Kip Roberts, co-owner of Onion River Outdoors, stared hard at the TV camera, the strain clear on his face. Next to him was the still-raging North Branch that just days before had wiped out the store and much of its inventory.

“A friend told me a long time ago Montpelier seems like a town that’s at war with its rivers,” Roberts said in the short video by Vermont Public. “And it’s kind of true. We have boxed this river in and it has nowhere to go but into our businesses and homes.”

How to make peace with the Winooski? The question comes up again and again in conversations and community forums.

How can we live more in harmony with a river that is increasingly prone to catastrophic flooding caused by climate change? Can we let the Winooski revert to more of its natural course? And even: Should we abandon downtown Montpelier and relocate the business district uphill?

Mike Kline knows rivers and how they flood. The former rivers program manager for the state Department of Environmental Conservation, Kline has many of the same questions and maybe even the beginning of a few answers formed by years of experience in river science.

The first thing to realize, Kline said, is how much humans over 250 years have changed rivers and increased their flood potential. We’ve built dams, dredged rivers for gravel, deforested their banks, hemmed in their meanders, even dredged new channels. And then we’re surprised they flood after all those alterations. Some of the answers for the future may involve undoing the damage of the past.

Lessons from Irene

I met Kline recently for a walk along the Winooski in Montpelier. He recalled that Tropical Storm Irene in 2011 helped reshape thinking statewide about how to live with rivers.

“Irene was a real interesting inflection point, I think, for Vermont. Up until that time, and I think in the cultural DNA still, there was this idea of putting the rivers back where they belong, digging them deeper,” he said. “Irene was a real interesting inflection point, I think, for Vermont. Up until that time, and I think in the cultural DNA still, there was this idea of putting the rivers back where they belong, digging them deeper,” he said. “What we have learned … is that some of those practices,
Community and Business News in Brief

The Goods Giveaway

Early in July, while helping out with flood clean up, Montpelier resident Jessica Oparowski stared at the piles of flood debris lining the streets and wondered: “...what would it be like to lose everything you owned when you had no money to replace things...I was thinking, especially, of renters who were unlikely to have flood insurance.”

Oparowski imagined a garage sale, but not a “sale.” What if people in the community gathered the clothing and household items they might normally put aside for a garage sale and offered them to flood victims for free? She posted her idea on Front Porch Forum, and a small army of volunteers went into action. The Barre Aldrich Library offered space for the event, called the Goods Giveaway, on Aug. 18. Posters went up, the Times Argus and The Bridge spread the word, and Lalitha Mailwaganam of Montpelier organized free meals for everyone who attended. Bob Nelson of Nelson’s Hardware in Barre and the Elks Club sent leftovers items didn’t go to a landfill. Oparowski and other volunteers (including many members of her own family) took them to Amy’s Armoire in Barre and the Goodwill in Williston.

At the end of the day, Oparowski was tired and grateful. “The volunteers stepped up and gave me direction. They helped to put everything together...I wish I could have thanked all of them in person.”

Now she’s thinking about next year. Maybe our community could use more “giveaways.”

—Mary Cole Mello

FEMA Activates Helpline for Disaster Survivors

Vermont survivors of the July 7-17 severe storms, flooding, landslides, and mudslides can access FEMA’s Hazard Mitigation Helpline. Experts will be available to offer advice on how to build your home back stronger and safer.

Help is available to all homeowners, not only those affected by the recent storms, by calling the FEMA Hazard Mitigation Helpline at 833-336-2487, then select prompt number 3 for Vermont.

The FEMA mitigation experts are also available for in-person advice on rebuilding at Disaster Recovery Centers, which are open 8 a.m. to 6 p.m., Monday through Saturday, in affected areas across the state. To find a center near you, visit fema.gov/drc. You may also call FEMA at 800-621-3362 for recovery center locations.

Locally, there is a disaster recovery center located at the Vermont College of Fine Arts in College Hall and another at the Barre Auditorium.

—press release

FEMA Seeking Multi-Family Residences

FEMA wants to hear from multi-family unit owners and landlords as it looks to temporarily house flood victims whose homes are uninhabitable. The Multi-Family Lease and Repair program allows FEMA to make improvements to existing units, bring them up to code, and then house flood victims for a minimum of 18 months. Reach out to FEMA by Sept. 12. To start, send an email to FEMA-DL4720VT-Housing@fema.dhs.gov. Find the information FEMA needs at www.rb.gov/kz0wy.

—from Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Fall Central Vermont OLLI Series

Central Vermont Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) programs begin soon at the Montpelier Senior Activity Center on Barre Street, with eight speakers plus a three-film series hosted by Rick Winston (films are shown at the Savoy Theater). The series runs Sept. 20 through Dec. 6.

The Wednesday series starts Sept. 20, when Linda Radtke celebrates the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1919 and traces the suffragette movement’s alignment with other social justice initiatives through song and story in full-period costume.

The Wednesday series starts Sept. 20, when Linda Radtke celebrates the passage of the 19th Amendment in 1919 and traces the suffragette movement’s alignment with other social justice initiatives through song and story in full-period costume.

Programs include new Medicare Advantage options, the Vermont Senior Games, the Vermont 251 Club, Rob Mermin’s Parkinson’s Panorama Project, Ben Koening on Dorothy Canfield Fisher, UVM Professor Anthony D’Amato on tree species migration, and Garrett Graff with his new book on UFOs.

All three comedy options by film director Ernest Lubitsch. Register for all 11 Wednesday presentations (all begin at 1:30 p.m.) — eight talks plus three films for $40 ($70 for two) or for individual sessions at $8 apiece. Payment cannot be made at the programs. Registration and all details are at learn.uvm.edu/olli/centralvt or call 802-223-5886.

—from Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Do Good Fest Contributes over $1.7M to Vermont Flood Relief


With the devastation Vermont experienced last month from historic flooding, National Life transformed within three days the annual benefit concert “Do Good Fest,” historically held on the company’s back lawn, to an indoor acoustic performance that was live-streamed so that viewers across Vermont, the nation, and globally could support the rebuilding of Vermont through online donations.

The July 15 event generated 1,845 gifts from 42 states and five countries outside of the U.S., raising $962,445, with National Life matching $750,000.

Partnering with the Vermont Community Foundation’s Vermont Flood Response and Recovery Fund 2023, the funds are dispersed to local relief agencies. Donations are still being accepted.

Broadcast live by Star 92.9 and Vermont’s Own WCAX Channel 3, on July 15 special guests joined the Plain White T’s, Fastball, lovelytheband, and Vermont favorite, All Night Boogie Band, during Do Good Fest, a telethon-type live event held from 6 to 9 p.m.

Rebuilding takes a long time. Donations are still being accepted online at classy.org/give/501764/#!/donation/checkout.

—from Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

3 O’clock Art!

NOW ENROLLING

Ages 8 - 12

Monday - Thursday, 3:00 - 5:30

• Great projects • Open studio time • Creative group games •

Instructed by: artist/educator Ellis Jacobson.

Location: 62 Ridge Street, Stone Science Hall, Rm 202, Montpelier

Info and Online Enrollment: www.3oclockart.com

Email: vermontartpath@gmail.com

Phone: 802 229-6178

—from Central Vermont Regional Planning Commission

Local Honors

Elia Pembroke, of Middlesex, was named to the 2023 spring semester Dean’s List at Simmons University in Boston.
Berlin Updates Water System Ordinance

The Berlin Selectboard recently approved changes to the town’s Water System Ordinance and Construction Standards. A revised section is aimed at mitigating unwanted effects of potentially destructive fires, according to information on the Ordinance and Construction Standards. A revised section is aimed at mitigating emergency.

Plainfield Selectman Resigns

Bram Towbin announced on social media he is stepping down from his posts as selectboard member, road commissioner, and member of the hazard mitigation committee. “I am stepping down from all my positions in town government.” Towbin cited several reasons for this, from the town needing an external audit, to what he alleged as “mismanagement.” He further said on a Facebook post he believes there needs to be major reforms in town government, particularly in the Town Clerk/Treasurer position, which he said should not be elected by the people. Robin Miller was recently elected to replace longtime Plainfield Town Clerk Linda Wells, who retired after 27 years. Miller was appointed by the selectboard to fill in for Wells at the end of 2022 and was elected by voters at town meeting in April 2023, getting 214 of 242 votes.

Montpelier Police Warn of Uptick in Car Burglaries

The Montpelier Police Department recently warned of an increase in car burglaries on its Facebook page. In order to slow down such activity, the department issued tips from what they called the “9 p.m. routine,” which calls on residents to secure their vehicles at 9 p.m. each night. This involves locking cars, homes, garages, windows, and gates; activating security alarms; and removing valuables from outdoor furniture and cars (including keys). The things most often reported stolen from cars are key fobs, spare keys, money, wallets, firearms, laptops, and tools. Community members who see a crime in progress should call 802-223-3445 or dial (or text) 9-1-1 in an emergency.

Berlin Updates Water System Ordinance

The Berlin Selectboard recently approved changes to the town’s Water System Ordinance and Construction Standards. A revised section is aimed at mitigating “unwanted effects of potentially destructive fires,” according to information on the town’s website, berlinvt.gov. The revised section states that all new houses and commercial, industrial, or other buildings used for human occupancy or human activities near any street, alley, or right of way served by the public water system are required, at the owner’s expense, to install sufficient water facilities to connect directly with the public water system, provided that the public water system is within 200 feet of the buildings. Likewise, all commercial and industrial buildings and structures must obtain their own fire protection capacity with the town’s public water system if the public water system is at least 1,000 feet from the structure.

—compiled by Carla Occaso

NATURE WATCH

Artwork and words by Nona Estrin

Dry and glorious days — finally. A climate changing, a town re-making, farmers scrambling. And we citizens, showing our mettle, finding ways to support, agitate, create, survive. Hawks strengthening their wings, many hummingbirds already moving, but we will stay! The last of our three flood-recovery meetings will be Sept. 7 at 6: 30 p.m. at Montpelier High School. See you there!
Letters to the Editor

We Live in an Ivory Tower
To the Editor:
Kudos for standing by your article “Post-Flood Montpelier Table Set ...”. You did the right thing.
This letter is for those who bristled at the accusation that “one of us” could be racist. I’m talking about all of us enlightened Montpelier folk who have BLM flags on our lawns and acknowledge that our boutiques are on Abenaki land and have enough financial security to volunteer our time and food trucks for free (but only to our own kind).
I hate to be the one to tell you this, Montpelier, but you can be racist too.
In central Vermont, we live in a tower as ivory as our demographics. When everyone up here looks the same as we do, and acts the same and believes the same, it’s easy to talk the talk without ever testing if you can walk the walk. During the cleanup period, when our population was injected with a shot of diversity, we stumbled pretty hard. And continue to, based on the local response to this article.
I’m sure Ms. O’Connor is an AMAZING person who is beautifully charitable. And I highly doubt she was thinking: “Only give food to my fellow white people. If anyone doesn’t speak English, let them pay or let them starve. Also, if anyone asks, I think slavery was pretty cool.” No, 999 out of 1,000 times, racism does not look like that.
I’ll give you a hint, though, at what it DOES look like. It’s an emotional response. A defensiveness. Very similar to when someone goes: “Hey, I know our intentions were noble, but the reality is that it caused a clear imbalance of equity between the privileged and the marginalized, especially along racial lines,” our response wasn’t: “Oh, crap! Really?” It was a disgusted: “How DARE you!” We cared more about our egos than how our actions might have affected others.
Thanks for keeping us real, Bridge.
KC Phipps, Montpelier

Resiliency Includes Economic and Social Plans
To the Editor:
After the devastation of the July flood, there are a lot of discussions about how Montpelier should respond to the disaster. How do we, as a city, become more resilient in the face of climate change?
But first, let’s be honest. The city faces many long-standing issues that have nothing to do with the flood:
• Shrinking population
• State government moving away from Montpelier
• Crumbling infrastructure
• Housing shortage
• Lack of effective economic development
• High tax burden
In order to meet these and the flood-related challenges, we need to evolve beyond the old way of doing and thinking about things. Our historical civic paralysis, exemplified by the endless committees, making “perfect” the enemy of the good, and our habit of kicking seemingly intractable problems down the road has come at a steep price. However, it is not too late for Montpelier.
The flood has created an opportunity to rethink and reimagine our city. Our plan for resilience must be comprehensive and include economic and social components that have been pushed aside in the past. I believe resiliency must mean more than just diverting the rivers or we will all be complicit in the decline of our beloved city.
Robert Kasow, Montpelier
to be out shopping in downtown Montpelier again — and it was a huge relief for us too! We’re hoping to resume our schedule of sewing and knitting classes in the next month or two.”

Eric Bigglestone, owner of Capital Stationers, said several children came in the store, excited to get balloons again. He credited building owner Tim Heney with rebuilding quickly, as well, which is why the businesses were able to reopen when they did.

“We had a fantastic opening day,” Bigglestone said. “From familiar faces, to the passing-through tourists, it was so great to see folks coming through our door once again. … foot traffic was heavy and sales were reflective of that. We are excited to be back in business and hope everyone likes the changes we have made to the store layout.”

“It felt like the weekend before Christmas, the biggest difference was that no one was in a hurry,” noted Kelly Sullivan of Splash Naturals. “Our community wanted to hear our stories, hug us, and restock their favorite products.”

The five businesses that opened Sept. 1 are all located in Montpelier’s Blanchard Block, at 65–77 Main Street in Montpelier.

“Our reopening was incredible, very busy, lots of hugs and even some tears of joy,” said Bear Pond Books co-owner Rob Kasow. “We can’t thank the community enough for helping and supporting us in our time of need. Montpelier and the surrounding towns rock!”

Several neighboring businesses hope to reopen in the coming weeks, according to a press release sent by Dan Groberg.

Montpelier Alive keeps a list of businesses with updates on their flood recovery and how to support them at montpelieralive.com/flood2023bizopenings.
Statehouse Flood Forum Generates List of Concerns for Next Session

By Cassandra Hemenway

The Montpelier Flood Choir set the tone for the second of three flood recovery forums Aug. 22, singing “Requiem” — composed after the 2004 Asian tsunami and dedicated to victims of natural disasters — as about 200 people filled the Statehouse House chambers to overflowing for a two-and-a-half-hour working session, the next step after a massive brainstorming forum on Aug. 11. A 16-page list of ideas and potential action items came out of the Statehouse meeting, along with a common understanding that natural disasters like the heavy rains, landslides, and flood that hit Vermont on July 10-11 will happen again, could occur sooner than anticipated, and could cause even bigger floods. As a result, a palpable sense of urgency has characterized the comments and ideas generated during the forum series, which has been organized by Montpelier Strong, a partnership of the Montpelier Foundation and Montpelier Alive, in collaboration with the city of Montpelier.

While the first forum on Aug. 11 gave people a chance to vent, brainstorm ideas for rebuilding Montpelier, and prepare for the effects of climate change, the second forum pulled ideas from the first, and participants broke into working sessions to generate a list of actions. The third forum — scheduled for Thursday, Sept. 7 at 6:30 p.m. at Montpelier High School — is the “concluding meeting of this series designed as a Vision and Action Dialogue for all who live, work or care for the future of Vermont’s capital city,” according to Paul Costello in a Sept. 2 Front Porch Form post. Costello has been moderating the forums as part of his role at Montpelier Strong.

The Sept. 7 meeting will review the ideas that have been contributed by the public, consider what’s most important, set priorities for action, and promote next steps needed to drive recovery and resilience efforts, Costello added.

Addressing the 200-plus group of local leaders and residents at the Statehouse Aug. 23, Costello said: “We are gathered here [after the] greatest disaster Montpelier has faced in the past 100 years. It’s not a day today for debate, politics … one-upmanship or fighting for your corner. … Today we’re not going to make the decisions that bind on law; we are going to make the decisions for what we stand for together.”

Costello also noted: “This is a working session — not a brainstorm session,” and formed nine breakout sessions on topics that included: emergency planning and warning system, food systems and security, leadership for recovery and resilience, supporting public health and well-being, financial recovery and resilience, river corridor and downtown flooding, supporting downtown, city infrastructure, and action in the face of climate change.

A local expert led each group, and discussions focused on what is currently happening, ideas for the short and long term, and priority ideas for action. Session leaders reported back at the end of the evening, and their notes were then used to compile a list to inform the Sept. 7 meeting.

Before the breakout sessions started, Sarah DeFelice, owner of the Main Street clothing store Bailey Road, addressed the crowd: “In order for us to come back, change needs to happen,” she said. “… We want our streets back, … we want our doors open, we want our Sunday stroll … . In order for that to happen, we have to be open to change.”

Some common ideas generated at the forum included reviving the Capital Area Neighborhood network and using it to get information out to neighborhoods before and after natural disasters; a need to reach out in person, rather than communicate solely with digital formats such as websites, emails, and texts; a general shout-out to Montpelier Alive and the Montpelier Department of Parks and Trees for their fast action in developing a volunteer and donation hub, as well as kudos to the Rainbow Bridge Community Center in Barre for doing similar work there. Across breakout sessions people said the city should build on that good work to continue to develop effective volunteer networks.

Other common themes in breakout sessions included a need to reach out to those who are disabled, elderly, pregnant, or otherwise unable to evacuate on their own; consider solving problems regionally rather than focusing only on Montpelier; making sure to include in disaster warnings and communication those who are unhoused or renting as well as property owners. Mostly, it was noted that “this is a multifaceted problem that does not just concern Montpelier,” according to one speaker in the river corridor session.

Notes from the meeting and information about the Sept. 7 forum are available at montpelierstrong.org/public-forum.
Montpelier Flood Choir Greets Forum Participants

By Cassandra Hemenway

The Montpelier Flood Choir came into being when director Donia Prince became aware of the piece “Requiem” by Eliza Gilkyson (choral arrangement by Craig Hella Johnson) a couple of weeks before the flood, “and was totally taken by it.” Gilkyson wrote the piece as a song of grief following the 2004 Asian tsunami, and it was taken up again after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast region of the U.S. in 2004.

“It has been used following many water-related disasters since, including apparently Irene,” Prince said in an email to The Bridge. “After the flood I wondered how we might get this song out there as a place for people to put their feelings. I asked members of the Unitarian Church Choir, which I direct, if they wanted to get together to learn this (we normally take the summer off), and possibly ask people from other groups to join. The response was immediate and overwhelmingly positive.”

Prince said the UCC pianist Eliza Thomas joined, and she then put the word out to the choirs of Bethany Church, Christ Church, the Old Meeting House, the Onion River Chorus, and Montpelier Community Gospel Choir. During two rehearsals at the gallery at the Vermont College of Fine Arts on July 20 and 27, the newly formed Montpelier Flood Choir learned “Requiem,” as well as “The Storm is Passing Over” (an old gospel song by Charles Tindlay, Prince explained), and “Hope Lingers On,” a contemporary song by Vermont musician Lisa Schneckenburger.

“Over 50 people came to our first rehearsal, and more to the second, as other singers heard about it. Singing such beautiful, cathartic, healing music with a large group of people after such a collective trauma was an incredible experience for those involved. Everyone felt we were doing something really special, although we didn’t know where it might go ... We felt that even if we didn’t sing publicly, however, that it was a wonderful experience in itself,” Prince said.

The choir sang once at the Montpelier Farmers Market and once in front of city hall at noon when the canceled Brown Bag concerts might have taken place, Prince said, and then at the Statehouse before the Aug. 22 community forum, where more than 200 people were in attendance.

At this time, the choir doesn’t have any other performances planned. Although “If something comes up where it feels this would be meaningful (and if enough singers were available), we would reconvene. I am also thinking that this could be a model for other circumstances in the future when the presence of a true community choir would be useful and welcome,” said Prince.
The State’s Flooded Buildings
Re-Opening Some Will Take A While

By J. Gregory Gerdel

The tentacles of large, white pipes that have adorned the Pavilion Building at 109 State Street for the weeks since the flood in July will be coming down soon, according to Buildings and General Services (BGS) Commissioner Jennifer Fitch. But replanting the row of trees on the east side of the building where a series of large, green “coolers” have been installed on a thick bed of black stay-mat, is going to take a while.

Of the 20 state-owned buildings in the Montpelier area, several suffered significant damage, either structural or to heating and ventilation equipment that will take several months, at minimum, to repair or replace.

Fitch explained that the initial “response phase” following the flood is complete. That has included drying out the flooded areas, reducing humidity, cleaning, and disinfecting. Where first floors were flooded in four historic State Street buildings (132, 134, 136, and 140), wooden floors and much of the inside walls have been removed. “They’re stripped down to the joists,” Fitch said.

Re-opening those buildings, which include the Capital Region Visitor Center and the Vermont Arts Council, is going to take a while. Moreover, Fitch explained, balancing the financial resources, insurance, and state and federal recovery is critical to making the repairs with the least impact on taxpayers. For instance, making permanent repairs to the visitor center and similar buildings too quickly will jeopardize access to FEMA grants.

During what Fitch describes as the “interim phase,” planning, temporary repairs, and more permanent reconstruction will be guided by the need to maintain financial balance, Fitch said. These projects include setting up temporary systems for heating and ventilation while permanent systems are designed and built to be installed “at least two feet above the flood plain.” Buildings where this planning is underway include the Pavilion and the Supreme Court buildings where heating and ventilation machinery has been in sub-basements.

Looking forward, the engineering firm Freeman, French, Freeman, which guided the reconstruction of the state complex in Waterbury following the Tropical Storm Irene flood in 2011, has been contracted to develop mitigation plans for Montpelier’s state buildings. Fitch noted that the Waterbury Complex weathered the most recent storm successfully.

“...the large berm between the river and the buildings worked well. Even though the flood did top the berm, the flood waters were confined to the parking lot,” she said. The major cleanup there has been removing the silt and sediments dropped by the flood waters.

Both the Department of Motor Vehicles (DMV) building, which has seen the installation of flood protection features, and the recently constructed, wood-fired district heat plant just behind it escaped serious damage from the flood. The DMV has re-opened and the heating plant is scheduled to restart in the fall, Fitch noted.

While some have suggested the district heat services should be expanded to include more downtown buildings, and possibly the federal building where the post office is located, the district heat system currently has two loops, one serving the state complex and the other connecting to city buildings downtown.

Fitch said that opportunity is limited by the capacity of the heating plant to increase production. That capacity is calculated by projecting the demand on the coldest days of the winter. “There is not much capacity for expansion,” she said.

Since the visitor center will not reopen for the soon-to-arrive fall tourism season, Fitch is working with city officials to find a temporary, alternative location for welcoming visitors.

And a building that won’t be coming back: The small, red-with-white-trim information building at the intersection of State and Elm has been removed because of flood damage.
I t’s good to get old. You don’t hear that very often, but there are benefits available to older people that younger people don’t even know about. Younger people can go ahead and wallow in their vigorous youth while we aging people (50 plus) are allowed to take it slower, visit our physicians more frequently, eat milder foods earlier in the evening, stop and smell the roses, and get access to a whole world of seniors-only activities and discounts. Count yourself lucky if you are the child or grandchild of a senior, because you just may be invited to join the fun.

Senior Discounts: Kaaaa-CHING!

Auto Insurance through Vermont Mature Driver’s Course (in conjunction with AARP): From its website — many insurance companies offer discounts to seniors (age 50 and over) “who take a driver improvement course. If you’re a seniors (age 50 and over) “who take a driver improvement course. If you’re a member of AARP, you may be eligible to get a senior discount of 10% at Comfort Inn hotels.

Hunger Mountain Co-op: Members age 65 and older may sign up for a 6% discount at Hunger Mountain Co-op. Web address: hungermountain.coop/membership

Kohl’s: Kohl’s offers a 15% discount to people over the age of 60 on Wednesdays. The website is kohls.com.

Vermont State Parks: Vermonters over the age of 62 are eligible to get the Green Mountain Passport ($2), which is good for a lifetime of free day-use entry to Vermont state parks. Available at your local town clerk’s office.

Wrightsville Beach: Senior season passes for people over 66 costs $25 compared to regular adult passes at a rate of $30. Day rates for seniors are $3 compared to $4 for younger adults. Note: The beach is closed this year following damage by the flood, but it will most likely be open for the 2024 season. For more information go to wrightsville-beachvt.com

Schuss: Most ski areas offer cheaper rates for senior skiers.

Local Senior Organizations

Barre Area Senior Center: Membership is $35 per person for access to programs and activities for members age 50 and older, from the towns of Barre, Orange, Washington, Berlin, Williamstown and other central Vermont towns as well as the city of Barre. Programs range from Arts & Crafts, Dance, Fitness, Health & Social Services and Nutrition, to Tai Chi, woodcarving, square dancing and more. A “collaborative bus/plane trip” to New Orleans, Memphis and Nashville is planned for spring of 2024.

Central Vermont Council on Aging: This Barre-based organization is an advocate for healthy aging in Vermont. They offer support for caregivers, help support Meals on Wheels, connect seniors to volunteers, work with health-care professionals to coordinate a senior’s needs, and respond to all areas regarding older Vermonters’ needs. The website is cvcoa.org.

Community of Vermont Elders: Offers resources and support for Vermont’s elders from the Statehouse to the senior center. The Senior Medicare Patrol of Vermont is an arm of the National Council on Medicare. The Council’s purpose is to educate, advocate for healthy aging in Vermont. This Barre-based organization is an advocate for healthy aging in Vermont. They offer support for caregivers, help support Meals on Wheels, connect seniors to volunteers, work with health-care professionals to coordinate a senior’s needs, and respond to all areas regarding older Vermonters’ needs. The website is cvcoa.org.

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Community of Vermont Elders: Offers resources and support for Vermont’s elders from the Statehouse to the senior center. The Senior Medicare Patrol offers programs and one-on-one counseling concerning Medicare errors, fraud, and abuse. They also offer educational programs just for seniors, as well as newsletters, videos, and programs. The website is vermontelders.org.

Montpelier Senior Activity Center: Anyone 50 and older is eligible to join. The cost is $25 for Montpelier residents, $40 for people living in towns that support the center financially through a tax appropriation (Middlesex, East Montpelier, Berlin, Calais, Moretown, and Worcester), and $60 for people from other towns. Residents of supporting towns may apply for financial aid. Benefits include access to classes at a lower cost, access to an entertainment library of DVDs as well as books from the center’s library. Also offered to members is a subscription to the Active Times newsletter, access to the center’s printer and copier, tech training, and e-bike rental from the e-bike lending library. Also, all are welcome to FEAST senior meals. Learn more at montpelier-vt.org/297/Montpelier-Senior-Activity-Center

By Carla Occaso
Barre, Painted Fresh
Oil Paintings by Tracey J. Hambleton at the Vermont Granite Museum

The Vermont Granite Museum announces the opening of a new exhibition, “Barre, Painted Fresh: Oil Paintings by Tracey J. Hambleton.” This new, engaging exhibition will be on view at the Vermont Granite Museum from Aug. 31 through Oct. 15, 2023.

Tracey J. Hambleton has been a practicing plein-air painter since 2010, and she most often seeks out familiar views to paint outside on her tripod easel. Hambleton embarked on an 11-month residency at Studio Place Arts in 2022, during which she explored Barre’s landmark buildings, iconic industrial areas, hillside houses, and crisscrossing tracks of the railroad in her work.

“Though sometimes gritty, weathered, imperfect or worn, the landscape of Barre keeps me inspired,” she says. “The shadows cast from church steeples, the glow on farm fields, the color of granite, the foursquare roof-lines, the evidence of changing times and the people who live and work here — these are the things I hope to preserve with my paintings.”

“Barre, Painted Fresh” celebrates Barre’s past and present in its historic neighborhoods and its varied architecture, honoring the indelible mark the granite industry has made on this community.

“We are thrilled to be exhibiting Tracey Hambleton’s paintings of Barre and its abandoned granite quarries,” says Scott McLaughlin, the museum’s executive director. “Her paintings capture views of the community that are peaceful, comforting, and timeless.”

More information about Hambleton’s exhibit can be found at vtgranitemuseum.org, or on the museum’s Facebook page: facebook/vermontgranitemuseum. Questions can go to development@vtgranitemuseum.org or 802-249-3897. All of Hambleton’s paintings in this exhibition are available for sale.

—press release

Review: Vance Gilbert, ‘The Mother of Trouble’

Vance Gilbert is folk. He’s also country, bluegrass, jazz, and so, so much more. His new album, “The Mother of Trouble” spans decades of musical influence, earned from years spent in the American folk scene, including the Cabot Arts and Music Festival, where he’ll be performing on July 29.

Gilbert has been around a long time. His first album was released nearly 30 years ago, with plenty of time performing before that. His longevity is a testament to his creativity, and his newest album shows clearly that even after 30 years, he hasn’t slowed down one bit.

Vance Gilbert has range, and that’s apparent on “The Mother of Trouble.” He draws from a myriad of influences on this album, blending and fusing them into some mysterious mixture that just made me want to keep listening. The title track opens the album with a folk-rock slow burn that almost sounds like it could fit right in with a Grateful Dead set. As the album progresses, Gilbert expands his scope, transitioning into romantic folk country jams, like “One or Two of These Things,” to big-band-inspired piece called “Bad For Me,” to introspective folk tunes like “Black Rechelle,” and soulful piano ballads like “I Hope He’s the One this Time.”

Two tracks really caught my eye — or, my ear, rather: “A Room Somewhere” feels like a familiar jazz slow dance number but fused with just enough country magic to make it pop. Joe K. Walsh’s mandolin here is phenomenal (as it is across the board), and the lyrics are full of a very special kind of nostalgia. “(They Long to Be) Close to You” is the second stand out, and possibly my favorite track on the album. The song feels almost like it was sent straight from the ‘60s, but with some modern pizzazz thrown on top. There’s a very danceable beat, and a great organ solo at the tail end. If any of the songs off this album are making one of my playlists, this is it.

Overall, “The Mother of Trouble” stands out. Gilbert pools his experiences and influences to create a diverse and interesting body of work, with many impressive tracks. While he’s been an East Coast staple for years, his music feels right at home in Vermont.

—Emery Brush

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Several contractors have been hard at work cleaning up the mess on the Montpelier High School’s fields after the July 10 flood, and the school will be ready for the academic year and the fall athletics season.

“We are on track for the start of school,” said Andrew LaRosa, the Montpelier Roxbury Public Schools (MRPS) Director of Facilities.

At Montpelier High School, “flooding is largely taken care of or contained. We are rebuilding our fields in the front of the school and continue to closely monitor air quality throughout MHS,” said Libby Bonesteel, MRPS superintendent.

Half of the MHS practice field needs to be scraped off, “but we’ll be able to use half of it for middle school field hockey,” said LaRosa. “Kyle Bellavance and his crew have done a great job out front, sort of shoveling off the silt and integrating what’s left and aerating they’re going to start seeding,” he said.

LaRosa said the Vermont College of Fine Arts field will be used for middle school soccer. At the high school, he said the game field and field hockey field are “looking great,” and grass will be planted on the baseball field this spring. Next spring, the baseball and softball fields will be dug out and the top layer replaced.

“We’re expecting that the students are going to come into the building and never know that anything happened,” said LaRosa.

“It’s been quite an effort,” said Jim Murphy, MRPS chairperson. “It’s really great that we were able to avoid having this crop of high schools have another disruptive event.”

There have also been talks about renovating Montpelier High School’s track, but with the task of repairing the flood damage and other ideas in circulation, the track project has been put off.

Last fall, the MRPS board approved a plan to renovate the track with a $1.8-million proposal, according to Murphy. He said “the track has not been substantively taken up by the board since the flooding of July 11.” Regarding damage to the current dirt and gravel track, Murphy said “as with most of our grounds, there was some minor damage that will require some repair.”

Bonesteel said “the track is but one very small piece of a much larger conversation regarding our facilities.”

There has been talk throughout the community about U-32 and MHS merging. Another idea has been raised to move to higher ground at [the Vermont College of Fine Arts]. Moving to the golf course has been floated,” said Jason Gingold, Montpelier High School principal, in a Facebook post on Aug. 14. “There are pluses and minuses to each of them, and none of the ideas can be considered in the short term.”

“We don’t want to invest a lot of capital into this building if we’re going to be changing direction,” said Paul Carnahan, an attendee at the Aug. 16 school board meeting. “Obviously we want to keep the building functioning and supporting the students that are there,” he added, “but at some point we’ll have to make a decision about what direction we’re going to go in.”

“A bare minimum of functioning while we figure things out,” is an approach that James Rea, who attended the MRPS board meeting, wanted to avoid. “I think the opportunities of those students to express their athletic selves deserves more consideration,” he said.

“I fully recognize that this might mean throwing some money at a school where changes down the road have to be made,” said Rea.

“We also understand the climate change models that show that we are likely to have more of these events in the future,” said Murphy. “I think it is almost certain that we will delay the track project, and probably any other major investments on the ground other than what’s needed to get kids safely into school.”

Murphy said that discussions require “immense community participation and a lot of expertise and a lot of thought.”

Rea said he does not want to stress the students with this “pot of boiling water” discussion, which is also happening on Front Porch Forum. He wants the message from the community to the students to be “We’ve got you. And we’re going to encase you in a settled and firm situation.”

Murphy said “it’s really been amazing and inspiring to see the staff, and Libby, and Andrew, and Tom and his custodial team, and I know I’m leaving a few names out, really pulled together and they’ve been working pretty tirelessly.”

“Everybody involved has really stepped up,” said LaRosa, adding that he hopes to truly acknowledge everybody when the work is done.
those historic practices of channelizing the river, were actually exacerbating the vulnerability of our communities and the damages that we were seeing.”

Kline said the basic lesson from fluvial geomorphology — the science of how rivers move and change across the landscape — is that rivers need room to move. When a river can slow down and dissipate its energy as it spreads across its historic floodplain, it is less likely to cause damage.

How do you do that in Montpelier? “It’s a hard question,” said Kline as we walked along a section of downtown where the river is lined with huge stone blocks forming a wall at least 20 feet high. “Because we’ve created a little human canyon down here that’s not left us many options. From an erosion standpoint, this is pretty good. From an inundation standpoint, no. The water has nowhere to go but up and out.”

One answer is to look outside of downtown Montpelier for places where the river can reclaim its former floodplain.

Ned Swanberg is the state’s regional floodplain manager. He spoke at a recent community forum about the importance of watershed-wide solutions. “We’re not alone. We’re part of a watershed. Protecting floodplain functions and the room needed by the river is really critical before the water shows up in town,” he said.

Floodplain Access

Some lessons for floodplain management may be found in Northfield, upstream from Montpelier on the Dog River, a major tributary of the Winooski.

After Irene, seven houses along the Dog River in Northfield were demolished and a small park was created in the greenspace. The river’s banks were lowered to help the stream slow down and access the floodplain. A federal program helped pay for the buyouts. Michelle Braun is now executive director of Friends of the Winooski, a local river advocacy group. But back in 2011 she was Northfield’s land use manager and helped facilitate the buyouts. She said engineers studying the impact of the July flood estimate that the floodplain project along the Dog helped reduce flooding in town by six inches.

“Six inches doesn’t sound like a lot. But if you’ve ever had six inches of water on your first floor, it makes a tremendous amount of difference,” she said.

Kline pointed to other floodplain restoration projects around the state. In Brattleboro, the Vermont River Conservancy bought 12 acres along the Whetstone Brook just upstream from downtown. Contractors this summer finished removing a berm so the flood waters of the brook can now flow onto the land.

“It’s estimated to receive the Whetstone Brook under flood and significantly drop levels in the business district of Brattleboro,” Kline said.

Kassia Randzio, development and operations director for the Vermont River Conservancy, said that the Whetstone project emerged after Irene as Brattleboro looked for ways to make the next flood less severe.

“Just as central Vermont communities are doing right now — so it’s a great opportunity to showcase flood recovery in action,” she said.

Another post-Irene project in Bennington allowed the Roaring Branch in that city to reach its former floodplain, Kline said.

“It took a number of years. And they had the space to do that. But the point I’m making is that sometimes a small,
few pieces of floodplain can make a difference," he said.

And in some river systems, big pieces of undeveloped floodplain can make a huge difference. Kline and others said the best example is a series of wetlands and agricultural fields along the Otter Creek between Rutland and Middlebury that served as a natural buffer during Irene and the July storm.

“The floodplain complex between Rutland and Middlebury protected property and infrastructure from Middlebury all the way to Lake Champlain, including in New Haven, Weybridge, and Vergennes,” according to a recent state report.

Kline said similar opportunities are rare outside the Champlain Valley. In central Vermont “the hills are steep, we have narrow valleys,” he said. “But we can get some flood relief by accessing some of the floodplains rivers have created over time.”

Even in Montpelier there are potentially places for the river to possibly access the floodplain, said Swanberg, the state’s regional floodplain manager. “We can set back some of the channelization and make some room,” he said, although in some of those areas the river is blocked by berms built by the railroad.

Floodproofing buildings and installing more resilient infrastructure — including bridges and culverts — is also key to reducing damage during the next flood event.

Agency of Natural Resources Secretary Julie Moore also cited the “build back better” lesson learned after Irene. In many areas, larger culverts installed after that 2011 flood withstanded the July storm, she said.

Irene also significantly damaged the state office complex in Waterbury. Post-Irene, a network of tunnels underneath the buildings was filled and the complex was floodproofed by elevating heating and electrical systems.

“To me, the Waterbury complex is an absolute success story. It doesn’t mean there was no flooding in Waterbury,” she said. “But the damage was much more modest than it was during Irene and that’s a reflection of the good work that took place over the last 11 to 12 years.”

For Moore, that’s the silver lining left by Irene’s storm clouds. “It doesn’t mean there aren’t hard choices, but the fact of the matter is we are able to really improve landscape level resilience,” she said.

**Dam Removal**

The Winnoski in and upstream from Montpelier is also altered and blocked by a number of unused dams. Removing those structures could help in future flood events, advocates say.

Four dams are now being studied for possible removal: the Bailey dam, just upstream from the Shaw’s supermarket, the Trestle dam upstream of the North Branch’s confluence with the main stem, the Pioneer Street dam, and the Hidden dam, located in East Montpelier about 2.75 miles upstream of the Pioneer Street structure.

It’s a common misperception that these dams help control flooding, but the opposite is true for these abandoned, often crumbling projects, said Michele Braun of Friends of the Winnoski. “If it’s not specifically designed to store water in a flood event, it’s not going to store water in a flood event,” she said. “It’s likely to make flooding worse by … inhibiting the river from behaving the way it naturally would.”

The Vermont River Conservancy is leading the dam removal project using funds from the Lake Champlain Basin program.

Removing dams takes time. Braun estimates even simple projects can last three to four years from start to finish. They’re also costly with many variables to look at. At the Pioneer Street dam, a big concern is potential toxic contamination left in upstream sediment by a coal tar plant once located at the Wind River Environmental site.

This dam “is the oldest and most decrepit of the four dams and is likely impounding hazardous sediments,” according to the Conservancy’s “request for proposal” (RFP) to design the removal. While the land on the site was cleaned up “remediation did not fully extend into the river; high-levels of these same industrial contaminants are likely accumulated in sediment behind the Pioneer Street dam.”

There are about 65 unused dams in the Winnoski watershed, Braun said. Technical hurdles — and significant expense — lie ahead. Yet removing dams could be part of the answer to letting the Winnoski behave more like a natural stream.

The audience gathered in the Vermont House chambers Aug. 22 for a community forum raised questions about dam removal, managing the river upstream, and reconfiguring existing flood control projects such as the Wrightsville dam on the North Branch. Among the questions: Is it possible to build catchments in the dozens of tributaries in the Winnoski headwaters? What about lowering the water level in Wrightsville before the flood? Can we encase the North Branch in a tunnel so it doesn’t flood downtown?

State climatologist Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux told the group that these questions will help inform the work that lies ahead for the scientists, engineers, and public at large.

“Meetings like this are the most important thing for us as scientists,” she said. “I just want to lift up all the things that were said tonight because they will help us all.”

Mike Kline said a team of experts could use river flow models and other research to search for answers. “It’s time to set those models back up and start asking some new questions, some of the questions the public is asking now.”

**Moving Downtown?**

We’ve stopped walking along the bike path and look down at the Winnoski that flows high and muddy weeks after the flood. It’s a rare moment of sun in this summer of endless rain. What about downtown, I ask: can Montpelier as we know it live with the river as we have it?

“When you see the downtown flood three times in three decades, you have to ask that question: can we endure this in another 10 years, and another 10 years after that,” Kline said.

“So, it is time to start asking these really big questions: can parts of downtown be floodproofed further? That’s one alternative. Can parts of downtown be moved to a higher location, in addition to some of these river and floodplain restoration projects that we’re talking about?”

Floodproofing is actually required for damaged properties under Montpelier’s “River Hazard Area Regulations.” These measures include either fully protecting basements from water inundation or moving electricity panels, HVAC, and fuel systems out of basements.

Moving downtown is another issue. It would obviously be hugely expensive and would mean abandoning the historic charm of the buildings in the city’s urban core.

Michele Braun of Friends of the Winnoski, sighed when asked: With her expertise, how should Montpelier live better with the river. Should downtown be moved and let the river be?

“People do keep asking me that and it’s just really hard because the river is just really channelized and we’ve really built so tight into the river,” she said. “The expense of moving is extraordinary and the cultural impact of moving may be unacceptable.”
I am writing this note to readers and friends of The Bridge to remember and honor Bernard W. Folta — called “Bernie” by his friends — who played a large and indispensable role in the early days of The Bridge — and who died this past April 10 in Claremont, N.H. at the age of 81.

At its beginnings, The Bridge was imagined as a community newspaper that would broadly, honestly, and inclusively reflect the life and diversity of Montpelier and connect the people of our community with each other.

When we started we had no money, no office, no paid staff, no place to receive and store newspapers, and no history of publication.

What we did have — in spades — was each other and our shared commitment to the paper we were creating. As we faced the task of pulling together the first issue of the paper that was published in December 1993 — everyone was a volunteer. So we introduced our project and sold ads both to members of the local business community and others. We wrote, edited, and formatted our stories. And in December 1993, the first issue of The Bridge rolled off the presses, got trucked to Montpelier, hit the street, and a community newspaper was born.

Looking back — now 30 years ago since that summer and fall of putting out our first issue, you have to wonder if there would even have been a first issue of The Montpelier Bridge without Bernie Folta’s leadership as editor.

As I tried to reconstruct the early history of The Bridge, I spoke with both Phil Dodd and Jake Brown. Phil was one of the paper’s two original founders, and Jake was deeply involved from almost the very beginning and he went from the late 1990s until 2004 to serve as the managing editor of The Bridge himself.

One clue as to how Bernie became the paper’s first editor is contained in a remembrance that Bernie wrote for The Bridge when the paper celebrated its 25th anniversary in December 2018. Here is what Bernie himself wrote: “I don’t exactly know how I fell into becoming the editor of the first issue in December 1993 — whether I tripped or was pushed.”

Bernie’s rather droll account is in square with what I remember happened. Because I don’t remember any “stir” about who the editor would be. There was no contest, no lobbying, no opposition, no intrigue. Or as Phil Dodd said, “I do remember his taking that on, in the beginning. He was obviously a smart guy and jumped into the project.” Or as Jake said, “He had an ability to work with all different kinds of people, which aligned beautifully with the democratic, community-focus of the project.”

In my conversation about Bernie with Jake, we talked about Bernie’s determined optimism that a brand new paper with no history of publishing could indeed be launched solely with volunteers. “Bernie’s commitment to the mission was deep and his certainty of the paper’s great potential, his can-do leadership, motivated us all.”

It was only after Bernie’s death that I became aware of Bernie’s impressive, formal credentials. I don’t ever remember Bernie crowing about his past achievements.

Bernie had a bachelor of arts degree from the University of Michigan in English, and a master of arts in teaching degree from Northwestern University, and at a time when typewriters and paper were going out and computers and electronic communications were coming — Bernie was already there having just recently retired from a 20-plus-year career at National Life where he had served as director of tech research and strategic planning.

It was a closing remark from a phone call with Jake Brown that summed up just why Bernie was the indispensable first editor of The Bridge in the days and weeks leading up to December 1993. Said Jake, “Bernie had the background, the skills, the attention to detail — and the personality — that was just right for that moment.”

Nat Frothingham is the former editor and publisher of The Bridge and one of its founders.
To Recover from the Flood, Look to Indigenous Wisdom

By Damian Costello and Randy Kritkausky

We survived the July 2023 flooding. Now it’s time to look to Indigenous wisdom and cultivate a new communal identity that connects us deeply to the land.

No doubt the flood was a devastating event that created lasting trauma. Yet from an Indigenous perspective, floods are often seen as pivotal moments of creation and recreation, such as the Native American Anishinaabe story of Turtle Island.

There are many versions of the Turtle Island story. In every version a human progenitor struggles to cope with a flood or alien watery environment. A large number of other-than-human kin attempt but fail to bring soil from the watery depths. Finally, Muskrat manages to bring a handful of soil to the surface and dies in the process. The soil is placed on Turtle’s back, where it expands to form a life-sustaining island called Turtle Island, which is also known today as North America.

For Native Americans, this is both a parable and a set of foundational teachings: we humans wouldn't be here without the freely offered gifts of all the beings that precede and surround us. And we cannot stay here — let alone flourish — without responding with gratitude and living in harmony with the beings that give us life.

Turtle Island’s message is what the Vermont floods now call us to embrace: to make reciprocal kinship with all beings the central, defining cultural value of our pluralist society and start with the principle that we don’t possess the land, the land possesses us.

This will start by establishing a meaningful relationship with waterways of the Winooski River watershed, the most important “person” in central Vermont. The personhood of natural features is not New Age fluff but a growing legal reality that acknowledges the incredible complexity of a river and human interaction with it.

Most basically, ‘relationship’ means understanding your partner and adapting to its character. Practically, it will mean finding ways to do what has been voiced repeatedly in our community forums: give our rivers more space to be what they are and build back wisely so as to minimize our vulnerability to the next floods.

Interestingly, this isn’t an innovation but a return to what both the original Indigenous inhabitants and the first settlers understood. Our early histories record that the greatest archaeological evidence was found in the less flood-prone area of East Montpelier and that the first Europeans envisioned the town growing in the highlands because of clear evidence of major flooding events.

On its deepest level, ‘relationship’ requires a transformation in the way we conceptualize the Winooski watershed. It’s not something we see only when we cross a bridge. We receive its gifts and affect it dozens of times a day: every time we turn on the faucet, flush the toilet, make decisions about our roads, and do landscaping.

This doesn’t mean that every person can fix everything. It means that every person measures their lives in light of that relationship and grows into a different way of walking on this land and living in community. That relationship, like any of our family relationships, requires daily attention and embodied practices.

Needless to say, modern people don’t have the kind of practices that connect Indigenous peoples to the land. In Vermont, that’s not exactly true. Maple sugaring, the most iconic symbol of our Vermont identity, was and continues to be an Indigenous practice and medicine, and is something that we can grow into more deeply to cultivate our connection to the land we call home.

This kind of reciprocal kinship isn’t just a practical way of addressing our problems. Ongoing, embodied connection provides healing and roots us in the most fundamental reality of our being: the land we walk on, the water that sustains us, and the beings that surround us.

Our community and globe face an uncertain future. Many wonder if we have the ability and will to turn the environmental corner. That can’t be known. Our Indigenous sisters and brothers remind us that our role and best chance of doing so is not to imagine that we have the ability — to control everything, but to live in right relationship with the beings around us.

The Earth wants to live in harmony with us and be the home for which we yearn. Despite our mistakes, the land has incredible regenerative powers. We can follow its lead and tell the right story about the flood. And in it, begin the process of recovering who we are: children of earth and the youngest siblings of the beings who surround and sustain us.

Randy Kritkausky, an enrolled member of the Citizen Potawatomi Nation, is the author of “Without Reservation: Awakening to Native American Spirituality and the Ways of Our Ancestors” (2020). He is the co-founder of ECOLOGIA, an international environmental nonprofit based in Middlebury, Vt. Damian Costello is the Director of Postgraduate Studies at NAIITS: An Indigenous Learning Community, a speaker with the Vermont Humanities Council, and a 2023 Trinity Leadership Fellow.

WHAT ARE YOU DOING FOR HUNGER ACTION MONTH?

September is Hunger Action Month. Hop on your bike and help raise money for the Vermont Foodbank at the Point to Point, powered by VSECU! There will be bike rides, music, food trucks, lawn games, and more at the State House Lawn in Montpelier. Every $100 is 115 meals for families in Vermont.
Several days ago, as I was pushing my cart around the supermarket, I found myself in the breakfast cereal aisle. I have not consumed breakfast cereal for many years, preferring instead to now get my grains and sugars through malting and fermentation processes. Nevertheless, suddenly sugars through malting and fermenting instead to now get my grains and breakfast cereal for many years, preferring the fast cereal aisle. I have not consumed any references to the Lone Ranger, were still boxes of Cheerios, albeit with since the days I consumed cereals. There In many cases nothing had changed of famous athletes, even though I was not familiar with the names or faces. Shredded wheat was still available in many forms, but, alas, gone was the version I remembered from Nabisco, with the image of Niagara Falls on the box. That brand was bought by Kraft Foods back in 1993, which then sold it to Post in exchange for a utility infielder and a relief pitcher. But it was the boxes of puffed rice that got me to thinking how decades ago I got swindled in a real estate deal. Now I know what you're thinking: "You mean, Lare, you were caught up in Atlantic City's Trump Taj Mahal casino mess?" Nope. I'm talking about something much more sinister than that: the Great Klondike Big Inch Land Company affair. If you were a kid back in the early days of television, on Thursday evenings you may have watched CBS's adventure series called "Sergeant Preston of the Yukon." "Sergeant Preston" was set in the 1890s gold rush in Canada's Yukon Territory. Sergeant William Preston was a member of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police and was always accompanied by his Alaskan Malamute dog named 'Yukon King,' who was just as smart as Lassie and, being Canadian, more polite and apologetic than Rin Tin Tin. Preston also had his horse 'Rex.' Rex was, as I remember, undistinguished intellectually, thus nothing like 'Trigger.' Preston wore the classic tan Mountie hat, red tunic, blue pants with a yellow stripe, knee-high English riding boots, Sam Browne belt, and black gauntlets that came up to his elbows. He was charged with protecting the folks in places such as Dawson and Whitehorse from the outlaws and ne'er-do-wells who inevitably accompany gold rushes. If you were a kid back in the early days of television, on Thursday evenings you may have watched CBS's adventure series called "Sergeant Preston of the Yukon." The series was sponsored by the Quaker Oats Company, which, in addition to oatmeal, manufactured puffed wheat and puffed rice, cereals it proudly proclaimed were "shot from guns" because they actually were during the manufacturing process. This was the golden age of cereal box giveaways. Trinkets often were inserted into the boxes. At other times, the customer had to send in a proof of purchase, such as a box top, to receive the promotional item. Somewhere along the way an ad agency decided Quaker Oats should offer something that would entice customers to buy Quaker Puffed Wheat and Puffed Rice while at the same time promoting the "Sergeant Preston" television series. They came up with the idea of a land give-away. Quaker bought just over 19 acres of land in the Yukon Territory of Canada for $1,000 US. Nineteen acres is more than 119 million square inches. Quaker printed up 21 million deeds, each for one square inch of the land. Therein in a legal maneuver Quaker transferred the land to a shell company, the Great Klondike Big Inch Land Company, which became the owner and manager of the land and deeds. At first customers had to mail in a form along with a box top to get a deed. However, the state of Ohio issued a ruling that Quaker could not send customers the deeds in exchange for a box top until it became licensed to sell land in a foreign country. Thereafter Quaker just included the deeds in the boxes of cereal. My brother and I had at least three or four of the deeds, and we often speculated on how we would, first, get to the Yukon, whatever that was — we were kind of vague on geography — and then find our land and strike it rich prospecting for gold. This wasn't the first time Quaker Oats tried such a scheme. About 50 years earlier, it had included coupons in its oatmeal boxes that could be redeemed for deeds to ten-foot-square lots in a 15-acre parcel of land in Milford, Connecticut. People claimed the deeds, which were legitimate, and began paying miniscule amounts of property taxes to the town, but because the tiny "oatmeal lots" had to be cobbled together to allow anyone to build a house, the subdivision never came to be. And, on investigation, it turns out the Klondike deeds were really a scam worthy of Erik the Red and his Greenland escapades centuries earlier. In their advertising in newspapers, Quaker proclaimed that deed holders would actually "own" one square inch of land in the Yukon, but the Great Klondike Big Inch Land Company never registered the deeds, so they were not legally binding. Also, the deeds never included the mineral rights on the land. We ate all that puffed rice for nothing! I don't know what happened to my deeds, but the notion that I "owned" three or four square inches of the Yukon never left my memory. As far as the Great Klondike Big Inch Land Company was concerned, the Canadian government foreclosed on the land in 1965 because the company failed to pay $37.20 in back taxes. The next year the company was dissolved. It is rumored that my three or four square inches of Yukon Territory are now part of the Dawson City Golf Course. But I guess that's what you can expect from a company that once aired television ads depicting a Quaker firing a cannon, even if it only shot puffed rice. As Sergeant Preston would say to the dog at the conclusion of each episode, "Well, King, this case is closed."
Monteverdi Music School is proud to present its faculty for Fall 2023

Mary Benhag | voice
Mary brings over 15 years of teaching experience, a love of helping others to learn, and extensive knowledge of classical vocal repertoire, diction, language, technique, and physiology to the Monteverdi School. She is a well-known vocalist and is Co-Artistic Director of St. James Mountain Music.

Lillian Broderick | voice
Lillian holds an M.M. in Opera Performance. Lil- lian’s teaching is rooted in inspiration and developing a concept of class, full- scale vowels, to enable easy expression in singing.

David Ruffin | voice
David Ruffin draws from 20+ years of professional experience in the performing arts — including Broadway musical theater — as well as in education and counseling. Through his sonically grounded, eclectic approach to vocal instruction, David supports students in creative and personal fulfillment.

Erik Kroncke | voice
Erik Kroncke is an internationally acclaimed opera singer. Voice instructor for over 20 years. 10 years adjunct professor of voice at NSU. Students are working professionals (opera, musical theater, rock, and jazz in local understudies. Faculty at EPCASO in Italy. 7 years.

Lindsey Warren | voice & piano
Lindsey received a MM from Florida State University. She teaches operatic technique, diction, and musicality. In her private practice, Lindsey focuses on vocal technique, interpretation, sight-singing, performance skills, and voice for auditions.

Nate Zablow | voice & piano
Nate has over 40 years of experience as a music educator and performer. Piano instruction focuses on creativity, healthy technique, and musicianship in age-appropriate ways. Nate’s vocal instruction focuses on technique, interpretation, sight-singing, performance skills, and preparation for auditions.

Chloe Brissett | voice, songwriting, arranging
Raised in New Hampshire with folk, blues, jazz, American, and jazz bands. Chloe was drawn to study and perform jazz voice. Chloe has 7+ years of training from the New England Conservatory and the Berklee Global Jazz Institute. She teaches voice in a variety of popular styles.

Eliza Thomas | piano
Eliza Thomas studied music at Harvard and New England Conservatory. She has taught piano at Monteverdi since 1998 and collaborates with numerous area musicians, community music theater groups, and local choirs. She serves as pianist/organist at the Montpelier Unitarian Church.

Dobra Smoller | piano
Dobra teaches piano to students ages 4-17 in her home studio in East Montpelier. She has taught piano for over 20 years through the Suzuki method. Private lessons accompanied by regular group lessons make for a strong community environment where students can flourish at the piano.

J.D. Williams | piano
J.D. began piano at age 9, and attended the Tanglewood Institute as a team. He is a graduate of the Peabody Conservatory in Piano Performance, and has participated in the Aspen, Banff, and Meadowbrook music festivals. He is the relationships formed with students that is the most rewarding part of teaching for him.

Christopher McWilliams | piano & organ
Christopher holds a BM in voice from the University of Colorado at Boulder, a BM in Organ from the University of Michigan, and an MM in Organ from the University of Southern California. He teaches organ, piano, and voice at Montpelier.

Nancy Reid Taube | piano, guitar, composition
Nancy Reid Taube has been a performer, recording artist, composer, and musical teacher for 20 years. Her innovative teaching technique integrates music, poetry, and the arts. She teaches piano, guitar, and composition at Montpelier.

Matt Delligatti | guitar
Matt loves working with students from beginners learning to play the guitar all the way to advanced players refining their style. A graduate of Berklee College of Music, Matt is a specialist in brass, piano, and percussion. He teaches voice, and has experience with students in early childhood, advanced ages, and with high support needs.

Erik Eberhardt | percussion, piano, harmonica
A recent graduate of the Berklee College of Music, Erik is excited to join the Monteverdi faculty as a specialist in brass, piano, and percussion. He has experience with students in early childhood, advanced ages, and with high support needs.

Taiga Warbelow | violin
Taiga studied violin at the Juilliard Pre-College and the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, and performed internationally with the Juilliard Pre-College Quartet. She recently performed on stage at the Broadway show “The Sound of Music.”

Elizabeth Reid | violin
Elizabeth Reid works with students of all ages and levels. She performs with TUR-Nu- music, the Northern Strings, and the Vermont Symphony Orchestra. She teaches violin, viola, and chamber music at Montpelier.

Sandra Cathay | violin and viola
Sandra Cathay graduated from Goddard College with a BA in Music and Education. She has performed with the Vermont Philharmonic, Vermont Symphony, and the Montpelier Chamber Orchestra. Sandra teaches violin, viola, and chamber music at Montpelier.

Lise Carlson | flute
Lise has taught flute in Central Vermont since 1984, and has trained some of the top high school flute players in New England. She studied flute at Oberlin and the Suzuki Institute in the US and Canada. She enjoys teaching students of all ages, 3 and up, and combines a solid foundation with joy.

Erik Nielsen | composition & theory
Composer Erik Nielsen has created works for cho- ras, orchestra, wind ensemble, solo instruments, and chamber groups, that have been performed all over the world. He teaches music theory and composition to students at all levels and offers music history and appreciation classes at the Montpelier Senior Activity Center.

Contact teachers through the faculty page on our website for more info about fees, schedules and trial lessons: monteverdimusic.org/faculty

Upcoming Programs:
- Mighty Music Makers, our Tuesday after-school music program, based at Union Elementary, begins in September.
- Musical Munchkins, our early childhood music program on Fridays & Sundays at Monteverdi, starts Sept 8.
- Youth chamber music groups on Saturday mornings, in collaboration with Green Mountain Youth Symphony.
- Fall Faculty Recital, fundraising concert in Nov. supports community programs & scholarship fund.
- In the winter, look for adult music classes, including those geared toward community choir singers.

If you have any questions about the Monteverdi Music School or would like to register for lessons, please contact us at info@monteverdimusic.org or call (802) 229-9000. We look forward to seeing you at the school located at 46 Barre Street, Montpelier.
WEDNESDAY, SEPT. 6
Barre Farmers Market. 5:30 to 6:30 p.m. City Hall Park, Barre. For more information, call 802-477-2967.

The Matter of Money. 6:30 to 7:30 p.m. Zoom event by Kellogg-Hubbard Library. Are you curious about how to create a simple spending plan, qualify for a loan, pay down debt, or save more of what you earn? This class offers a chance to meet with a certified AFCPE financial counselor. We will discuss strategies to pay down debt and build savings, as well as review some programs and incentives to help make your money matter. The class is interactive, so bring your questions. For more information and to register for the program, visit kelloggshubbard.org/adult-programs.

Barre, Painted Fresh: Oil Paintings by Tracey J. Hambleton. 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Barre Granite Museum, Jones Brothers Way. Tracey J. Hambleton is a plein-air painter who finds inspiration by Tracey J. Hambleton.

THURSDAY, SEPT. 7
Granite Lecture and Film Series: 1960s BGA Summer Outings. 6 to 7 p.m. Granite Museum, Barre. In the mid-20th century, the Barre Granite Association began to schedule and host promotional summer outings. Monument dealers from surrounding regions would be invited to Barre to tour the area. As guests, they were treated to meals, trips to Mount Mansfield, picnics, and more. The first film will present a summer outing in the 1960s, and the second records guests gathered to watch the installation of a columbaria. Call 802-476-4605 for more information.

Flood Recovery Community Forum. 6:30 to 9 p.m. Montpelier High School. Third in a series. The forums are designed to get the best recovery and resilience ideas of the public on the table. These ideas will be reviewed by the city and nonprofits, which may take some of them on to drive their efforts.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 8
Fall Birding. 7 to 9 a.m. North Branch Nature Center, Montpelier. A casual morning of birding suitable for all interests and experience levels. Meet fellow bird enthusiasts, kindle new friendships, and enjoy a supportive environment where questions and shared discoveries are encouraged. For more information, call 802-229-6206.

Art at the Kent — Traces. 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. 7 Old West Church Road, Calais. In this once-a-year exhibition, works from over 20 Vermont artists will be highlighted that stitch together remnants of experiences, connections, observations, dreams, and discoveries. Works in wax, wood, paint, clay, fabric, metal, and photographs. Open Friday through Sunday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., or by appointment through Oct. 8. For more information, call 802-477-2967.

Flood-relief Benefit Concert by Pi- anist Jeffrey Chappel. 7 p.m. Barre Opera House. Internationally renowned pianist Jeffrey Chappel is one of the most beloved and dazzling performers in the history of Capital City Concerts. Ticket proceeds will be split and distributed to Montpelier Alive and the Capital City Flood Emergency Fund. For more information, call 802-476-8188.

SATURDAY, SEPT. 9
Capital City Farmers Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The green at VCFA, 36 College 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.

Merchants Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Vermont College of Fine Arts green, East State Street, Montpelier.

A History of Silence by Vermont Author Cynthia J. Bogard

BOOK TALK – first in a series at Montpelier Senior Center, 58 Barre St. Montpelier, VT Thursday, September 21, 2023 at 1:30 p.m.

Please Support Bear Pond Books by ordering at bearpondbooks.com

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cynthiajbogard.com g Instagram f Facebook

WORDS OUT LOUD Poetry, Place, and the Passage of Time

SEPTEMBER 17 Sean Premtaz: Scudder Parker
SEPTEMBER 24 Sarah Audhecy: Nadinne Buddill
OCTOBER 1 Nadell Fishman: Sydney Lee

Sundays 3:00 p.m. Fall 2023

OLD WEST CHURCH / 758 Old West Church Road / Calais, Vermont

Receptions to follow the readings down the road at the Kent within the Traces exhibit

Please visit kentscorner.org for more info on ArtsAtTheKent events
Central Vermont Flood Relief Benefit Concert. 3 to 7 p.m. Statehouse Lawn, Montpelier. Hear great music and help raise money to support the Montpelier Strong Recovery Fund and the Barre Community Relief Fund. Musical lineup includes Cooke and Friends; Guagua; the Brass Quintet; Dwight-Nicolle; and The Dave Keller Band. The concert is a fundraiser with a goal to raise over $50,000 to benefit small businesses and residents across Barre and Montpelier. Tickets are $35 at sevendaystickets.com/events/central-vermont-flood-relief-benefit-concert-9-9-2023. For more information, call 802-279-2236.

Age Outdoors! 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Northern Vermont University Johnson, 337 College Hill, Johnson. Registration and check-in open at 9:00 a.m. A guided walk begins at 10:00 a.m., followed by lawn games, a scavenger hunt, and a relay race that will be sure to have you laughing. Fun continues with lunch from Morse Block Deli, included in your ticket, plus music and giveaways for top fundraisers and event participants. Learn more and get tickets at tiny.cc/ageoutdoors.

SUNDAY, SEPT. 10
The 33rd Annual Green Mountain Photo Show. Noon to 9 p.m. The Red Barn Galleries at Lareau Farm and Forest, Route 100, Waitsfield. Thursday and Friday: 4 to 9 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday: Noon to 9 p.m. Exhibit runs September 9. Photo Show.

MONDAY, SEPT. 11
FEMA and SBA Assistance Clinics for Homeowners, Renters and Businesses. 2 to 6 p.m. Aldrich Public Library, Barre. See description under September 9.

Onion River Chorus Fall Program Starts. 7 to 9 p.m. The Gallery, College Hall, Vermont College of Fine Arts, Montpelier. Onion River Chorus will begin rehearsals for its fall program “Leaders of the Pack” (early works by Mendelssohn, Mozart, Brahms, and Bach). New singers welcome! Arrive at 6:45 p.m. For more information, visit onionriverchorus.org

Men’s Community Evolution Circle. 5:30 to 8:30 p.m. Back Roads, Plainfield. By donation. Opportunity for men to support relationship and community building among men and to shift away from mainstream cultural norms that promote unhealthy expectations of masculinity. Anyone who identifies as male is invited to attend. Racial, class, sexual identity, age, and ability diversity are all welcome. Pre-registration is required. For more information and to register, call 802-318-5527.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 15
Four Shillings Short. 7 to 9 p.m. Old Meeting House, 1620 Center Road, East Montpelier. A musical journey through time and across the seas, playing traditional and original music from the Celtic lands, Medieval and Renaissance Europe, India, and the Americas on a window into his inner thoughts while inviting you to ponder your own. Call 802-505-0353 for more information.

Currently Speaking: “Fluxus: Art Performs Life.” 5 to 6 p.m. The Current Art Center, 90 Pond Street, Stowe. John Killacky and Sean Clute will first present a series of original Fluxus films on loop, followed by a presentation on the history of the Fluxus movement, during which they will discuss renowned artists such as Yoko Ono and Nam June Paik, whose provocative actions challenged existing art norms in the 1960s. Free, with a suggested donation of $10. Refreshments served. For more information, call 802-253-8358.

Returning to Ourselves. 5 to 7 p.m. River’s Way Movement Studio, 114 River Street, Montpelier. See description under September 9.

The Bad Thing. Art Exhibit. Noon to 5 p.m. The People’s Gallery, 18 Merchants Row, Randolph. This painting exhibit immerses you in the images and stories of childhood fears revisited. Mark Rosalbo’s art is an iterative process that opens a window into his inner thoughts while inviting you to ponder your own. Call 802-505-0353 for more information.

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“Time Stands Still.” 7:30 to 9:30 p.m. Waterbury Center Grange Hall, 317 Howard Avenue, Waterbury Center. This Broadway-hit play from Pulitzer Prize-winner Donald Margulies is a witty, intelligent look at what happens when ordinary life is refracted through the lens of war. After barely surviving a bomb blast while covering war in the Mideast, photojournalist Sarah Goodwin finds herself caught in a tug of war between her career and the quiet of domestic life in Brooklyn. For tickets and more information, go to theartengine.com/productions/2333

SATURDAY, SEPT. 16
Central Vermont Farmers Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. The green at VCFA, 36 College Street, Montpelier. See description under September 9.

“Time Stands Still.” 2 to 4 p.m. Waterbury Center Grange Hall, 317 Howard Avenue, Waterbury Center. See description under September 15.

Returning to Ourselves. Noon to 2 p.m. River’s Way Movement Studio, 114 River Street, Montpelier. See description under September 9.

Contra Dance. 7-10 p.m. Capital City Grange, Berlin. Adina Gordon calling. Please bring clean soft-soled shoes. Beginners, singles, and all ages are welcome; all dances are taught. Questions? Call 802-225-8921.

FRIDAY, SEPT. 17
Dave Keller Album Release Concert. 4 to 5:30 p.m. Plainfield Opera Hall, 19 Merchants Row, Plainfield. Dave Keller is an award-winning recording artist, a powerful performer, and a top-notch songwriter, bringing his thrilling shows to stages around the world. Join us for an intimate local performance celebrating his newly released album. Doors open at 3:30 p.m. Suggested donation: $20. For more information, email davekeller.com.

Words Out Loud: Poetry, Place, and the Passage of Time. 3 p.m. Old West Church, 758 Old West Church Road, Calais. Vermont poets Sean Prentiss and Scudder Parker will be the first to read in this year’s series. Words Out Loud 2023 has been organized by poet Mary Elder Jacobsen with the support of the Art at the Kent curatorial team. The series includes readings by six presenters: Sean Prentiss and Scudder Parker (Sept. 17); Sarah Audley and Nadine Budhill (Sept. 24); and Nadell Fishman and Sydney Lea (Oct. 1). No tickets required. Arrive early to allow time for parking and seating.
JOBS • JOBS • JOBS

Assistant Office Manager
Ferro Jewelers has an exciting opportunity for an experienced, motivated Assistant Office Manager to help take our company into the future and create a great experience for customers and staff.

This position includes activities such as answering phones, re-stocking and pricing inventory, data entry and customer correspondence & follow-ups through phone and email. The successful candidate should be organized and detail oriented.

Full and part-time positions available.

In return, we offer a competitive salary, a bonus scheme, and a range of other benefits.

Email resume to: bferro@ferrojewlers.com

Volunteer(s) With Car Needed at The Bridge
Do you have a few hours a month to help out our nonprofit community newspaper? We need someone with a car to help deliver the paper to our local newspaper racks. If interested, contact Sharon Allen: 802-223-5112 or ops@montpelierbridge.com.

The Center for an Agricultural Economy is HIRING!

- Farm Connex Delivery Driver: Do you have a passion for helping expand farmers’ opportunities across the state and being an integral part of local food distribution? Come drive the local agricultural economy! Hourly rate starting at $20.50/hour, 40 hours/week
- Accounting Coordinator: Are you good with numbers, comfortable with computers, enjoy solving puzzles, and excited to support organization-wide accounting and financial systems? We want to hear from you! Salary range: $45,000-$55,000 at 40 hrs a week.

Find more information at: http://www.hardwickagriculture.org/jobs

WE ARE HIRING!

NEW AND EXPERIENCED REAL ESTATE AGENTS
- We help 100s of people buy and sell real estate each year, and you can be part of our continued growth in Central Vermont and statewide.
- Training, mentoring, systems, marketing, and more are all provided.
- Flexible scheduling means you can have a real work-life balance.
- Commission based, but expect $50,000-$200,000 or more.

Already a broker/agent? Are you doing as well as you want? Our agents do better, no matter the market cycle that we’re in!

Join Our Team

CLASSIFIED AD: HELP WANTED

Are you looking for a part-time job with a mission? Come be a part of the VABVI team helping to improve the lives of Vermonter’s with impaired vision. The Vermont Association for the Blind and Visually Impaired is looking to hire a Driver/Assistant to work up to 30 hours per week driving a visually impaired teacher in our Berlin office. Duties include but are not limited to, driving, guiding, and assisting the employee, carrying supplies, and helping with paperwork. Must possess a reliable insured vehicle, a clean driving record, and be able to pass a background check. Starting pay is $15.76 per hour plus mileage compensation. Please send your resume to Cathie Peller at cpeller@vabvi.org or call for an application 802-505-4006.

We’re Hiring!

Human Resources Department Manager
Hunger Mountain Co-op is seeking a motivated and experienced HR manager for a customer-focused team providing natural, organic, and local products in a member-owned cooperative natural foods store.

Our co-op offers competitive pay and benefits and the opportunity to join an outstanding management team.

Visit hungermountain.coop/careers for a detailed job description and to apply.

Hunger Mountain Co-op is an inclusive employer. Women, minorities, people with disabilities, veterans, and members of the LGBTQ community are encouraged to apply. Hourly employees are represented by UE Local 255.

623 Stone Cutters Way • Montpelier, VT 05602
(802) 223-8000 • hungermountain.coop
Words Out Loud marks its ninth year of Sunday afternoon readings of work by Vermont writers at the historic 1823 meetinghouse, the Old West Church, presented in tandem with the annual fall Art at the Kent exhibit in Kent’s Corner, Vermont. This year, “Words Out Loud: Poetry, Place, and the Passage of Time” will be an all-poetry series of readings by engaging literary Vermonters: Sept. 17, Sean Prentiss and Scudder Parker; Sept. 24, Sarah Audsley and Nadine Budbill; and Oct. 1, Nadell Fishman and Sydney Lea.

Book sales and signings and a chance to meet the presenters will follow the readings. Donations suggested. No tickets required for the readings. Please arrive early to allow time for parking and seating ahead of the 3 p.m. start.

Vermont poets Sean Prentiss and Scudder Parker will be the first to read in this year’s series on Sunday, Sept. 17.

Sean Prentiss is the award-winning author of “Finding Abbey: The Search for Edward Abbey and His Hidden Desert Grave,” which won the National Outdoor Book Award, Utah Book Award, and the New Mexico-Arizona Book Award, and the author of “Crosscut: Poems.” He is also the author of two textbooks: “Environmental and Nature Writing,” and “Advanced Creative Nonfiction.” Prentiss is coeditor of “The Far Edges of the Fourth Genre: Explorations in Creative Nonfiction” and coeditor of “The Science of Story: The Brain Behind Creative Nonfiction.” He and his family live on a small lake in northern Vermont, and he serves as an associate professor at Norwich University.

Scudder Parker’s first volume of poetry, “Safe as Lightning” (Rootstock Publishing, 2020) was awarded the Best Poetry Book of 2020 by the Independent Publishers of New England. His poetry has appeared in numerous literary journals including Sun Magazine, Crosswinds, The Lascaux Review, Northern Woodlands, Sky Island Journal, Vermont Life, Northern Woodlands, and Twyckenham, and his poem “The Poem of the World” was awarded an Honorable Mention in the 2021 Tom Howard/Margaret Reid Poetry Contest. A passionate gardener and proud grandfather of four, Parker lives with his wife, Susan, in Middlesex.

For more information about Words Out Loud and other programs of this year’s Traces exhibit, go to kentscorner.org/2023-readings.

—press release
Bean is a confident guy with the softest fur ever! He is curious and friendly with staff at the shelter. He can sometimes get nervous, but generally recovers with some treats. He does not love being picked up, but he absolutely loves to get pets and attention with his feet on the floor. He has free-roamed with another rabbit but has never shared a cage with one. He has partial blindness in one eye that does not seem to affect his quality of life.

Central Vermont Humane Society
1589 Vermont Route 14S
East Montpelier
802-476-3811
centralvermonthumane.org
Back to School

School’s back in session. On the first day of the 2023–24 school year, students at Montpelier High School filled the hallways. Photo by Oliver Laxer.

Help The Bridge,
Help The Flood Recovery

During the flood, merchants in Montpelier, Barre and Berlin were among those hit hardest, and many of those businesses are advertisers in the Bridge. That means the paper’s ad revenues are expected to decline (and have already). The Bridge plans to be an essential partner throughout the rebuilding process, with coverage to include information on flood relief resources, articles and opinions on flood resilience, stories and photos of your neighbors as they work toward recovery, reports on city and state government actions, and updates on businesses as they reopen.

To do all this, we need your help. Please contribute generously to the Bridge, a 501c3 nonprofit, by visiting our donation page at montpelierbridge.org/donate

Thank you!
Volunteer Hub Shifting Operations
Resilient Montpelier is Thinking Ahead, by Avi Zimet

Federal Programs that Can Help with Flood Recovery

Our next print issue comes out on September 20, 2023. Check out our website or 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 editor@montpelierbridge.com.

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.

The Bridge brings our community together.
Advertise with us.

SEPT 20 FOOD & DINING
All Ad Materials and Ad Space Reservations Due Friday, September 15

OCT 4 ARTS, HARVEST & LIFESTYLE
All Ad Materials and Ad Space Reservations Due Friday, September 29

For more info about deadlines, rates, and the design of your ad, contact Rick McMahan: 802-249-8666 or rick@vtbridge.com