Residents in Barre and Montpelier may be moving into the upper levels of their homes. In Barre City, some homes were flooded up to five feet deep, and in Montpelier, the Wrightsville dam is just one foot from capacity as of 11:30 a.m. Tuesday. Officials in both cities are asking people to stay out of the downtown areas while rescue operations and evacuations are still underway.

After days of heavy rains in the region, central Vermont has weathered the biggest flood since the 1927 flood took out most of Vermont’s bridges. The damage is not yet assessed, but downtowns in Barre, Montpelier, and Waterbury were underwater Monday night and into Tuesday. On Sunday, President Biden issued an emergency declaration, freeing up federal assistance from FEMA and the Department of Homeland Security to flooded areas across the state.

The Barre Auditorium was set up as an emergency center on Monday for the whole region, and as of Tuesday morning is near capacity with 190 people, and more are on the way, said Barre City Fire Chief Keith Cushman. Capacity at the “Aud” is 200. Cushman said the number fluctuates as some people who were stranded during heavy rains are able to leave and others are coming in.

Helicopters from the National Guard will be deployed to help with evacuations for those in remote areas inaccessible to swiftwater rescue teams.

Five VCFA Buildings Under Contract with Engineering School

By Cassandra Hemenway

The Vermont College of Fine Arts campus will see some changes this fall.

Five of the college’s buildings are being sold to Greenway Institute, a Vermont nonprofit that offers college-level sustainable engineering education. And another building is under contract with longtime tenant the New School of Montpelier.

The purchase agreement with Greenway is near completion, said state Rep. Rebecca Holcombe, D-Norwich, Greenway’s cofounder.

“We’re just negotiating the final details of the closing. We don’t anticipate any problem,” Holcombe said in an interview while she was in town Friday to meet with city officials.

By Cassandra Hemenway

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A kayaker paddles down State Street during record floods in downtown Montpelier Tuesday. This week’s flood with a river height of 21-feet is second only to the great flood of 1927 when the Winooski River reached 28 feet and bridges were wiped out throughout Vermont. Photo by Marisa Keller.

Central Vermont is Underwater

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By Cassandra Hemenway
The following students at the Community College of Vermont were named to the spring 2023 Student Honors List. This honor recognizes part-time students with a 4.0 grade point average.

Barre
Sharon Bell
Denise Blankenship
Nicole Carpenter
Ashley Copeland
Amanda Filbotte
Shelly Gerard
Erika Joslin
Sonja Keene
William Kelly
Stefanie Lawrence
Brendan Smith
Joy Whitehouse

Berlin
Jaiden Bonanno
Esther Lent
Stacey Snyder

Bolton
Melissa Flores-Alvarado

East Barre, Tamara Keane

East Montpelier, Miranda Bushey, Jeannine Dewald
Marshfield
Marie Barney
Alanna Flynn
Wendy Koponen-Robotham

Middlesex
Katherine Bailey
Sebastian Morland
Stefanie Pinard

Montpelier
Owen Carswell-Damiano
Gabriel Chaves
Harley Dewald-Emick
Dixie Lambert
Percy Magueire
Marisa Mullins
Hannah Tirrul
Shyloh Wunder-Macx
Greta Zeanowski-Giffin
Sarah Zwegust

Orange, Megan Comstock

Plainfield
Rosamond Manning
Joshua Thompson

Waterbury
Jolene Dobbins
Jennifer Grandfield
Zoe Lemon

Waterbury Center, Jessica Earlandt
Websterville, Kyle Fassett

Worcester, Melinda Audet

---Bridge Staff---

CCV Student Honors

The Vermont Granite Museum is holding a Granite Lecture and Film Series, a weekly program featuring a wide range of talks and films focused on the granite industry in Vermont. The series offers a new program each Thursday at 6 p.m. at the Vermont Granite Museum through the end of October.

Upcoming speakers include Sean Hunter Williams, a sculptor who will discuss his experience working as a granite artist.

The Vermont Granite Museum’s recently restored film archive includes a century of videos featuring the Vermont granite industry’s many people, places, and trades. The earliest films are silent clips from the 1920s capturing work in Vermont’s quarries. Several films produced by the Barre Granite Association offer insight into granite quarrying and carving, such as “The Stone Whistle,” a production starring John Forsythe (1956). The museum also holds a series of commercials commissioned by the Rock of Ages Corporation in the late 1950s featuring former “Today Show” host, Dave Garroway.

“The museum’s newly digitized historic films and television advertisements reflect the opinions and values of their era,” says Scott McLaughlin, the museum’s executive director. “They transport today’s viewers back in time, allowing them to see people, places, and technologies in action. And they’re just fun to watch!” The Vermont Granite Museum offers its thanks to the Windham Foundation, the John M. Bissel Foundation, and the National Film Preservation Foundation for funding this remarkable project.

More information about the Vermont Granite Museum’s Granite Lecture and Film Series can be found on the museum’s website, vigranitenumuseum.org, or on the museum’s Facebook page (facebook/vermontgranitemuseum).

---press release---

Granite Lecture and Film Series at the Vermont Granite Museum

Vermont Land Trust Welcomes Vaut and Herrick

Sasha Vaut has joined the Vermont Land Trust as development director. Vaut comes to the organization from the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, where she was director of philanthropy for over six years.

“Sasha brings a wealth of expertise in development for nonprofit organizations,” said Abby White, the Land Trust’s vice president of engagement. “With her fundraising experience and her passion for VLT’s mission, Sasha will help our organization garner more support to help us do more — for the land and for all of us who live here.”

Vaut is a graduate of Syracuse University and a certified fundraising executive. She has worked for 16 years in philanthropy and nonprofit management, supporting the Vermont arts and health-related nonprofits in the Boston area.

Vaut was also a graduate of the 2020 class of Leadership Champlain, a professional development and community engagement program of the Lake Champlain Chamber of Commerce.

---press release---

Maggie Herrick, of Middlesex, has joined the Land Trust as its new bookkeeper. Before this position, Herrick spent a decade in operations roles at forward-thinking organizations within the food sector.

Herrick graduated from the University of Colorado at Boulder and worked in New York City before moving to Vermont. In her spare time, she likes to tend her homestead garden, cook family meals, or learn about and practice making herbal medicines.

---press release---

Wendy Commiskey Joins Green Lantern Solar

Green Lantern Solar, a leading renewable energy development and finance company focusing on commercial solar and energy storage systems, has added Wendy Commiskey to its accounting team.

As an accounting specialist, Commiskey is responsible for overseeing various accounting functions, including accounts payable, accounts receivable, general ledger, and taxes. Additionally, she will support quarterly and year-end financial audit activities as well as prepare monthly, quarterly, and annual reports for investors.

With a strong background in accounting and finance, Commiskey brings a wealth of expertise to the team. Her extensive knowledge and experience will contribute to maintaining the company’s financial health and streamlining financial operations.

“I am particularly impressed by the company’s work model and values, including a commitment to a supportive and appreciative work environment,” said Commiskey. “The benefits of working from home and the chance to collaborate with a highly skilled group of professionals are an extra bonus.”

---press release---

Maggie Herrick. Courtesy photo.

Wendy Commiskey. Courtesy photo.
Montpelier’s Capitol Plaza Hotel Sold

An agreement has been reached between Capitol Plaza Hotel and Conference Center owner Fred Bashara and Jamsan Management, according to a report. Bashara said operations should stay the same, however. “Nothing is changing,” Bashara told WCAX on July 7. “Same staff at the front desk, same staff waiting in the restaurant, same staff in the kitchen, housekeepers, maintenance people.”

Jamsan is a New England management company “with expertise in hotel, retail, commercial, construction, brand relations, and asset management,” according to jam-san.us. The company lists their offices as being in Lexington, Mass. Their Vermont portfolio includes the Delta Hotel in Burlington and the Fairfield Inn in Williston. Other hotels they manage include several Hampton Inns, a couple of Sheraton hotels, some Courtyard Marriot properties, and multiple other Fairfield Inns in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and New Hampshire.

Mexican Takeout Restaurant Opens In Montpelier

A Mexican restaurant, Arandas Mexican Cuisine, that opened in Barre a few years ago, has opened a second branch — takeout only — in the convenience store at the Sunoco Station at 108 State Street in Montpelier, across from Pho Capital. David Thomas, an owner of Arandas as well as the Montpelier building, said his firm recently took over operation of the convenience store and gas station, with a corner of the premises now reserved for cooking authentic Mexican food. Takeout is currently available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., except 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays, Thomas said. The menu can be seen and orders can be placed at arandas-mexican-cuisine.square.site.

New Store, Nepalese Food Truck to Open in Barre

Bibic Bhattachari, manager for a new store called Grab N Go, introduced himself to the Barre City Council June 20. The store will be located at 377 N. Main Street, and offer beverages for sale. Eventually, a food truck offering Nepalese food will be added to the spot. The council voted to approve a new second class liquor license and tobacco license for the store on a motion of Councilor Michael Deering, seconded by Councilor Thom Lauzon. The motion carried with Councilor Michael Boutin abstaining.

Montpelier Police Crack Down on Speeding, Other Violations

The Montpelier Police Department has installed “feedback signs” that display a car’s rate of speed as it passes the sign. The newest ones are on Main Street in the area between Lincoln Street and Towne Hill Road, according to a recent police Facebook posting. The signs are in response to complaints about drivers failing to slow down when entering the downtown area where the speed limit is 25 mph. Earlier in June, the department conducted “directed motor vehicle enforcement” on Elm Street/Route 12 as part of field training for Officer Quinn Montes. On June 9, Sergeant Chris Quesnel and Corporal Michael Philbrick monitored Elm Street and Route 12 to quell speeding during school-related traffic times.

Montpelier businessman Lewis Bartlett Cross, his chauffeur, daughter Carrie, and an unidentified woman pose in a 1911 Cadillac touring car in front of their 39 School Street home. L. Bart, as he was known, was the son of the founder of C.H. Cross & Son Baking Company. The younger Cross sold the company in 1908 but remained active in the business and civic affairs of the city until his death in 1915. The family’s house still stands, although the expansive front porch has been removed and shutters have been added. The Montpelier Historical Society currently has an exhibit on the Cross Baking Company in the window of the Walgreens pharmacy on Main Street.

Then & Now

By Paul Carnahan

Mexican restaurant, Arandas Mexican Cuisine, that opened in Barre a few years ago, has opened a second branch — takeout only — in the convenience store at the Sunoco Station at 108 State Street in Montpelier, across from Pho Capital. David Thomas, an owner of Arandas as well as the Montpelier building, said his firm recently took over operation of the convenience store and gas station, with a corner of the premises now reserved for cooking authentic Mexican food. Takeout is currently available from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m., except 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. on Sundays, Thomas said. The menu can be seen and orders can be placed at arandas-mexican-cuisine.square.site.
Letters to the Editor

Put Housing in Unused VCFA Buildings

To the Editor:
Lately, the unhoused population is very much in the news as legislators continue debating extending the housing program. While we applaud these efforts to provide housing for all, many of these seem shortsighted and stop-gap, at best.

Why not spend some of these allocated funds purchasing (and staffing) more permanent solutions, such as the dorms on the campus of the former Vermont College of Fine Arts in Montpelier. These buildings lie vacant (as far as we know) and seem like a good solution to begin providing more stable housing. In addition, more programs are needed to assist those in temporary housing to be successful living in a more stable environment.

All people deserve housing (and health care)!

Wren Grace and Nan Carpenter, Berlin

To the Editor:
I am writing about the article “Motel Exodus Begins” by Cassandra Hemenway (The Bridge, June 7 - 27, 2023 issue) and in particular “Tips for Surviving Without Shelter” at the bottom of Page 22, which states the following:

“Have also found that layers of cardboard…as well as newspapers (like the weekly World and Seven Days newspapers as well as the daily newspapers) can help provide insulation either underneath a tent, sleeping bag or whatever is being used...”

My question to you is why you did not include The Bridge in this tidbit of advice? You are inferring that The World, Seven Days or the daily paper provides better insulation than The Bridge or that The Bridge has higher standards than other newspapers to be used for insulation. Shame on you to not include the newspaper you work for in this opinion.

Carole Hass, Barre

The Editor replies: The section referred to in this letter is a direct quote from a handbook prepared by two people who have themselves lived on the streets, giving advice to others about how to stay warm and safe while living without shelter. The Bridge directly quoted the handbook in the aforementioned citation. However the writer’s point is well-taken.

You are encouraging the homeless to rake the newsstands of free weeklies which as you can surely understand would undermine the circulation efforts of an already struggling local media, notwithstanding harming those businesses who do advertise and who expect the paper will reach the general public in support of their livelihoods.

Perhaps this suggestion of yours doesn’t affect the bottom line at The Bridge, as the newspaper does, on several occasions during the year, appeal to the general public for donations to aid in continued publication of the periodical. I am not as familiar with Seven Days, but what I can say is The World is not dependent on monetary donations received from the community in order to stay afloat. They shoulder their responsibilities to their advertisers and readership by enhancing their reputation of the paper through hard work and dedication for the past 50 years.

Carole Hass, Barre

The Editor replies: The section referred to in this letter is a direct quote from a handbook prepared by two people who have themselves lived on the streets, giving advice to others about how to stay warm and safe while living without shelter. The Bridge directly quoted the handbook in the aforementioned citation. However the writer’s point is well-taken.
Climate Change Brings Greater Risk of Drowning

By Dan Hemenway

The recent local drowning death at the Bolton Potholes after heavy rains should refocus management of Vermont’s natural resources to minimize such risks. The rolling contours of Vermont result in large catchments, areas that focus surface water to lower rills, streams, and eventually rivers. Vermont’s main asset in moderating flash flooding is our forest cover. The better we manage our forests, and the more intelligently we conserve them, the lower the risk to life, property, and natural resources in general.

Climate change is expected to increase our total annual rainfall while also increasing the incidence of drought, particularly while trees are actively growing in late spring and summer. The combination of increased rain and increased drought may seem counterintuitive. Because of longer and warmer growing seasons, our increased rain falls is expected to be progressively less than the increase of water returned to the atmosphere by evaporation. Moreover, that rain may increase to some degree, no matter how we manage our forests, the small amount of water that we can do. Remnants of drenching hurricanes are almost certain to make their way here with increasing frequency. But managing forests to maximize the amount of water held in the high ground will greatly reduce the severity and intensity of flood events whether local or national in scope. And this benefit can accompany an increase in forest products, providing some jobs that will be needed by climate refugees and longtime Vermonters alike.

Besides flood control, well-managed forests help reduce the effects of climate heating, provide aesthetic benefits beyond measure, enhance recreation and subsistence foraging, fishing and hunting, and nurture specialized ‘industries’ such as maple syrup and tourism. As the moderate climates of North America shrink, our forests can increasingly provide a survival refuge to plant and animal species alike. Yet managing them strictly to reduce the ravages of floods is benefit enough. The other benefits will come with that effort.

Dan Hemenway, a Montpelier resident, was a permaculture teacher, publisher, and designer from 1981 until his retirement circa 2010. He has international awards in conservation and community service and five advanced degrees from the International Permaculture Institute.
Changing the Status Quo — MHS All High School Reunion July 14 and 15

For as long as anyone can remember, Montpelier High School (MHS) has held annual reunions at the class level — but rallying a group of 100 or fewer people, many of whom are dispersed around the country, has led to fewer and fewer reunions. This year, the MHS Alumni Committee is turning the status quo on its head with an “all high school” reunion July 14 and 15.

“There are so many memorable things about high school that aren’t specifically within your class — our teachers, staff, coaches, extracurricular leaders, sports teammates, and the list goes on of people who influenced and had an impact on our lives. Our classes are great, but if people travel across the country to reunite around high school memories, it would be great if it was a full package event,” said Mary (Campos) McPheat, class of 2003, a member of the alumni committee organizing the reunion. McPheat, who is celebrating her 20th year since graduating from MHS, is the primary driver behind this event, partnering with Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools Partners in Education, Montpelier Alive, Elevate Youth (formerly Washington County Youth Service Bureau), and the Montpelier Recreation Department, to pull together an inclusive fun-filled weekend welcoming all classes, faculty, staff, coaches, and respective families.

The MHS Alumni Reunion will be an annual fundraiser, celebrating the MHS experience while giving back to both the school and the Montpelier community. The inaugural weekend-long event kicks off on Friday, July 14 with a “Welcome Back Street Party” from 4 p.m. to 10 p.m. hosted by Langdon Street Tavern’s Dave Thomas (MHS class of ’06), featuring pub food and drinks for purchase with entertainment by the locally popular Gallison Hill Band.

The fun continues Saturday, July 15 from 2:30 to 5:30 p.m. at the Montpelier Pool and Pavilion with face-painting, a raffle, games, and swimming. Northfield-based pub and brewery Good Measure Brewing will be on-site with a beer garden and their food truck in addition to Sisters of Anarchy Ice Cream.

At 6:30 p.m. we cheer on the Mountaineers at their home field, which will start by honoring the MHS athletics teams that won a championship this past year followed by a special national anthem performance by MHS alum, Meghan (Hatch) Sheeran (class of ’03) and her daughter. Real Bounce, from Barre, will be at the game with a bounce house for the kids, and the Mountaineers 50/50 raffle will benefit the event’s charity, Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools Partners in Education, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit supporting the school district’s four caregiver groups.

The planning committees behind this event thank event sponsors Coldwell Banker Classic Properties and Bolduc Metal Recycling and Storage Containers for making this event possible.

Alumni, faculty, coaches, and staff of MHS may reserve tickets through Seven Days Tickets (sevendaystickets.com/events/montpelier-high-school-reunion-7-15-2023) and can join the Facebook page (MHS Alumni Roundup) for regular updates. Tickets will also be available at the door for both Friday and Saturday events.

— press release

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One Year Later

The sale comes just over a year after VCFA leadership announced that it would be selling 11 campus buildings, and moving its annual residency programs to Colorado College. The college’s low-residency graduate-level arts programming will continue to be administered out of the Montpelier headquarters, but residential programming is moving out of state. Some faculty and students have protested the change throughout the past year. The college has promised to keep its headquarters in Vermont and is not selling College Hall or the college green.

From Art to Engineering

Greenway will be purchasing Noble, Glover, Stone, Schulmaier, and Dewey halls, Holcombe said. This fall, in its first school year at the Montpelier campus, Greenway plans to hold classes for 20 students in Noble Hall, all of whom will be staying in a campus dormitory for the “Greenway Center for Equity and Sustainability.” Holcombe noted that Greenway has been working in partnership with Elizabethtown College of Pennsylvania and Norwich Technologies to launch the program in Montpelier.

“We are pleased the campus will continue to be used for higher education and look forward to collaborating with Greenway on shared services and complementary programming,” said VCFA’s Vice President for Finance and Administration Katie Gustafson.

According to a joint press release from both Greenway and VCFA, “The Greenway Center for Equity and Sustainability represents a unique opportunity to extend the campus’ current use as an institution of higher education. The GCES will offer mission-driven college and graduate level engineering and technology coursework that prepares diverse graduates to design and build a more sustainable and equitable future.”

Some of the buildings Greenway is buying already have long-term tenants (The Bridge is one of those tenants, in the Stone Science Building). Holcombe said Greenway plans to keep the many tenants of VCFA buildings, and has no immediate plans to renegotiate existing lease agreements.

“Greenway is purchasing the buildings where we have current tenants and they are interested in maintaining all of these tenants,” confirmed Gustafson.

“We carefully identified potential buyers that have a demonstrated commitment to serving the community and will continue to enrich the campus and city,” said VCFA President Leslie Ward. “We are pleased to be partnering with entities that share our community’s values and commitment to lifelong learning.”

Holcombe noted that an influx of young people will be seen around town once the Greenway programming starts up. “We’re good at innovation; we’re good at sustainability,” she said. “We’re trying to bring that all together in a way we think will complement Montpelier … I hope it also helps bring more young people to help drive this for the whole [community].”

Bishop-Hatch Going to the New School

In addition to the five buildings Greenway is purchasing, another — Bishop-Hatch hall — is under contract with the New School, a long-time VCFA tenant and a private special education school serving approximately 30 students in grades 3–12, Gustafson said in an email to The Bridge.

Last spring, a local group of wellness professionals known as 150 Main Street LLC planned to purchase three VCFA buildings — Crowley Center, Martin House, and Gary Library. The sale fell through during the discovery phase of the purchase, according to a letter 150 Main Street sent to neighbors on College Street this spring.

Greenway and VCFA will host a community event on July 13 on the VCFA campus in the College Hall Chapel at 6:00 p.m. to introduce the program and hear from community members about their hopes for the future. You can also follow the meeting remotely at orcamedia.net/browncf-community-meeting-live.
By Phil Dodd

In a June 28 letter to Montpelier officials, the state Drinking Water Division seems to back away from requiring the city to reduce the city water system’s high pressure, but also said it wants the city to replace its aging water pipes at a much faster rate than had been proposed in a city consultant’s preliminary engineering report (PER). Faster replacement could potentially lead to higher costs for water system users.

“It is imperative that the Water System work with urgency to replace the 11% of pipe beyond its useful life and address areas repeatedly affected by boil water notices, as the PER identifies another 35% of the distribution piping that is expected to exceed its useful life within the next 20 years,” the letter states.

The report, prepared for the Montpelier Water Department by the Dufresne Group, had called for replacing just 2% of the distribution system over the next five years. The system has 58 miles of distribution lines.

Meanwhile, a relatively new citizen group called Resilient Montpelier has sent its own July 5 letter to the city requesting more focus on and faster action to fix the troubled water system. The group plans to attend the June 12 city council meeting to present its concerns.

The Resilient Montpelier letter begins: “We are writing to express extreme disappointment with the City Council meeting of May 10, 2023, and with the subsequent failure of City Hall to let the city go forward with pipe replacement.”

In an April 18 letter, the state said the pipe replacement strategy “does not address the remediation of high-pressure transient events or reduce areas with elevated pressure conditions; therefore, Alternative 3 (replacing pipe materials without reducing pressures in the high pressure zone) is equivalent to the ‘Do Nothing’ Alternative.” Earlier, another state official had characterized the city’s pipe-replacement-only approach as “kicking the can down the road.”

But the state now seems prepared to let the city go forward with pipe replacement alone. “As expressed in the Division’s June 23, 2023 letter, the Division maintains concerns about the high operating pressures; however, we acknowledge that that lowering system-wide pressures would be complicated and require a large upfront investment,” said the June 28 letter, signed by Allison Murphy, an engineer in the state’s Drinking Water and Groundwater Protection Division.

The letter continues: “The Division’s primary objective is protecting public health. The Water System and Dufresne Group assert that Alternative 3, focused on pipe replacement, is the fastest, most cost-effective alternative that addresses public health concerns; therefore, the Division believes there is a path to approve this recommended alternative if the Division’s public health concerns are adequately addressed.”

The report had also suggested the highest city priority should be addressing hydrants served by undersized lines. This priority should remain, the state said, but “from a drinking water public health perspective, the Division considers the water main breaking and requiring boil water notices to be more urgent.”

The June 28 letter from the state also directs the Public Works to implement management strategies to “prevent frequent, uncontrolled pressure loss events ... from being a reoccurring issue.” It also asks the city to “outline additional data needs to inform investment and make data-driven decisions, and the strategies to obtain the needed data,” such as additional test pitting and pressure monitoring within the high-pressure zone downtown.

Significantly boosting the rate at which water pipes are replaced will require more money, either from bonding, water rate increases, or state or federal funding. About the last possibility, the state’s letter noted that “[b]ringing this PER ... to Division approval will facilitate funding options available for design and construction of pipe replacement and infrastructure modifications for data collection.”
A n annual event that draws thou-
sands to central Vermont, the
Waterbury Arts Fest, features
more than 100 artist-vendors on Sat-
urday June 15 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.
Pilgrim Park, its spacious new location
behind the downtown train station will
include a “creation station” for all ages
from MakerSphere, tents with artist/
vendor arts, and a stage with local events
day all day, including Irish dancers
from Green Mountain Performing Arts
and a lineup of eclectic musical offer-
ings.

“And there is oodles of parking,” says
executive director Karen Nevin from
Revitalizing Waterbury. “Word got out
that last year many artists sold out
by the end of the day or had the best
festival sales of the summer. Of 135 ap-
plications, we chose 100 artist vendors,
up from 85 last year, and they are the
cream of the crop.”

Twelve food trucks will offer all kinds
of fare, from fancy to traditional “fair
food,” including pulled pork and tots
from Randolph Technical Career Cen-
ter. The wide-open lawn along Railroad
Street provides space for picnicking,
lawn games, and hourly performances
on the stage.

For the first time, a commemorative
poster of a landscape with the Water-
bury Reservoir by Vermont artist Todd
Cummings is for sale, along with greet-
ing cards. It is the major fundraising
event for Revitalizing Waterbury.

The Arts Fest has grown over the
years, requiring a bigger space than the
former Stowe Street location. Nevin
cites several prior difficulties, including
fire department access to the street, the
cost of erecting tents on the pavement,
and the size and noise of the crowd in
that enclosed space. The big lawn and
size of the outdoor venue provide the
increasingly popular festival a more spa-
cious site.

The festival kicks off with a block
party and dance June 14, from 5:30 to
9:30 p.m. with beer trucks, food, and
live music. “I’m super excited about the
party,” Nevin comments. “Every year,
we invite The Grift for our dancing
from 7:30 to 9:30. Emma Cook and
Questionable Company opens for them.
I love watching the setting sun behind
the band.”

For the Friday party, with each dona-
tion, attendees receive a raffle ticket for
a “Best of Waterbury” basket of items.
(There is no charge for the Arts Fest
on Saturday.) According to Nevin, the
crowd was estimated at two thousand
people last year for the block party and
dance. “I’m super excited about both
events, and I always predict 72 degrees
and sunny,” she jokes.

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Waterbury’s most recent public art project — a massive mural welcoming all and promoting anti-racist social change — is set to be painted and installed this summer.

Organizers are seeking volunteers to assist in painting the separate panels and people of all ages and backgrounds to participate in art activities. They are also continuing to solicit donations from the community to complete the work and have a community celebration.

The murder of George Floyd in 2020 served as the initial catalyst for the project, spurred on by founding member Marioni Minter of the Waterbury Area Anti-Racism Coalition. Three years in the planning, project co-coordinators Chiyomi McKibbin and MK Monley applied for and received a two-to-one matching grant from the state of Vermont after their crowdsourcing effort yielded $10,405 by June 20.

Monley, a retired art educator from Brookside Primary School, says community connections are essential to the project. McKibbin, who works for a non-profit organization, was drawn to the idea of the welcoming mural on Stowe Street as a way to reach out to BIPOC residents and visitors. (A prominent sign on the entrance to the town on Main Street greets arrivals with “Waterbury Condemns Racism and Welcomes All” — also a product of the Coalition — intending to make clear the town’s welcome.)

After extensive competition, Burlington-based artist Raphaella Brice emerged as the winner. The design “Madonna’s Earth,” depicts the Black Madonna as an expression of the divine feminine. According to the committee, Brice, known as “Raph,” reflects the group’s mission to foster a sense of belonging and to continue efforts against racism. Brice draws on Roman Catholic imagery and the ancient worship of Mother Earth as inspiration to promote anti-racist social change. Her style has been called “cultural psychedelic.” At the Fletcher Free Library in Burlington, Brice’s mural “Black Freedom, Black Madonna, and the Black Child” depicts images inspired by her Haitian heritage.

Finding a prominent place to install the mural so it’s visible to those entering the village prompted participation of a local business, the Stowe Street Café. Proprietors Nicole and John Grenier offered the wall of their building at the entrance to the Stowe Street Historic District (see photo) as well as interior space. MK Monley from the Coalition, a retired primary educator at Brookside Primary School just down the street, commends the Greniers for their commitment to public art. She also emphasizes the support of all-volunteer Revitalizing Waterbury.

For the work next month, all people — especially children and youths — are welcome to sign up to paint the mural on large panels to be installed early in September. Organizers from the Waterbury Area Anti-Racism Coalition plan a celebration and reveal of the mural in September. Donations for long-term maintenance of the mural can be sent by checks made out to the Peace and Justice Center and mailed to WAARC, P.O. Box 492, Waterbury, VT 05676. Please note in the memo line it’s for WAARC Mural.

Preparation for the popular Arts Fest draws many visitors and vendors on Saturday, July 15, at Pilgrim Park behind the train station.

By Linda Radtke

Waterbury Community Mural Project

The location for the mural at the entrance to the Stowe Street Historic District has been donated by local business owners in Waterbury. Photo by Gordon Miller.
Nancy Schulz is standing in front of the Montpelier Senior Activity Center on Barre Street getting ready for the day’s work. It’s a beautiful June morning, ideal for a hike or a day at the beach, but the nine men and women, gathered with Schulz, have other plans. They’re all part of the Graffiti Removal Infrastructure Team (GRIT) and they’re not dressed to impress. Their outfits are ideal, however, for painting over the scrawls and slurs that appear on dumpsters, bridge railings, stop signs, and other unloved surfaces.

Schulz has the quiet confidence of a woman who could probably direct a Fortune 500 company. Instead, she’s busy assigning members of her group to their teams, the gray team, the green team, the black team, etc. If you’re on the “gray team,” you’ll be painting over graffiti on gray surfaces such as the railings on the bike path bridge. Fortunately, the group doesn’t have to pay for the paint or paint tools. The Montpelier Department of Public Works, Montpelier Alive, and Heney Realtors all contribute to the expense of materials.

Graffiti goes with the territory in cities all over the world, but it’s a newer issue in Montpelier. Some cities have tried another strategy. They create “free walls,” large spaces where graffiti artists can let their imaginations soar. It sounds like a brilliant idea and the walls do become tourist destinations. Unfortunately, there’s little evidence that this approach reduces the amount of graffiti. The freedom to paint at will can rob vandals of the edgy satisfaction that goes with stealth.

As a result, the illegal surfaces in the city continue to be vandalized.

The GRIT approach to cover it up as quickly as possible seems to make more sense. So much of graffiti is based on a craving for attention and visibility. The longer the message remains on the wall, the greater the gratification. The GRIT volunteers want to show visitors and locals that their town is valued and cared for. The team got its start in May of 2022 and participated in 17 outings (usually on Sundays) through the fall of that year. In the spring of 2023, they began again, heading for the downtown area every few weeks to clean up, even while knowing that visitors and locals that their town is valued and cared for. The team got its start in May of 2022 and participated in 17 outings (usually on Sundays) through the fall of that year. In the spring of 2023, they began again, heading for the downtown area every few weeks to clean up, even while knowing that graffiti may often reappear on exactly the same walls.

No matter what form it takes, graffiti can be contagious. Evidence that a city has an apathetic attitude toward petty crimes such as vandalism and littering encourages other kinds of lawbreaking. On the other hand, a community that’s well cared for suggests that, in this town, there’s little tolerance for crime.

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Plan to dress down.

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The GRIT approach to cover it up as quickly as possible seems to make more sense. So much of graffiti is based on a craving for attention and visibility. The longer the message remains on the wall, the greater the gratification and the more likely graffiti will spread across a community.

Schulz and her crew are working as hard as they can but they’d welcome others on their team. If you’d like to try out a day with GRIT, contact Nancy Schulz at SaddleShoes@gmail.com.

Plan to dress down.

July 17 - 19, “Twist and Turn,” Vacation Bible School for children ages 3-12, 6:30 - 8:00 PM, Call 802-223-6538 for more information.

Montpelier’s Graffiti Removal Infrastructure Team (GRIT), from left: Nolan Carver, Meredith Kitfield, Jerry Freeman, Nancy Schulz, Kirk Gardner, Roberta Downey, Rebecca Sheppard, Cathy Metz, Bret Appel, and Anne Ferguson. Photo by Mary Cole Mello.
The Wrightsville Dam near capacity as the city considers whether or not to release some of the water. Photo from the City of Montpelier.

Main Street Middle School — Temporary Shelter

The Main Street Middle School gym has been opened as a temporary shelter until buses can once again pick up residents and transport them to the Barre Auditorium, which is being staffed by the Red Cross, Nordenson told The Bridge. Murphy said public safety employees have been working to evacuate people on Elm Street to the Middle School.

“There have been some swift water rescues [as well],” Murphy said, with two swift-water rescue teams in the city as of this writing.

City Moves Operations to Water Treatment Plant

City officials evacuated city hall in the early hours of Tuesday morning, and moved operations to the water treatment plant on Berlin Street, well uphill of downtown. Very few city staff members got any sleep Monday night; by Tuesday morning police and public works staff members have been helping people evacuate through the night, according to

Post-Flood Resources

From the Vermont Arts Council:

• Vermont State Agency of Commerce & Community Development is a major coordinating body in Vermont that will be a key resource in the days ahead as we approach cleanup of infrastructure, businesses, and homes. Get on their email list to stay in touch about the resources that may be available.

• In the coming days, the state will document the storm damage in local towns. You can help by documenting (photos, writing, etc.) the damage to your property/business. The Vermont Small Business Development Center has a workbook to help you document and move through planning and recovery stages after a disaster.
Kelly Murphy, Montpelier’s assistant city manager.

Fraser said the city had already established operations jointly with Barre City at the plant, and is moving its full emergency operations center to the treatment plant as well.

“Computer and radio systems at the Police Station may become incapacitated if floodwaters increase,” he wrote, ending the release with, “Again, could be a dangerous situation.”

According to Nordenson, “three radio towers positioned in Washington County used to dispatch fire and ambulances are currently not functional and Washington Electric has been notified to attempt repairs.”

At 10:57 p.m., the city of Montpelier announced it would be closing downtown until at least noon on Tuesday hoping the river would recede by then; they later adjusted that time to 3 p.m.

**Barre City Underwater**

Barre City police and fire departments have been rescuing and evacuating people from flooded homes throughout the night and into Tuesday, said Fire Chief Cushman.

“We’re still having high rapid water in our streets,” he said Tuesday morning. “We’re still planning and coordinating around what assets we need.”

Specifically, Cushman said, Barre City needs additional front-end loaders, dump trucks, and street sweepers.

The city has started to move abandoned vehicles as well, he said, mostly from people who drove their cars into deep flood waters “and their vehicles were disabled.”

“Don’t drive into a flood,” he pointed out.

Many people have been forced into the second floor of their homes, including the elderly, he said, so there has been a focus Tuesday morning on getting people to the emergency shelter at the auditorium.

As with Montpelier, the Barre City downtown is also closed off for most of Tuesday. Cushman specifically asked people to stay away from the flooded areas for sightseeing.

“It really is obstructive,” he said.

Nordenson also urged people to stay out of the downtown flooded areas.

“Roads throughout the area continue to be closed, and travel is very dangerous at this time,” he said in a release.

“Please understand that all responders are at the max capacity and to only contact dispatch in an extreme emergency.”

**Resources:**

- For a list of state road closures: newengland511.org/
- Track river forecasts and levels at water.weather.gov/ahps2/index.php?wfo=btv.
- Register for a Vermont Alert account at www.vtalert.gov to receive up-to-the-minute safety warnings.
- A Red Cross shelter is open at the Barre Auditorium in Barre. Several towns have also opened shelters, to find specific locations call 211.
If Loons Could Talk: Wake Boat Hearing Coming Soon

By John Dillon

I heard a half-dozen loons singing in syncopated chorus the other evening. It was a thrilling, spine-chilling sound that captures the essence of summer on a Vermont lake.

Loons can’t talk. But if you care about quiet and clean waters, now’s the time to speak up.

On Aug. 1, the state will hold its first public hearing, in Montpelier, on a proposal to regulate wake boats, a craft designed to plow through the water and leave a large wake for surfing. An online hearing will be held Aug. 3. To testify at either you have to sign up starting July 10, or you can submit written comments.

I’ll be blunt. For me, wake boats are almost too easy to dislike. I see them as symbolizing so much that is wrong and shortsighted about our overly consumptive, self-centered society. I know that sounds extreme, but hear me out.

These powerful craft, propelled by 400-500 horsepower motors, are designed to generate three-to-four-foot waves for surfing without a tow rope. The boats are often equipped with loudspeakers to mimic the wild wail of those loons. Forget about underwater navigation, these wake boats could easily swamp loon nests just inches above the water line. Nests will fail.

The boats’ propellers aim down, so their egg-beater action stirs lake sediment to 20 feet deep, releasing phosphorus stored on the lake bottom. This could worsen a pollution problem we spend millions of dollars a year trying to fix. Burlington’s beaches are often closed due to toxic cyanobacteria blooms, fueled, by you guessed it, phosphorus. The Health Department’s algae tracker also shows recent outbreaks on Joe’s Pond in Danville, where wake boats have stirred controversy along with the sediment.

These noisy, polluting thrill craft, spewing hydrocarbons in an era of climate change, seem to me the very epitome of environmental arrogance.

But as a former journalist plagued by leftover professional ambivalence, I know there’s always another side. Surfing is a blast. Riding a consistent wave anytime you launch has to be a big plus.

On the fun side of wake surfing, listen to Kim Mackey, a doctor from Wisconsin, who showed up in February to speak out at a wake boat hearing in Greensboro. He told the crowd that he and his friends love riding the waves behind his boat. But he only uses it on a 9,700-acre lake in Wisconsin. He doesn’t bring it to his lakeside property in the Northeast Kingdom, where the lakes are just too small for the “washing machine” churn the machines leave behind.

“Where these boats are used, it will require great regulation and enforcement,” said Mackey.

Vermont has only a handful of inland lakes over 1,000 acres in size. The rule, as proposed, would permit wake boats on 31 inland lakes, including 393-acre Joe’s Pond, where state Secretary of Commerce Lindsay Kurrle operates her wake boat.

That’s where we find ourselves this summer. The state says its draft rules are the strictest in the country. In fact, they don’t go far enough.

The Vermont Department of Environmental Conservation rule would limit wake boats to areas of 50 contiguous acres, 500 feet from shore or more and in depths of 20 feet or greater.

The rule is substantially similar to one requested by a citizens group, called Responsible Wakes for Vermont Lakes, with one huge exception. The RWVL proposal would require a 1,000-foot buffer from shore, and would thus limit wake boats to 16 lakes in Vermont. (The state can’t regulate the boats in the seven Connecticut River reservoirs or on Lakes Memphremagog and Champlain because they straddle state or international borders.)

The 1,000 foot limit is a good first step, but I think wake boats should be outright banned. Extreme? I don’t think so. Vermont was the first state to ban billboards. It’s time again for similar visionary environmental leadership. Remember, the water belongs to everyone, held in “public trust” for all to use. But the state’s draft rule means our public waters would be hogged by the few at the expense of the many.

The kayaker who wants to experience a quiet afternoon paddling across a lake is likely to turn back in the face of a mini mid-lake tsunami. An angler looking for rising fish won’t cast into that washing machine churn. A mom teaching her kid to sail will have to find a breeze close to shore. The rule effectively confines the majority of lake users to shoreline areas, where the best angling, sailing, or paddling may not be found.

The state’s mandate, according to the use of public waters rule, is to “ensure that the natural values of the public waters are fully protected.”

To me, that means not allowing more damage to lakes that are already under many environmental threats.

The state estimates that about 100 wake boats are currently used in Vermont. Those users are backed by an industry that since 2022 paid lobbyists $30,001 to kill or weaken regulation.

Loons can’t lobby. Paddlers, anglers, and other lovers of quiet waters aren’t paying to sow influence in the State House. But we do have the numbers. Please make your voices heard at the upcoming hearings.

To sign up for the hearings or to provide written comment, go to: https://dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/rulemaking.

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“Farm to Family Coupon” Program Starts
Food assistance for local produce available statewide

More Vermonters now have access to fresh, local produce across the state through the “Farm to Family Coupon” program. Approximately $164,000 in coupons are now available to help eligible Vermonters buy locally grown fresh fruits and vegetables at participating farmers markets and farm stands. Coupons are issued on a first-come, first-served basis, and may be used at any of the 60 markets and farm stands enrolled in the program this summer.

Vermont households with incomes at or below 185% of the federal poverty level and households participating in the Vermont Department of Health’s WIC Program (Supplemental Nutrition Program for Women, Infants and Children) are eligible for the program. People can apply through their local WIC office or local community action agency. Dial 2-1-1 for local agency contact information. Current income limits are $2,248 a month for a single person, $3,041 for a couple, $3,833 for a family of three, $4,625 for a family of four, and $5,418 for a family of five.

“Farm to Family supports Vermonters eating more fruits and vegetables and local farming at the same time,” said Chris Winters, commissioner of the Department for Children and Families.

“We expect over 200 farmers to participate in the program this season. Every coupon spent puts money directly into the pocket of a Vermont farmer while helping Vermonters in need and putting great local foods on kitchen tables across Vermont.”

To learn more, go to dcf.vermont.gov/benefits/2ff.

Farm to Family is a program of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

—press release

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The absence of trusted local news sources opens the door for spreading misinformation and eroding public confidence.

MONTPELIERBRIDGE.ORG/DONATE

TELL THEM YOU SAW IT IN THE BRIDGE.
Montpelier Planning Commission Invites You to Review Proposed Zoning Changes

By the Montpelier Planning Commission

Happy summer from your Montpelier Planning Commission. We would like to invite you to a listening session regarding some zoning changes we have been considering. These changes are in response to citizen requests. The listening session will take place on July 24 from 5:30pm-7:30pm during our regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting on July 24, 2023.

We are bringing forward proposed zoning amendments based on a recent report on Montpelier’s zoning code by the Congress for New Urbanism (CNU) and AARP Vermont. The two groups partnered to examine zoning regulations in both Montpelier and Burlington to identify barriers to housing choice and walkability. AARP Vermont promotes policies that create more livable and walkable neighbors as well as increase housing choices. CNU provides technical assistance to communities that want to improve their zoning codes.

The report recommended removing zoning regulations that limit the number of housing units based on lot size, also known as “density caps,” for all zoning districts in the City. Currently, a certain number of units are allowed per square foot, and the numbers vary based on the associated zoning district. We are not currently recommending eliminating density caps for all zoning neighborhoods, but have other incremental changes we are suggesting at this time.

The Planning Commission has developed the following menu of ideas for consideration:
• Eliminating density caps in areas currently in the Design Review District. The Design Review District in Montpelier is a district that the City has recognized has special characteristics and therefore has specific design regulations. A map of this district is included as an additional graphic. This district already has strong design controls, so we feel confident that eliminating density caps will result in development that aligns with the City’s design goals and criteria. This change offers the opportunity for more development in this district and increases the housing supply in the City.
• Expanding the density exemption by allowing a four-unit building to be placed anywhere a single-family dwelling is allowed. Again, given that the housing supply in Montpelier has not kept pace with demand and has resulted in a critical lack of supply, this change allows more units to be developed while maintaining the zoning standards for individual lots.
• Doubling the density in all districts, which would retain density regulation but allow for more housing development.
• Eliminating density caps in some zoning districts outside of the Design Review District but near the center of town. Currently, the downtown neighborhoods do not have density requirements. We could extend this to other high-density districts that are adjacent to or near the downtown.

We look forward to hearing from the community. We will be hosting a listening session to discuss these proposals, as well as collect additional ideas from the public before any changes move forward to the official public hearings. The session will take place during our regularly scheduled Planning Commission meeting from 5:30-7:30 on July 24, 2023. The agenda and instructions for attending the meeting can be found at https://www.montpelier-vt.org/129/Agendas-Minutes
Later in the fall, we will schedule formal public hearings.

We have also been busy working on a final draft of the City Plan which outlines the City’s planning goals and priorities over the next eight years. We anticipate it will be ready for public comment by late summer or early fall. The City Plan was drafted with input from local committees that have engaged deeply with such issues as transportation, housing, and economic development. We are excited to share the draft with the community and look forward to feedback and questions.

The Planning Commission meets on the second and fourth Mondays of each month.
Montpelier's Independence Day celebration brought a large crowd with family events on the Statehouse lawn, the Montpelier Mile race, music, games, and, of course, the parade and fireworks. Both Miss Vermont (Yamuna Turco) and Miss Vermont Teen (Ginger Ragaishis) made an appearance as well. Despite some rain, the event went off without a hitch, and even ended with a rainbow, and just a few days later the entire area would be covered with several feet of flood waters. A few new food trucks were seen lining State Street this year and Arandas Mexican Cuisine debuted its new takeout food at the convenience store/Sunoco station at 108 State Street.

According to Katie Trautz, executive director of the lead event organizer Montpelier Alive, “Family fest drew 25–30 [people] for the 3 p.m. family dance, around 100 came for the Big Nazo/Providence Drum Troupe on the Statehouse lawn, and according to previous research, we know that almost 20,000 people visit the Capital City on July 3rd each year. This year seemed on par!”

A team of six people ran the event, leading a host of volunteers, setting up at 9 a.m. and closing down at 11:30 p.m. “We are so glad there weren’t thunderstorms, and so lucky that a rainbow became a part of the day’s entertainment,” Trautz said.

— Cassandra Hemenway

Photo above of the start of the Montpelier Mile by Oliver Laxer. All other photos by Terry Allen.
The Way I See It
The Way I See the Open Road

By Richard Littauer

I recently traveled almost 200 miles across the far north of Scotland without a ticket or schedule. On the way, I learned about the area from local guides, saw about 40 species of birds and endless miles of heather, petted some very good dogs, and had excellent conversations about many topics with new friends.

I got some exercise, picked up some last-minute items at a shop, and tasted food I’ve never had before (black sausage and chorizo tapas). I saw old castles, and new vistas.

Hitching today is rare, obsolete, and generally frowned upon. When I mention that I hitch while traveling, I hear the same questions: Are your finances really that bad? Isn’t it dangerous? Doesn’t everyone ignore you? (No, no, and no.) When I mention that I hitch for fun, people generally get confused.

So, as an exercise, let me tell you about a particular day on the road. I woke up at a friend’s house in Fort William, having arrived in the UK the day before and taken the train to the west coast of the Highlands.

At 8:30 a.m., after a light run, a shower, and being handed dozens of objects by his two-year-old daughter, my friend dropped me off at a petrol station on the left way (north), and, on this road, the driver and I agreed he was going the right way (north), and, on this road, any ride works. I got in.

He was an American, Jeff from Pennsylvania, with a dog named Hoopie. He lives in his Spanish van in Europe a few months of the year, and this was his first time in Scotland. We talked about the best types of fit-out for campers, his daughter’s yellow Jeep, the war in Ukraine, invasive rhododendrons. He had volunteered with refugees in Berlin. He loved his bike. The act of hitching barely came up.

And then, after a brief half-hour, he dropped me off at the Bridge of Orchy. The air was clear, the swallows twittered, and everything was just grand. I took out my notebook to write about it, but only managed one line. I got a ride from the seventh car that passed.

With rides this fast, travel was easy. Nigel drove a Jaguar and was accompanied by his Tamaskan dog named Milo. (Tamaskans were used in “Game of Thrones” to represent now-extinct dire wolves, as he repeatedly told me.) Milo was as placid as Loch Ness. Nigel traded in his 4x4 when Milo wouldn’t jump up into it.

Brendan had modded his car to go faster. He works in Taiwan on windmills. He once ran into a waitress from his village of 400 people serving cocktails in Dubai.

I’m not sure I heard Chief’s name correctly, but he told me, “I keep to myself mostly.” His massive, sun-spotted hands directly, but he told me, “I keep to myself mostly.” His massive, sun-spotted hands packed scallops and occasionally relit the slowest cigarette I’ve ever seen. He didn’t like shellfish, but never minded the smell.

Four hours passed this way. I waited, in total, perhaps 20 minutes.

I can’t think of a more Zen way to travel — close to the land, close to the culture. I am, of course, privileged, not just by dint of being a semi-muscular white male, but also in terms of where I can hitch. Northern Scotland is safer than Vermont, which is safer than, say, California. I’ve still had close calls, and cars I’ve gotten out of early. But I’ve also hitched more than 20,000 miles in my life. Perhaps I’m lucky. If so, I feel it — with every car. I raise my hands in joy whenever someone pulls over. Cultivating gratefulness, I find, is an antidote to fear.

On this day, after I’ve finally washed up at a restaurant, I wait for the ferry. It’s three in the afternoon as I write, and I have hours to wait. I sit outside on the pier and watch the terns. When the ferry drops me off in Orkney, I’ll start walking down the road again. If I make it to the next spot I’m going, good. If not, I’ve got a tent and a sleeping bag, and the stars will be out overnight.
**Wednesday, July 12**

**FEAST Farmstand.** 9 to 10:30 a.m. 58 Barre Street, Montpelier. Fresh, local produce from the FEAST Farm in Montpelier. Each week, we will sell below-market rate produce to support older adults in need, although all ages are welcome to shop with us. 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. New expanded space. Lots of fresh produce, local meats, crafts, baked goods, and more. Call 802-477-2967 for more information.

**A2VT.** 6:30 p.m. Middlesex Bandstand, Shady Kill Road, next to Rumney School. Voted Vermont’s best hip-hop group in 2022, A$AP (Artists Supporting Africa to Vermont) brings together members of the African diaspora who came to Vermont from Somalia, Congo, Tanzania, and Burundi and made the state their home. Food available for purchase on site. Call 802-272-4920 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. If you play a band instrument, come join us. All levels of ability welcome. Please bring your instrument, a chair, and music stand. We supply the music. For more information, email CapitalCityBandVT@gmail.com

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**Thursday, July 13**

**Les Dead Ringers.** Noon to 1 p.m. Christ Church Courtyard, Montpelier. Gypsy jazz meets New Orleans! Playing originals, a wide range of artists from Django Reinhardt and Duke Ellington to Howling Wolf and The Coasters. For more information, call CapitalCityBandVT@gmail.com

**Food Truck Thursday/ Currier Park Concerts: Full House.** 4 to 8 p.m. Currier Park, Barre. Food trucks gather at 4 p.m. Bring a blanket or a chair. Music runs from 6 to 8 p.m. Family fun! For more information, call 802-477-2967.

**Wild Leek River.** 5:30 p.m. Tuning Forks Stage, Old Shelter, Hubbard Park, Montpelier. A family friendly concert. Part of the Parkapalooza series, featuring live music, a giant slip ‘n slide, lawn games, and a huge open space for people to gather and listen to live music. Wood-belly Pizza will be vending. Questions? Call 802-585-7673.

“**The Will to be Remembered**” and **Rock of Ages TV Commercials.** 6 to 7 p.m. The Vermont Granite Museum, Barre. “The Will to be Remembered” is a film produced by the Barrett Granite Association in 1951 showcasing their efforts. Fast forward to 1958 when Rock of Ages began advertising their products on trucks serving up tasty bally-lying food, and, of course, incredible live music for you to dance the night away. For more information, go to waterburyartsfest.com.

**Pointe Noir Cajun Band.** 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. The Gazebo, Old Schoolhouse Community Marshfield. Enjoy the rocking rhythms of Cajun music! Bring a chair or a blanket to picnic on. Pointe Noir finds its rhythm deeply seated in Southwest Louisiana, where many of its members have studied and learned Cajun music. Call 802-426-3581 for more information.

**Rabbit and Wolf Live Poetry.** 6:30 to 8 p.m. The Front, 6 Barre St., Montpelier. This month features Jenn Brown and Josh Barber. Free. For more information, call 802-552-0877.

**Roald Dahl’s Willy Wonka.** 7:30 to 9 p.m. Valley Players Theater, 4254 Main Street (Rt. 100), Waitsfield. Roald Dahl’s family friendly Willy Wonka follows imaginative candy manufacturer Willy Wonka as he stages a contest by hiding golden tickets in five of his scrumptious candy bars. To purchase tickets and for more information, go to valleyplayers.com.

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**Friday, July 14**

**Waterbury Arts Fest.** 5 to 9:30 p.m. 5 Pilgrim Park, Waterbury. On the lawn behind the train station. The Friday Night Block Party features a beer garden sponsored by Big Tree Brewing, food trucks serving up tasty bally-lying food, and, of course, incredible live music for you to dance the night away. For more information, go to waterburyartsfest.com.

**Roald Dahl’s Willy Wonka.** 7:30 to 9 p.m. Valley Players Theater, 4254 Main Street (Rt. 100), Waitsfield. See description under July 13.

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**Saturday, July 15**

**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.

**Waterbury Arts Fest.** 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. 5 Pilgrim Park, Waterbury. On the lawn behind the train station. The Waterbury Arts Fest will once again transform downtown Waterbury into a lively outdoor art gallery and street fair with over 100 artist exhibitors, fantastic festival fare, and live music from some of the area’s most beloved entertainers. For more information, including visitor information, maps, parking, and street closings, go to waterburyartsfest.com.

**Do Good Fest.** 1:30 to 10 p.m. National Life, Montpelier. Live music, food trucks, a beer garden run by Cornerstone Pub and Kitchen, an exclusive VIP lounge, face painting for kids, fireworks, and much more. Advance Valley tickets are required. While the concert is free, a donation to Branches of Hope is strongly suggested. For more information, go to dogoodfest.com.

**Roald Dahl’s Willy Wonka.** 7:30 to 9 p.m. Valley Players Theater, 4254 Main Street (Rt. 100), Waitsfield. See description under July 13.

**Contra Dance with Anna Rain and Sycamore.** 7:40 to 11 p.m. Capital City Grange, Berlin. Beginners, singles, and all ages are welcome: all dances are taught. Gender neutral role terms. Newcomers contra dance lessons at 7:40 p.m. Please bring clean soft-soled shoes. Questions? Call 802-225-8921.

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**Sunday, July 16**

**Summer Nature Romp.** 10 a.m. to noon. North Branch Nature Center, Montpelier. Adults and families are welcome. Free, no registration required. For more information, call 802-223-6206.

**Roald Dahl’s Willy Wonka.** 4 to 6:30 p.m. Valley Players Theater, 4254 Main Street (Rt. 100), Waitsfield. See description under July 13.

**Community Barbeque.** 5:30 to 7 p.m. Redemption Baptist Church, 144 Elm Street, Montpelier. Meet your neighbors with hot dogs and hamburgers on the side at no cost. For more information, call 802-223-6538.

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**Monday, July 17**

**Vacation Bible School.** 6:30 to 8 p.m. Redemption Baptist Church, 144 Elm Street, Montpelier. Three evenings with games, crafts, and refreshment for children ages 3 through 12. For more information, call 802-223-6538.

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**Tuesday, July 18**

**Stand Up Paddleboard Yoga with Chrissy.** 6 p.m. to sunset. Wrightsville Reservoir, 369 Vermont Rt.12, Middlesex. SUP yoga for all levels, pre-registration required. You’ll receive a confirmation email after registering with the exact location if you’re unfamiliar. Cost: $20/class if you bring your own board; $45/class includes board rental. For information and to register, email chrissy@gratefulyogavt.com.

**Vacation Bible School.** 6:30 to 8 p.m. Redemption Baptist Church, 144 Elm Street, Montpelier. See description under July 17.

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**Wednesday, July 19**

**FEAST Farmstand.** 9 to 10:30 a.m. 58 Barre Street, Montpelier. Fresh, local produce from the FEAST Farm in Montpelier. See description under July 12.

**Barre Farmers Market.** 3:30 to 6:30 p.m. Depot Square, Barre. New expanded space. See description under July 12.

**Vacation Bible School.** 6:30 to 8 p.m. Redemption Baptist Church, 144 Elm Street, Montpelier. See description under July 17.

**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. See description under July 12.

**Nomfusi.** 6:30 p.m. Middlesex Bandstand, Shady Kill Road by the Rumney School. Coming from her performance at the Kennedy Center Nomfusi is a world-renowned singer whose music is a beautiful and beautiful mix of the Xhosa sounds of her childhood in the squatter camps of South Africa, ballads touched by gospel and American soul, and Afropop. Food available for purchase on site. Call 802-272-4920 for more information.
### NIGHT LIFE

#### WEDNESDAY, JULY 12
- **David Cron.** 5:30 to 7:30 p.m. Bear Naked Growler, 186 River Street, Montpelier.
- **Slap Happy Jack.** 7 p.m. Bent Nails Bistro, 4 Langdon Street, Montpelier.
- **The Fretbenders (acoustic Americana blues).** 8 to 11 p.m. Charlie-O’s, 70 Main Street, Montpelier. Never a cover. 21+.
- **Trivia Night.** 6 to 7:30 p.m. Bear Naked Growler, 186 River Street, Montpelier.
- **Travis Cyr/Stabilizers.** 7 p.m. Bent Nails Bistro, 4 Langdon Street, Montpelier.
- **Faith Kelly and Caswyn Moon (space folk).** 8 to 11 p.m. Charlie-O’s, 70 Main Street, Montpelier. Never a cover. 21+.
- **Open Mic with Artie.** 7 p.m. The Whammy Bar, 31 West Country Road, Maple Corner, Calais.

#### FRIDAY, JULY 14
- **Nowhere Washington (Rock).** 7 p.m. Hugo’s Upstairs, 118 Main Street, Montpelier.
- **The Shandy Rats.** 7 p.m. The Whammy Bar, 31 West Country Road, Maple Corner, Calais.
- **The Apollos.** 7 p.m. Bent Nails Bistro, 4 Langdon Street, Montpelier.
- **Tom Banjo, Ethan Azarian, and Son (bluegrass).** 7 p.m. (outside weather permitting); Blue Swag (rock/blues). 9:30 p.m. Charlie-O’s, 70 Main Street, Montpelier. Never a cover. 21+.

#### SATURDAY, JULY 15
- **Get Up With It (jazz).** 7 p.m. Hugo’s Upstairs, 118 Main Street, Montpelier.
- **TBA.** 7 p.m. The Whammy Bar, 31 West Country Road, Maple Corner, Calais.
- **Rust and Ruin.** 5 to 8 p.m. Bear Naked Growler, 186 River Street, Montpelier.
- **The Nailers.** 7 p.m. Bent Nails Bistro, 4 Langdon Street, Montpelier.
- **TBA.** 7 to 12:30 a.m. Charlie-O’s, 70 Main Street, Montpelier. Never a cover. 21+.

#### SUNDAY, JULY 16
- **Open Mic with Nancy.** 8 p.m. Charlie-O’s, 70 Main Street, Montpelier. Never a cover. 21+.
- **Pool Tournament.** 8:30 p.m. Charlie-O’s, 70 Main Street, Montpelier. Never a cover. 21+.
- **Pinball Night.** 7:15 p.m. Charlie-O’s, 70 Main Street, Montpelier. Never a cover. 21+.
- **Bingo at the Bar.** 6 to 7 p.m. Bear Naked Growler, 186 River Street, Montpelier.
- **Open Dan Haley.** 7 p.m. Bent Nails Bistro, 4 Langdon Street, Montpelier.

#### TUESDAY, JULY 18
- **Acoustic Ruckus.** 7 p.m. The Whammy Bar, 31 West Country Road, Maple Corner, Calais.
- **Uam Bauman/Dorado Collective.** 7 p.m. Bent Nails Bistro, 4 Langdon Street, Montpelier.
- **Get Up With It (jazz).** 6 p.m. (outside weather permitting); Nowhere Washington (reggae/rock/hip hop). 9:30 p.m. to 12:30 a.m. Charlie-O’s, 70 Main Street, Montpelier. Never a cover. 21+.
High Cost of Grout Road Bridge Project Reduced Paving Plans

By Phil Dodd

Contractors hired by the city are in the midst of building a new bridge on Grout Road at a much higher cost than originally expected, an expense that adversely impacted this year’s overall city paving plans at a time when some roads are in poor shape. The bridge work serving Grout Road, a short street off Elm Street that serves three houses, is about one-third complete, according to Zach Blodgett, assistant director of Montpelier’s Department of Public Works.

An engineer’s estimate of the Grout Road bridge project was far lower than the winning bid of $921,000, which the city was able to whittle down to around $860,000, Blodgett said. However, the higher bridge cost meant money had to be shifted within the city’s capital fund, which pays for things such as bridges, paving, and equipment. Among other things, that reduced this year’s paving budget to $118,000, one of the lowest levels in recent years, he said.

Last year, with ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act) federal money, the city was able to spend around $1 million on paving projects, a level Blodgett would like to reach again next year. Typically, the city spends around $750,000 a year on paving, he said. Blodgett noted that U.S. routes 2 and 302 in Montpelier are being repaved this summer, with that work largely paid for by the state.

Blodgett also noted the city recently received a $25,000 municipal planning grant to conduct an inventory of Montpelier’s road network that will be used to plan future road projects. The results could be available by this fall, he said.

In addition to the Grout Road bridge, Blodgett said the city owns two other dead-end bridges, both of which have been rebuilt within the past decade. One serves five houses on Haggett Road, while the other serves several houses and an apartment complex on Cummings Street. Blodgett speculated that the dead-end bridges may have been private at one time, but were wiped out in the 1927 flood, rebuilt by the state, and then turned over to the city. The city currently owns or maintains a total of 15 vehicular bridges, he said.

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Central Vermont Humane Society
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802-476-3811
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Tell them you saw it in The Bridge.
Linda Quinlan Brings Her Poetry to Lake Elmore
Vermont Humanities Council Taps Montpelier poet for Words in the Woods series

By Mike Dunphy

In the Vermont poetry scene, Linda Quinlan stands tall. At 76 years old, she's racked up a number of honors for her writing over a long career. Little more than 10 years after she graduated from the University of Massachusetts in 1976, she was named poet of the year in Wisconsin. In 2019, she won the “Wicked Woman Poetry Prize” and in between — and since — her poetry won publication in journals such as Sinister Wisdom, New Orleans Review, and Black Mountain Press. Locals may also know her as co-host of All Things LGBTQ on Orca Media.

On July 15, she's bringing her poetry to Elmore State Park as part of the Words in the Woods series put on by the Vermont Humanities Council. Begun online during the pandemic and moved to in-person in 2022, Words in the Woods aims to pair Vermont's ample poetry talent with the state's famed natural beauty — echoing a long and close relationship between poetry and nature.

While no stranger to reading her poetry in public — at The Front gallery in Montpelier, as part of LGBTQ Poetry Month at the library, and at the Montpelier Senior Activity Center — this is Quinlan's first time doing so for Vermont Humanities Council.

"I think it's a clever idea because poetry go back to kind of those emotions and the importance of connection," he explains. "While the themes themselves may not directly reference nature ... a lot of those things are our internal struggles with nature, especially kind of as we're looking at climate change and the impacts of that. A lot of her themes about acceptance and overcoming big-otry are things that we're battling within the environmental spheres, as well."

Readings like this are fun for Quinlan, but they offer a practical kind of feedback not easily acquired without an audience. A positive response, such as laughing or gasping in the right places can draw her to a poem more, she says, or the opposite if negative. With new work, audience response and the reading experience may even help shape the final form. "If I read a poem that I wrote ... five days ago ... and I'm thinking, 'Oh, that's too long and this line … then I will [make a change]."

Turnout is equally important, as it helps ensure the series will continue. That's not just good for Vermont poets, but also the parks themselves, which get additional attention and traffic, a secondary goal of the series. While the summer series has been successful, Pelletier envisions extending this into other seasons, even winter, with hot cocoa adding further warmth to the poetry.

Beyond that, attending poetry readings offers a great source of inspiration for anyone. As Quinlan points out. "I find it opens me up when I'm listening to other people or reading poetry. It opens me up to new ideas and new feelings."

Quinlan will read a range of poems from her career over the hour, but she's keeping the set list somewhat flexible according to the audience and the vibe. It will also include a mix of new and old work. "I'm not comparing myself to a rock star," she explains, "but if you do a lot of reading ... you might get a little bored with your own work and want to read a lot of new stuff. But then you have an audience who has been following you [and] they want to hear a lot of the old."

There's also the fact that much of Quinlan's work tends to the dark side, featuring topics such as suicide, abuse, and more. "I don't have a lot of really cheery ones," she notes, but "I do have some kind-of funny ones and tried to put those in."

One example of the darker humor is her poem "Popping Frogs in the '50s," which she plans to read. "It's about mostly class issues and how my cousins used to make a sport of throwing frogs under cars so they could hear them pop," she explains. Later in the poem, she writes:

I saved as many frogs as I could, but most weren’t quick enough to hide in the summer grass.
They slipped in oil as thick as mud.
I sat down by the pond making mud pies, listening to my mother yell about polio as if that were the only danger.

While these might not directly link nature and poetry in expected ways, Jacob Pelletier, community programs officer at the Vermont Humanities Council, sees a particular connection to nature in Quinlan's work that echoes the series' goals.

"I think a lot of the themes in her poetry go back to kind of those emotions and the importance of connection," he explains. While the themes themselves may not directly reference nature ... a lot of those things are our internal struggles with nature, especially kind of as we're looking at climate change and the impacts of that. A lot of her themes about acceptance and overcoming big-otry are things that we're battling within the environmental spheres, as well."

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Quinlan will read her poetry at the picnic pavilion at Lake Elmore State Park starting at 11 a.m. on July 15, with a Q&A to follow. A limited number of tables are available; bringing lawn chairs or blankets is encouraged. Find more information at Words in the Woods at Vermonthumanities.org or call 802-262-2626.
In case you missed it on MontpelierBridge.org

City Council Approves “Actionable Plan” for Country Club Road Project, By J. Gregory Gerdel
Man Deemed to Have Drowned in Bolton Potholes, By Carla Occaso
Seniors Petitions Against Montpelier’s Rec Center Homeless Shelter Plans, By Avi Zimet

Our next print issue comes out on July 26, 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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