner Unmasked as Neo-Nazi Podcaster, By VTdigger

Waterbury Braces for April 2024’s Total Solar Eclipse, By Carla Occaso

Colorful M-Shaped Benches Arrive Downtown, By Tom McKone

Our next print issue comes out on July 12, 2023. Check out our website and join our email list to see the latest stories between now and then. Emails come one time per week, featuring our most current stories. Sign up by emailing ops@montpelierbridge.com.

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