

YEAR IN REVIEW

The RECORD

DECEMBER 31 & JANUARY 1, 2023
SECTION B



Jesse Holden, right, of St. Johnsbury, with friends Kris Pieper, left, of Littleton, N.H., and Chris Gagnon, of East Burke, at Pulpit Rock on Mount Pisgah on Dec. 31, 2021. Holden managed 12 summits of the Northeast Kingdom peak in a 24-hour period for a total of 49 miles of hiking, sliding and running and just over 18,000 feet of vertical gain. He also raised over \$7,000 for Umbrella.

Jesse Holden Runs Westmore Region

The conditions on Mount Pisgah on New Year’s Eve were, well, less than ideal.

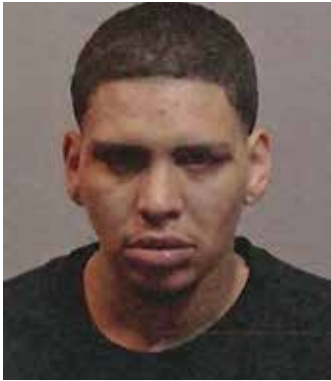
“The weather was pretty horrible for the first four hours,” recounted Jesse Holden, of St. Johnsbury, on Monday, Jan. 10, 2022. “It was raining a bit when I started [around 3 p.m.] and, during the first couple of laps, there were 20-minute downpours where I’d get completely soaked ... everything I was wearing.”

In fact, the weather was so bad that Holden eventually abandoned his original plan of running the almost nine miles from Mount Pisgah’s South Trail parking lot over the 2,785-foot peak to the North Trailhead and back.

“I got so wet and cold from getting poured on, and I knew that I’d end up in a bad place if I was soaked and by myself throughout the night,” the Northeast Kingdom born-and-raised teacher and endurance athlete said.

Instead, Holden stayed closer to his base camp at the South Trailhead, spending only about four miles away at a time — up to the top of Pisgah and then right back down to change wet clothes and shoes and warm himself by the portable fire pit.

At first, Holden thought the safer choice would be boring — but found it wasn’t due to the changing snow conditions. “I literally had to stay on my toes throughout the whole 24 hours because it changed from pretty solid footing to horrendous sloppy snow, basically running down a river,” he said. “So that kept my mind going.”



Jessica Robishaw, 34, of Orleans County and Jan Michael Valverde, 27, of New Haven, Connecticut. (File photos)

Two Shot In Holland

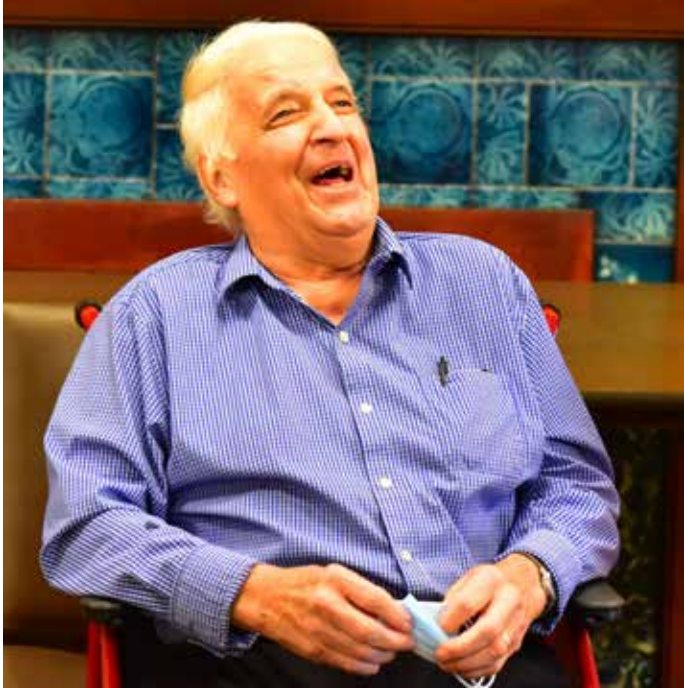
A Northeast Kingdom mother and her adult son were shot on Saturday, Jan. 1. The pair were found wounded inside a vehicle on School Road in Holland at about 8:20 p.m.

Jason Willey, 38, of Derby Line, and his mother Valerie Lyon, 57, also of Derby Line, were treated for their injuries at Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center. Willey, who was shot in the torso, was in critical condition and Lyon was in fair condition with a gunshot wound to the arm.

Vermont State Police investigated what they said may have been a targeted shooting. The vehicle was seized and transported to the Derby Barracks where the Vermont State Police Crime Scene Search Team processed both the vehicle and the scene.

Vermont State Police announced on Feb. 15 that Jan Michael Valverde, 27, of New Haven was arrested in Connecticut on multiple charges including attempted murder for allegedly shooting the Derby Line residents. After turning herself in to VSP, Jessica Robishaw, 34, pleaded not guilty in Orleans Superior Court to a felony charge of accessory after the fact in connection with the drug-related shooting.

YEAR IN CR REVIEW



Littleton Town Moderator Gerald Winn (File photo by Robert Blechl)

Gerald Winn, Littleton Town Moderator For More Than 50 Years, Dies At 84

In 2022, the Littleton community mourned the loss of Gerald Winn, who had served as town moderator for over half a century and was New Hampshire’s longest consecutively serving town moderator.

Winn died on Jan. 8 after a battle with cancer. He was 84.

In September 2021, Winn retired as Littleton’s town moderator after serving for 56 years.

In November of that year, he was named 2021 Littleton Citizen of the Year by the Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce, which honored Winn for “outstanding citizenship,” for bringing an “exemplary vision, pride, and commitment to the betterment of society,” and for giving tirelessly to his community for decades.

In the same ceremony, Winn was honored with proclamations by the New Hampshire Senate, which recognized his “devoted service as Littleton town moderator,” and by Gov. Chris Sununu, who recognized Winn for his decades of leadership.

In 1959, the Piermont native moved to Littleton, where he took the automotive and mechanic skills he learned in the Air National Guard and opened up Winn’s Flying A service station.

In 1965, after taking a Dale Carnegie course on public speaking, Winn ran for Littleton town moderator and was first elected in 1966 at 28.

After running his gas station for several years, he and his wife, Mona ventured into the real estate business and together built Century 21 Winn Associates.

In service to the town, Winn would also serve on the Littleton School Board and would serve as a community leader in many capacities.

In 1996, with his moderator skills in demand, he was elected school district moderator.

Winn was known for keeping order at meetings while giving all residents the full opportunity to speak.

Winn said his philosophy as town moderator was simple — “It’s the people’s meeting.”

Winn is survived by his wife of 62 years, Mona, sons Greg Winn and Jeff Winn, daughter Carrie Gendreau, and eight grandchildren.

Teenager Charged With Lafayette Street Shooting

A 16-year-old Connecticut teen was charged with shooting a man in the neck in St. Johnsbury during a drug dispute on Lafayette Street in January.

According to court documents, Caledonia County State’s Attorney Jessica Zaleski has filed multiple criminal charges against Kameron Garcia of Farmington, Conn. including felony aggravated assault, felony use of a weapon while committing a crime and a misdemeanor charge of reckless endangerment.

“Kameron Garcia, 16, committed the offense of Aggravated Assault when he was a person who shot Robert Stamps, 51, and knowingly caused serious bodily injury to Stamps manifesting an extreme indifference to the value of human life,” wrote St. Johnsbury Police Detective Sgt. Lester Cleary in his report.

Caledonia Superior Court Judge Justin P. Jiron issued a \$50,000 ar-



545 Lafayette Street in St. Johnsbury. (St. Johnsbury)

rest warrant for Garcia.

Stamps was shot and seriously injured during the early morning of Jan. 28. at the 545 Lafayette Street home of Deborah Clark, 62, and Mark Savary, 53.

Stamps was transported to Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital and then to Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center to treat his gunshot wound.

Garcia is facing a possible sentence of up to 21 years in prison and over \$11,000 in fines if convicted.

It was the second drug-related shooting on Lafayette Street in less than a year.

Omicron Wave Drives NEK COVID Cases Over 10,000

The Northeast Kingdom saw COVID cases spike last winter with the Omicron surge. Case counts shot past the 10,000 mark in mid-January as the region experienced the highest average daily new cases of the pandemic, when the three counties were averaging just over 150 confirmed cases per day on Jan. 15.

The pace of cases would soon abate and the region added about 5,000 cases since mid-January, reaching a total of 15,014 confirmed cases as of Dec. 27, according to the Vermont Department of Health.

The year also saw a rise in COVID-related deaths. On Jan. 1, 2022, there had been 55 deaths among NEK residents. That tally grew by 28, to reach 83 total fatalities, with the latest being an Orleans County resident on Dec. 12.

The NEK continues to lag behind much of the rest of the state regarding vaccination uptake.

As of year-end, the Health Department’s weekly surveillance report continues to show low community levels across the major metrics, including new cases, new hospitalizations of COVID-positive patients, the percentage of hospital beds occupied by COVID-positive patients and the percentage of people reporting COVID-like symptoms during emergency room visits.

2022 saw successive federal approvals of the bivalent vaccine designed for the original strain and omicron strain of the virus for both adults and children. On the state level, COVID strategies shifted predominantly to at-home testing and away from state-run vaccination clinics to vaccines through medical offices and pharmacies.

The state also shifted its guidance on how schools confront COVID. As the 2022-23 winter set in, schools were dealing with a variety of illnesses, including COVID, flu and RSV.

Arther Butler Wanted A ‘White Person’ To Stand-In For Him During Trial

A story broke in January about an unusual filing by convicted Elm Street shooter Arther Butler.

Butler, 20, wanted to be tried as a white person.

Butler filed the motion in November of 2021 asking the court to “order a white person to sit/stand in place of the defendant any time actual, alternate, or prospective jurors are present, and order all other relief in the interests of justice.”

Butler argued that he couldn’t get a fair trial in Vermont because he is Black and that data from the U.S. Census Bureau reports that 93 percent of Vermont residents identify as white.

“An overwhelming majority of these white residents are conservative-leaning, financially stable, legally un-educated and untrained, myopic thinking, older, rural-lifestyled, Vermonters,” wrote Butler.

He then advised the court that he is “black, liberal-leaning, financial-



Arther Butler at the Carroll County House of Corrections in Ossipee, N.H. (File photo)

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Butler said that a Vermont jury would likely not give him a fair trial if he was in the courtroom.

“Virtually any jury drawn with the defendant seated/standing at the defense table will be a jury of the putative victim’s peers, not a jury of the defendant’s peers,” wrote Butler.

The motion was eventually dismissed by Windsor County Judge Robert P. Gerety Jr. in December 2021.

Butler has since reached a plea agreement with prosecutors and settled the charges against him in April.

Butler pleaded guilty to charges of aggravated assault, reckless endangerment and violating conditions of release in exchange for a sentence of 40 months to ten years, all suspended except for 40 months to serve and eight years of probation.



Brad Reed talks to Town Manager Chad Whitehead at the scene of a Cherry Street apartment building fire on April 9, 2021. (File Photo by Dana Gray)

Brad Reed Named SJFD Chief

ST. JOHNSBURY — A familiar face in the town’s fire department from a St. Johnsbury firefighting family has been hired to serve as the department’s next fire chief.

After a months-long search in which applicants from out-of-state were considered, the search committee decided they didn’t need to go far to find the right person for the job, naming Assistant Chief Brad Reed to the position on Tuesday, Jan. 4.

“Brad is committed to the Town of St. Johnsbury and the Fire Service, and I am confident that he will be a successful leader for the St. Johnsbury Fire Department and a great addition to the Town Management Team,” said Town Manager Chad Whitehead.

Reed has been with the department since 1998, starting as a call firefighter. In 2001, he was hired full-time at the department, filling the spot vacated by his retiring father, Richard.

“He actually took my place,” said Richard Reed of St. Johnsbury, who served as a firefighter in St. Johnsbury for 35 years. Richard Reed’s father, Carlisle, served in the fire department before him, and two of Brad Reed’s uncles were St. Johnsbury firefighters: Eugene McDonough, who died battling a fire in 1998, and Jerry Fournier, who was fire chief in the 1970s and 1980s.

Reed, 46, identified his familiarity with the department and its crew as a significant asset to the town. “We have a really good solid team of firefighters,” he said. Additionally, he said, his progression through the ranks over the last two decades puts him in a good position to lead. “I certainly have a lot of gas left in the tank, a lot of energy, and I think that my experience in the last 20 years has prepared me very well to step into this role,” he said.

COVID-19 Outbreak At St. J Prison

The Vermont Department of Corrections announced ten incarcerated individuals tested positive for COVID-19 at the Northeast Correctional Complex (NECC) in St. Johnsbury during testing conducted on Jan. 20.

Nine of the incarcerated individuals resided in the work camp building where the outbreak was first detected on Jan. 8. The tenth case was detected in the general population at the facility’s second building.

The St. Johnsbury prison complex remained on full lockdown. Vermont DOC and the Vermont Department of Health coordinated follow-up testing later that week.

At the time, 57 incarcerated individuals were considered positive across four Vermont facilities. There were 57 positive staff cases across six correctional facilities, eight field offices, the Vermont Correctional Academy, and Central Office.

St. Johnsbury had 49 current positive cases among the inmates prior to the most recent report that week. There were 17 positive staff members in St. Johnsbury and six at the Newport prison.

Waterford Municipal Woes

WATERFORD — 2022 began as 2021 left off for the Town of Waterford, with uncertainty over municipal leadership in key staff positions, unprecedented turnover and a cloud of concerns over transparency issues.

Just as the page turned to the new year, it was announced that Waterford’s Assistant Town Clerk and Treasurer Donna Berry would resign from her position effective March 1, 2022 — Town Meeting Day.

The town also lost its clerk, Jessie Pelow, in the early part of the New Year after she returned from maternity leave and ultimately resigned

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later in January.

Jessy Pelow, who has served for almost ten years in the town offices, sent her resignation letter — effective Jan. 31.

Ultimately, a new town clerk, Kandy Benedetti, was appointed but did not stay on the job for long, citing personal reasons. She is the daughter of State Rep. Marcia Martel. A new town clerk was searched for and the board ultimately hired.

Concerns over remote access that began amid the pandemic continued, and poor connectivity for people trying to attend remotely led to Select Board member Bill Piper, who winters in Montana, to ultimately resign due to the poor connection.

In mid-February, selectman Warner Hodgdon resigned and then un-resigned.

The board’s chairman, Fred Saar, also announced his resignation in early April after previously refusing to do so.

Throughout 2021, the town of Waterford saw an ever-larger cast of residents bring forward various concerns and criticisms regarding the transparency and accountability of town officials.



From different political parties, Joe Benning, of Lyndon, and Kitty Toll, of Danville, both ran for the position of Vermont Lieutenant Governor in 2022, making for a potential race between Caledonia County residents in the statewide election in November. Voters for David Zuckerman thwarted the possibility of a matchup between local candidates by giving Zuckerman the Primary victory over Toll. Zuckerman then beat Benning in November.

Local Candidates Make Bid For Statewide Office

Vermont candidates for statewide office who live in the Northeast Kingdom are rare, and when Joe Benning, of Lyndon, announced in January that he would be seeking the lieutenant governor position, it was news.

Then another local resident, Kitty Toll, of Danville, announced in February that she would be running for the same post, and it created the potential for an all-Kingdom contest in November as Toll is a Democrat and Benning is a Republican. That potential made the race especially newsworthy on a local level.

Both candidates had significant political qualifications, Benning as a county senator and Toll as a state representative. They each were easily re-elected multiple times. Both received endorsements from influential people. Toll was endorsed by former Vermont governors Madeleine Kunin and Howard Dean. Benning’s bid was supported by current Gov. Phil Scott and former Gov. Jim Douglas.

Neither would go on to win the position of lieutenant governor, each losing to David Zuckerman. Visions of a November race between local candidates vanished in August when Zuckerman defeated Toll in the Democratic Primary by fewer than 4,700 votes. Zuckerman, a former lieutenant governor, then beat Benning with 51 percent of the votes.

LED Hires New Manager

Lyndonville Electric Department hired a new manager.

Jonathan Elwell, the Village Manager of Enosburg Falls since 2004, began on March 7.

He replaced Bill Humphrey, who had served as LED manager since September of 2016, and retired.

The Lyndonville Board of Trustees, which oversees LED, received nine applications and interviewed three finalists.

Elwell, the only finalist from Vermont, was chosen because of his experience and knowledge of state energy issues.

He oversaw the Enosburg Falls Water & Light, a municipal electric department similar to LED, for the previous 17 years.

Elwell was raised in Brattleboro and served 23 years in local government as Village Manager of Enosburg Falls; Town Manager for Manchester, Maine; Development Director for Rockingham, Vt.; and Grant Administrative Assistant for Clarksdale, Ariz, according to a biography provided by Lyndonville Trustees.

He holds a master’s degree in Public Administration from Northern Arizona University and an undergraduate degree from Prescott College.

His biography states that, “Through his career working for small municipalities, [Elwell] has taken on a variety of tasks, and experiences including grant administration, financial administration, electric utility management, community development, and housing development.”

Elwell was officially hired on Dec. 30 at a salary of \$115,000.

Lyndonville Electric Department serves over 5,700 customers in 13 communities (Burke, East Haven, Glover, Kirby, Lyndon, Lyndonville, Newark, Sheffield, St. Johnsbury, Sutton, Victory, Westmore and Wheelock).

New Hampshire Summer Tourism Numbers Set Record

In January 2022, when the numbers were in, state officials said tourism in summer 2021 set a record, with millions of visitors pouring into the White Mountains, Great North Woods, and the rest of the Granite State and making a strong economic impact on local communities.

The state welcomed 4.4 million visitors who spent more than \$2.1 billion, breaking previous pre-pandemic summer records set in 2019 and representing a 21-percent increase in visitors and a 5-percent increase in spending for the season.

Including winter and fall, fiscal year 2021 in New Hampshire had a record number of visitors, in all 12.8 million people spending more than \$5.5 billion, which equals \$322.6 million in state tax revenue.

As a result of the New Hampshire Division of Travel and Tourism Development’s strategic marketing efforts, 2021 yielded one of the strongest returns on investment measured.

“New Hampshire is the best place to live, work, raise a family – and also take a vacation,” Gov. Chris Sununu said in a statement. “With this record-breaking summer tourist season, it’s clear that the Granite State is the number one destination for families looking to have fun, experience our beautiful state, and shop tax-free.”

Taylor Caswell, commissioner of the New Hampshire Department of Business and Economic Affairs, said, “We went from the worst season ever to the best. That is a rebound in an industry I can’t recall seeing. The industry had been knocked down, and to see this type of activity I think is a reaction to COVID and people wanting to get outside, and I think it’s a harbinger of several years of this, at least.”

Charyl Reardon, president of the White Mountains Attractions Association, said, “After so much uncertainty in 2020 and even some still today, it is wonderful to see how strong tourism has rebounded in the White Mountains, welcoming several million visitors, millions in travel-related spending, and support for so many households and nearly 15,000 tourism-related careers.”

FEBRUARY

Man Killed In Main Street Accident

Ralph Porfido was struck and killed by a tractor trailer while crossing Littleton’s Main Street within the crosswalk on Feb. 9. He was 79.

Porfido passed away 200 feet from his childhood home, which was located behind the family business Porfido’s Market & Deli.

One of three children, Porfido attended St. Rose of Lima Catholic School, Littleton High School (Class of 1961), and then Berlin Technical College.

According to his obituary, Porfido served in the Littleton National Guard and was a member of the Knights of Columbus and was a congregant of Saint Rose of Lima Church and the All Saints Episcopal Church.

He worked in the Metropolitan areas of Boston and southern New Hampshire, as a Mechanical Draftsman and Graphic Designer.

His obituary stated, “He was a talented artist who produced beautiful drawings of the Churches that line the main street of Littleton and was once commissioned to paint a beautiful mural for an oriental restaurant. In his youth, he had a vision of flying automobiles and drew a spec car. Cars similar to his vision are now a reality. He also enjoyed studying foreign languages and became quite fluent in many of them. Ralph enjoyed visiting the Littleton Senior Center, and the Littleton Public Library. He loved to dance and take long walks. Until just a few years ago, he greatly enjoyed his daily workouts at the local gym.”



Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital in St. Johnsbury on Friday, Feb. 11.

NVRH Reaches 50-Year Anniversary

ST. JOHNSBURY — A labor of love reached a 50-year milestone on Valentine’s Day as Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital marked 50 years of operation.

It was on Feb. 14, 1972, that patients from the former Brightlook Hospital were transported to the brand new facility on Hospital Drive, marking the start of 50 years of continuous operation for NVRH.

Planning for NVRH began in the 1960s with the recognition that the town’s two hospitals - Brightlook and St. Johnsbury Hospital on Prospect Street - were aging. Community leaders and medical professionals “recognized a need for a new, centralized healthcare facility that would provide a modern environment for quality healthcare,” Tester noted.

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2022



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seats. Republican Charles Wilson won the other seat.

Another local incumbent legislator in the Republican party, Marcia Martel, of Waterford, also decided against a re-election bid, creating a vacancy that Bobby Farlice-Rubio, a Democrat, was voted to fill.

In Orleans County, multi-term Republican Rep. Vicki Strong was defeated by Democrat Katherine Sims. They had served together in the previous composition of legislative districts, but the changes put them in a different legislative district with only one seat.

Once all the decisions among the representatives and the redistricting were made, Northeast Kingdom voters on Election Day, Nov. 8 helped balance the political landscape between Democrats and Republicans. After the 2020 election, there were only four Democrats in the Kingdom occupying a possible 17 representative seats. The new makeup has Democrats filling seven of the 16 NEK representative seats.

Hardwick Police Chief Investigated



Aaron Cochran

Hardwick Police Chief Aaron Cochran was placed on paid administrative leave in February due to an internal investigation.

Cochran is no longer employed by the Town of Hardwick but still works as a police officer in Vermont with the Northfield Police Department.

Retired Vermont State Police Capt. Mike Henry was brought in to serve as Hardwick's interim police chief.

Hardwick officials say the investigation into Chief Cochran was being conducted by the Vermont Criminal Justice Training Council. The Cochran

investigation followed an investigation into Hardwick Police Sgt. Darin Barber who is also no longer working for Hardwick Police.

In November, Caledonia County State's Attorney Jessica Zaleski sent a "Brady disclosure" letter to local defense attorneys saying Cochran was "dishonest" during his investigation into one of the officers under his command.

The Caledonia County State's Attorney's Office has also sent a similar letter about Barber to defense attorneys saying they would no longer accept cases investigated by Sgt. Barber due to an "incident" in May of 2021.

According to the Brady v. Maryland ruling by the U.S. Supreme Court, prosecutors must disclose evidence or information that would help prove the innocence of a defendant or would enable the defense to more effectively impeach the credibility of government witnesses.

Mistrial Declared When Judge Gets COVID

A domestic and sexual assault trial ended in a mistrial in February after Orleans Superior Court Judge Lisa A. Warren announced that she had just tested positive for COVID-19.

The trial of Lawrence A. Dizazzo was well underway with the defense ready to present evidence. But the trial was canceled because Judge Warren could not continue to be present in the courtroom due to her positive test.

Witnesses say Judge Warren appeared in the courtroom by video and said she wasn't feeling well, had just tested positive for the virus and dismissed the jury resulting in a mistrial.

Less than an hour later, the Orleans County Court Clerk's Office sent out an email to all prosecutors and defense attorneys announcing that Judge Warren would not be available for the remainder of the week and that all Orleans criminal hearings were being postponed.

The Orleans County Courthouse in Newport had just been re-opened for jury trials after the Vermont judiciary went from months of declaring the building unsafe for trials to suddenly announcing in December that the installation of a heating coil in the courthouse ventilation system made it safe again.

The court did not say where Judge Warren contracted the virus.

Dizazzo, 37, was accused in September of 2018 of 1st-degree aggravated domestic assault and sexual assault following an incident on Lake Willoughby Road in Barton.

Former Deputy Sheriff Sentenced

Former Caledonia County Deputy Sheriff Stephen Bunnell reached a plea agreement in February and was convicted in March of two criminal charges in Caledonia Superior Court.

Bunnell, 47, once served as "Chief Deputy" to Caledonia County Sheriff Dean Shatney and was frequently assigned to security at the Caledonia County Courthouse, prisoner transports and other law enforcement duties. But he lost his job after being accused by state police investigators of abusing his position as a police officer by soliciting nude photos and sex from three female drug addicts.

Bunnell pleaded guilty to one count of prohibited conduct and an amended charge of disturbing the peace by telephone.

If Bunnell complies with all the terms of probation in the agreement for the next two years, the guilty plea and prohibited acts conviction will be dismissed. The disturbing the peace by telephone guilty plea and conviction will remain on Bunnell's record.

Bunnell was also fined \$100 and ordered to pay \$162 in court surcharges for the disturbing the peace conviction. The deal also included several special conditions of probation including participation in a treatment program for sex offenders through the Department of Cor-

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rections.

Because Bunnell worked in the Caledonia County courthouse for much of his 22-year law enforcement career, the case was prosecuted by Windham County State's Attorney Tracy K. Shriver to avoid local conflicts of interest.



Marty's 1st Stop owner Marty Beattie, stands in the aisle of the store he owns next to Lyndsay and James Beattie, who will be leasing to buy the store. James and Lyndsay are married, and James is Marty's son. (File Photo by Dana Gray)

Ownership Of Popular Danville Store Passes To Next Generation

DANVILLE — After running a community market named for himself, Marty Beattie, founder of Marty's 1st Stop on Route 2 in Danville, passed the torch earlier this year to his son and daughter-in-law to run the family market. He had begun Marty's 33 years ago and said it was time to pass the torch to the next generation.

In February, Marty Beattie said he was working with his son, James, and daughter-in-law, Lyndsay, on a lease-to-purchase transition that commenced on April 1.

"For the community, this is probably the most positive route that this could go," said Marty.

The busy store off Route 2 just east of Danville village has expanded over the years to become a small grocery store. "We're one of the larger family-owned stores around," he said, also mentioning the larger family-owned grocery store The White Market in Lyndonville and St. Johnsbury. Marty's has 38 people on the payroll.

Marty said he's had opportunities to sell in the past and knows there would be interest if he sought buyers, but he has no interest in seeing Marty's 1st Stop become something unrecognizable to him or the community.

"I've had a lot of people say 'whatever you do, don't just sell out,'" Marty said.

The popularity of Marty's 1st Stop and its established prominence in the community offers a financially-sound future for James and Lyndsay at a time James is not so sure about the farming future.

"It's going to feel good to carry on the tradition, the family tradition and be able to serve the community like Marty has done for years," said Lyndsey.

Draper Convicted Of Killing Tim Persons

Allen Draper was convicted in February of killing St. Johnsbury resident Tim Persons.

In 2018, Draper, now 34, was on furlough from an unrelated prior conviction serving part of his prison sentence in the community at Covered Bridge Therapeutic Communities at 184 Pearl St. in St. Johnsbury.

Persons, 52, who knew Draper through his volunteer work at Covered Bridge, was found dead in the charred rubble of his Crepeault Hill Road home on May 15, 2018. Draper was later charged with killing Persons by striking him in the head with a radiator pipe and setting his house on fire after Persons refused to give Draper money so he could buy cocaine.

Persons was survived by his parents, siblings, nieces and two young daughters.

Draper pleaded guilty in Caledonia Superior Court to an amended charge of 2nd-degree murder and two unrelated counts of violating an abuse prevention order in exchange for the sentence a 20 years-to-life prison sentence as part of a plea agreement.

It was the second plea deal Draper had entered into with the state.

In August of 2019, Draper agreed to plead guilty to a charge of first-degree murder as well as a felony charge of assault and robbery and a misdemeanor charge of providing false information to a police officer in exchange for a sentence of 27 years to life in prison.

But in December of 2019, Draper withdrew from the deal that Attorney Rob Sussman had negotiated with former Caledonia County State's Attorney Lisa Warren.

NCSU Names New Leader

NEWPORT — Elaine Collins was announced in early February as the new superintendent for the SU, succeeding longtime superintendent John Castle to lead the North Country Supervisory Union.

"A Northeast Kingdom native, Elaine has been working in the Vermont educational field, in a variety of roles, for 32 years," NCSU Board Chair Steve Mason said in announcing Collins. "She started out in various support staff roles, then moved into teaching before transitioning into educational leadership through consulting work and then as a school principal, which she has done for the past 12 years. Elaine is currently the principal at Newport City Elementary School."

Following her selection, Collins, in an email to the newspaper wrote, "I am so appreciative of the support and confidence that the NCSU community has extended to me in hiring me for this position. John Castle has done an exceptional job of leading our district through unprecedented times, yet our work in dealing with COVID and its aftermath will continue to be one of our biggest challenges."

She said, "I look forward to working with everyone... and I am thankful for the opportunity."

Collins at the time was in her 11th year as an elementary school principal, having served earlier as the principal of Brownington Central School and at present at the Newport City Elementary School.

An Irasburg resident, Collins has been married for 31 years, has six children, and six grandchildren. She and her husband have also served as foster parents for 53 children between 1992 and 2005. She holds K-6 Elementary Teaching License, Level II, a PreK-12 Administrator's License, Level II, and has a pending PreK-12 Superintendent's License, Level I.

Collins holds a Master's Degree in Education (Curriculum and Instruction) from Lyndon State College and a Bachelor's Degree in Elementary Education and Psychology from Johnson State College. She is a 1986 graduate of Lake Region High School.

March

Shooting In NVRH Parking Lot Claims Life Of St. Johnsbury Man

Jerry "Mike" Ramirez 36, of New York City, is accused of shooting and killing 44-year-old St. Johnsbury resident Vincent Keithan in the parking lot at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital on the morning of March 1.

Ramirez pleaded not guilty in Caledonia Superior Court in March to charges of aggravated assault and 2nd-degree murder and was ordered held without bail by Judge Justin P. Jiron.

But in August, defense attorney Rob Sussman of Burlington asked the court to consider releasing Ramirez into the custody of his parents, Margarita Ramirez, 61, and Juan Ramirez, 59, at their home in Brooklyn, New York.

Caledonia County State's Attorney Jessica Zaleski strongly opposed to the release.

Judge Jiron later issued an Entry Order in favor of the state.

"The State has established, through credible evidence, that the evidence of guilt is great that Mr. Ramirez intentionally and unlawfully killed Mr. Keithan," wrote Judge Jiron in his ruling. "There are no conditions of release that would adequately ensure Mr. Ramirez' return to court or protect the community from further acts of violence. The State's Motion to Hold without Bail is GRANTED."

Police say Ramirez is also accused of selling drugs out of a house at 45 Jills Hill Road in South Wheelock. Ramirez is being held in pre-trial detention at Northeast Correctional Complex in St. Johnsbury.

He faces a possible sentence of up to life in prison.

Selectman Cited For DWI

A member of the St. Johnsbury Select Board was accused of drunken driving on Main Street.

Brendan Hughes, 28, was stopped by St. Johnsbury Police at 11:13 p.m. on March 14 and cited into court later this month on a charge of drunken driving - test refusal.

Hughes, who was recently re-elected to his one-year seat, addressed the allegation at the board's regular meeting.

"I understand the public curiosity about the case, but the facts will be adjudicated in the normal course of the court process," Hughes said.

Hughes' case was not criminally prosecuted. Instead it was referred by the Caledonia County State's Attorney's Office to the St. Johnsbury Community Restorative Justice Center.

Man Dies In Lyndonville Fire

LYNDONVILLE — A Center Street apartment fire March 29 claimed the life of a resident.

Wayne Moore, 63, was found by Lyndonville firefighters in an apartment at 580 Center St. after they were alerted to a fire there a little after 2 a.m. Lyndonville Fire Capt. Dan Bigelow, the scene commander at the fire, said arriving firefighters saw smoke pouring from the apartment and flames on the backside of the apartment building. The property, owned by Spates Family LLC, based in Newport, has six apartments.

Upon arrival, firefighters learned that Moore was still inside the apartment where the fire was spreading. All other occupants of the

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To our customers, neighbors, associates and friends go our thanks and best wishes for the New Year.

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FROM

ST. JOHNSBURY ACADEMY

apartment building were safely outside. No one else was in Moore’s apartment at the time of the fire.

Firefighters made entry into Moore’s apartment and found him. They carried him out of the apartment. He was pronounced dead at the scene.

The fire continued through the predawn hours with East Burke and St. Johnsbury firefighters helping at the scene. Other than the fire victim, no other injuries were reported. The back portion of the L-shaped building was heavily damaged by fire, smoke, and water.



An updated architectural rendering of the Fairbanks Museum Science Annex that is under construction in St. Johnsbury. (Courtesy Image)

Federal Earmark Secures Final Funding For Fairbanks Museum Science Annex

Early March brought welcome news to supporters of the Fairbanks Museum in St. Johnsbury in their effort to construct a Science Annex on the back of the venerable institution.

The passage of an omnibus spending bill by the US Congress pushed funding for the nearly \$7 million project across the finish line with an earmark sponsored by Rep. Peter Welch.

“Museums both reflect and shape our communities. In that spirit, this project will serve as an investment not just in the future of the Fairbanks Museum, but in St. Johnsbury as a whole,” said Welch. “Vermonters step up for each other and give back to their communities and this funding will help in that mission. I look forward to visiting and seeing the positive impact of this project on the community in the near future.”

The museum staff had initially believed they would be able to break ground on the Science Annex in 2021, but cost overruns induced by the pandemic meant the project needed to be delayed a year and some plans adjusted.

The annex will be the realization of years of work by staff and trustees of the museum and allow the museum to provide greater access to the balcony displays, install new, modern exhibits, as well as host a new partner in Community College of Vermont with offices and classroom space in a renovated basement area.

The addition will be a modern addition with glass walls, and it will serve, in a way, to create an exhibit case to view the original museum from the outside.

The museum held a ceremonial groundbreaking in early May and then readied itself for a year of construction and adjusted operations. As of year’s end signs of progress were evident with the foundation poured for the addition, a variety of restoration projects underway on the original building and renovation work underway in the basement of the original building.

A grand opening had originally been targeted for March or April 2023, but some unexpected discoveries found in late summer in the original stacked stone foundation set the project back on its timeline.

NEK Legend Dudley Bell Passes Away

Northeast Kingdom legend Dudley Bell who died March 11 after a year-long bout of melanoma at the age of 89.

Born in Middletown, Conn., Bell served in the U.S. Navy and then attended Springfield College, where he was the captain of the basketball team. He graduated in 1958 with a bachelor’s in physical education and a master’s in physical education/organization and administration.



Dudley Bell poses with some of the hardware he earned over a lifetime of unrivaled athletic achievement. (File photo)

He was a 40-plus year tennis pro who taught 25 years at the Country Club of Pittsfield, Mass., and 13 years at the St. Johnsbury Kiwanis Club, earning a place in the USPTA New England Hall of Fame. The USTA New England Division once named Bell and his family the Tennis Family of the Year

He spent nearly 40 years at Lyndon State College (now NVU-Lyndon) as a physical education professor, department chair, coach (of eight teams) and athletic director. The tennis courts and museum were named in his honor in 2006 and his 1964 basketball team was inducted into the New England Basketball Hall of Fame in 2009. In 1986 he introduced the first Tennis Management program, with a practicum and internship program.

YEAR IN REVIEW

He was also a year-round athlete who founded NEK Senior Tennis, organized golf outings and competed in the Vermont Senior Games and more than 10 National Senior Games, where he competed in 28 events in track and field, racquetball, basketball and softball.

He was also an avid sports fan who frequently traveled to attend the U.S. Open Tennis Championships in New York, where he got to know the Williams family, and the University of Vermont men’s basketball team, typically sitting behind the bench at home games in Patrick Gym.

April



The Mountain View Grand Resort & Spa in Whitefield, N.H. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Mountain View Grand Sold For \$24.2M

WHITEFIELD — The 1,700-acre resort property and historic 141-room hotel were acquired by New Hampshire-based Hay Creek Hotels on April 27 for \$24.2 million, according to documents from the Coos County Registry of Deeds.

Nestled in the heart of the White Mountains, the Mountain View Grand is one of the state’s last grand hotels, and it remains a major economic driver for the region.

The resort is the largest employer in Whitefield with 200 employees and one of the top private-sector job creators in Coos County.

Hay Creek Hotels adds the Mountain View Grand to a portfolio of 26 upscale independent hotel properties, including five in the Granite State: The Centennial Hotel in Concord, The Eagle Mountain House & Golf Club in Jackson, The Exeter Inn, The Wolfeboro Inn, and the Mountain View Grand.

According to the company website, Hay Creek Hotels was founded in 2005 “to combine the intimacy of a boutique hotel with world-class cuisine, cutting-edge technology, unparalleled guest service and the exclusive amenities of a luxury inn.”

In a press release, Hay Creek stated, “The resort has plans to undergo a massive rehaul of their employee housing as well as renovations to the lobby and clubhouse, upgrades to their IT systems, a plan for additional meeting and event space and substantial enhancements to their [food and beverage] offerings, including the creation of an additional [food and beverage] outlet.”

Community Celebrates Life Of Jillian Hegarty

Beloved 2020 Academy graduate Jillian Hegarty, 20, was killed on April 1 while walking with two friends from Trinity College in Hartford, Conn., when an SUV struck them as they crossed a street. The driver immediately fled the scene. All three were transported to area hospitals. Hegarty succumbed to her injuries. Another of the students suffered serious injuries, and the third was treated for minor injuries.

Joanne Berger-Sweeney, Trinity’s president, wrote, “Jillian Hegarty was special ... And to lose her — a student, a classmate, a daughter, a teammate, a friend — at such a young age and in such a tragic fashion is heartbreaking. There is no other way to describe it.”

At the Academy and throughout the community, Hegarty made an indelible mark. Headmaster Dr. Sharon Howell noted in a statement that she was a “perfect role model.”



Jillian Hegarty.

Hegarty was a member of SJA’s student government, a student orientation leader, a community service volunteer, an athlete, a camp counselor and a dancer.

Hegarty’s death was a significant loss to her college community in Hartford and for the St. Johnsbury community. Trinity College held a vigil in the campus chapel and the Academy hosted a celebration of life ceremony in Fuller Hall which hundreds attended.

People began arriving as early as 90 minutes ahead of the service. As the 2 p.m. start drew near, the line extended down the Fuller Hall steps and onto the Main Street sidewalk for about 100 feet. Former Academy Headmaster Tom Lovett officiated the service.

He shared with those gathered words he told Jillian about her qualities when she won one of the two Headmaster’s Prizes at the time of her graduation. Among the words he used to describe her were “fearless,” “compassionate” and “intelligent.”

Fishing Trip Turns Tragic In Monroe

Jonathan Zukowski, 31, of Woodstock, N.H., died while fishing with two friends on the Connecticut River in Monroe on the afternoon of April 6.

The trio stopped on Nine Island, near the confluence of the Connecticut and Passumpsic rivers, when he saw their boat drifting away in the strong, fast current.

Zukowski entered the water in an attempt to retrieve it, and despite attempts to throw him a life jacket, he went underwater and did not resurface. First responders rescued the two other men, who were uninjured but stranded on the island.



Jonathan Zukowski

His body was recovered on May 3.

According to his obituary, Zukowski was an accomplished musician and member of the band Boreal Orchestra.

More so, he was an avid outdoorsman who enjoyed camping, hiking, rock climbing, skiing, and hunting. A passionate fly fisherman, he was guide and owner of Mountain High Fly Shop in Lincoln.

His obituary states, “If there’s any consolation amidst this horrific tragedy, and that’s hard to imagine, it’s that Jon passed doing what he loved most, and where he most loved to do it.”

Wildflower Inn Sold

LYNDON — The Wildflower Inn and Juniper’s Restaurant changed hands this year.

Investment group Heaven’s Bench Realty Corp. purchased the 290-acre estate on April 29 for an amount in excess of \$2 million.

In a social media post, longtime owners Jim and Mary O’Reilly explained, “It’s a bittersweet experience selling something that’s been the heart and soul, and 24/7 life, for us for the past 38 years, but it was time.”

Heaven’s Bench Realty Corp. has continued operation of the 25-room inn and restaurant, located at 2059 Darling Hill Rd., with minor changes geared towards local residents and outdoor enthusiasts. The property includes a significant portion of Kingdom Trails, the pump track, and heaven’s bench.

Heaven’s Bench Realty commissioned a master plan for the site, done by planning firm Tighe & Bond of Boston, to guide its efforts.

In efforts to smooth tensions between businesses such as the Wildflower Inn and neighborhood residents, the town has initiated efforts to create of a Recreation Overlay District so that those living and playing on Darling Hill could peacefully coexist.

An ad-hoc committee will be formed to study the overlay district proposal. It will convene in the spring.

Arrest Made In Danville Murder For Hire Scheme

The FBI arrested an alleged hit-man in the spring who authorities say posed as a federal agent to kidnap and murder a Danville man four years ago.

Greg Davis, 49, was found hand-cuffed and dead from multiple gunshot wounds near 1648 Peacham Road in Barnet at about 4:30 p.m. on Sunday, Jan. 7, 2018.

Two days later, all court records related to the case were sealed in Caledonia Superior Court at the request of prosecutors.

But in April a man identified in federal court documents as Colorado resident Jerry Banks, 34, was arrested at Yellowstone National Park in Wyoming and now stands accused as part of a sophisticated murder-for-hire plot.

Three other suspects were later arrested and charged in connection with the case including Nevada residents Aron Lee Ethridge, 42; Berk Eratay, 35, and the alleged mastermind of the murder for hire scheme, Los Angeles resident Serhat D. Gumrukcu, 39.

Ethridge has since made a plea agreement with the government to settle his charges.

Federal authorities believe that Gumrukcu conspired with others to have Davis killed because he feared that Davis - one of his business partners - would report Gumrukcu to the FBI alleging fraud.

The federal cases against Eratay, Banks and Gumrukcu remain pending in U.S. District Court.

Davis lived with his family at 884 Hawkins Road in Danville.

Davis’s widow, Melissa Davis, filed a civil lawsuit this year against Gumrukcu seeking \$25 million dollars in damages.

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Ariel Quiros Sentenced

BURLINGTON — On April 29, Ariel Quiros, the former owner of Burke Mountain resort and Jay Peak ski resort, was sentenced in federal court to serve five years in prison.

The United States Attorney’s Office announced that Ariel Quiros, of Puerto Rico, and formerly of Key Biscayne, Florida, was sentenced to 60 months in prison by Chief Judge Geoffrey W. Crawford in United States District Court in connection with his involvement in the AnC Vermont EB-5 investment project.

Chief Judge Crawford also ordered Quiros to serve a three-year term of supervised release and to pay \$8,338,600.77 in restitution.

The sentencing followed Quiros’s guilty pleas in August 2020 to three felony charges: conspiring with co-defendants William Kelly, Jong Weon (Alex) Choi, and William Stenger in a multi-year wire fraud scheme to defraud immigrant investors seeking green cards through the EB-5 program; money laundering for using a loan collateralized with investor funds to pay a personal tax obligation; and concealing material facts in a matter within the jurisdiction of a federal agency, namely United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS), which oversaw the EB-5 process.

According to court records and proceedings, the AnC Vermont project was designed to raise \$110 million from 220 immigrant investors in order to construct and operate a biotechnology facility in Newport. From 2012 to 2016, the defendants convinced approximately 169 investors to invest approximately \$85 million in the AnC Vermont project, in addition to paying approximately \$8 million in “administrative fees.” The facility was never constructed. As Chief Judge Crawford observed during Stenger’s sentencing hearing, in reality the AnC Vermont project was a “ghost.”

When Quiros pleaded guilty, he admitted that he and his co-conspirators misled AnC investors about important information, including how investor money would be used, the timing of job creation for the project, and Choi’s role in the project.

In addition to the wire fraud conspiracy charges, Quiros admitted using AnC investor funds for personal expenses, specifically a \$6 million payment to the IRS in early 2015 funded by a loan collateralized by investor funds. Quiros also admitted helping to conceal from the Vermont Regional Center that Choi, who was deeply involved in the project, was being investigated in Korea for financial crimes.

The plea agreement signed by Quiros and the government capped Quiros’s potential jail sentence at 97 months, so long as he abided by the terms of the agreement. The government informed the Court that Quiros should receive significant credit for his cooperation and would be an important witness at any trial of his co-defendants.

May



New Hampshire State Police divers search the Conn. River in late May 2022 after discovering a submerged vehicle and human remains that may belong to a woman missing since 1978. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Human Remains Confirmed As Missing Woman

LANCASTER — After decades of wondering, 84-year-old Nancy McLain finally knows what happened to her mother, Alberta Leeman, who disappeared in 1978.

In a statement on May 20, state police confirmed that human remains found in a car in the Connecticut River last year were Leeman’s.

“It’s peace of mind,” McLain said.

Leeman’s identity was confirmed through DNA testing, using samples from relatives. They matched the DNA of the remains found in the car, which was registered to Leeman.

Forensic anthropologists and the New Hampshire Medical Examiner’s Office determined that the cause of death was multiple blunt force trauma injuries, sustained when the car plunged into the river near the Mt. Orne Covered Bridge, according to the statement.

The circumstances of the death were not considered suspicious, the statement said.

Family members now believe Leeman was on her way to McLain’s home in Lunenburg, Vt., located three miles from the crash site.

Leeman vanished on July 26, 1978.

The 63-year-old widow left her second-floor apartment in Gorham and drove off into a rainy night, according to the book “Tales Told in the Shadows of the White Mountains,” by Charles Jordan.

She was reported missing a week later. Multiple police investigations centered on the Gorham area came up empty.

After a while, the case went cold.

Then, four years ago, New Hampshire Fish and Game’s Sonar/ROV team, which uses underwater side-scan sonar and submersible drone technology, made the Leeman case the basis for its monthly training.

The team chose areas where Leeman could have disappeared underwater, and the Sonar/ROV team would search those places.

They broke the case open on July 29; the Sonar/ROV team detected a 1972 Pontiac LeMans lying in a shallow area on the Vermont side of the river alongside River Road, just south of the bridge.

A week later, after the dive team confirmed it was Leeman’s car through a license plate; the family was notified.

Sheriff Shatney Not Seeking Re-election

ST. JOHNSBURY — Caledonia County Sheriff Dean Shatney did not seek re-election this year, completing three terms as sheriff. He began in 2011 when Mike Bergeron retired.

“My time’s up,” he said. “I’ve been here long enough.”

Shatney, who turned 54 before the election in November, said he’s a big believer in term limits at all levels of elected office.

“No elected official should have a lifetime job,” he said. “If I were going to run another term wouldn’t I be a hypocrite?”

Shatney said he loved the job despite the challenge of low staffing numbers and the difficulty of attracting new recruits in a time of anti-law enforcement sentiment.

“It’s this woke society that we’re living in,” he said.

He referenced the “defund police” efforts nationally and a recent effort in the Vermont Legislature to end “qualified immunity” protections for police officers. “People are saying, ‘nope I don’t want to get into law enforcement,’” Shatney said.

He said the department is on stable financial footing and is well-equipped, having just received three new cruisers. He just wishes staffing levels were higher.

“It would be a lot more enjoyable if we had another 10 people,” he said.

Shatney, who lives in West Burke, said he doesn’t know what’s next for him.

“I’m going to miss it,” he said. “I know when I walk out of here it’s going to be the hardest thing I’ve had to do.”

In November, a member of the Caledonia County Sheriff’s Department, James Hemond, was elected to replace Shatney.

YEAR IN REVIEW

Rehab Administrator, Director Of Nursing Caught In COVID Vaccination Lie

An investigation at the St. Johnsbury Health & Rehabilitation determined the director of nursing lied about her COVID-19 vaccination status and that the facility’s administrator knowingly maintained the lie.

Director of Nursing Holly Switser and Administrator Ross Farnsworth were no longer working at the Rehab in May, following an investigation by the Division of Licensing and Protection for Vermont’s Disabilities, Aging and Independent Living department.

Unannounced facility visits in April led to the discovery of a false assertion of COVID-19 vaccination compliance.

On April 20, an investigator determined that the facility’s Infection Preventionist, who had been required to verify proof of employees’ vaccination status, had a photocopy of the vaccination card for Switser, the facility’s Director of Nursing (DON) that only noted a single dose of Pfizer received on Dec. 1, 2021. A follow-up interview with the administrator, Farnsworth, on the same day included Farnsworth showing a photocopy of a vaccination card for Switser that showed two doses of Pfizer, one on Dec. 1, 2021, and the other on Dec. 22, 2021.

The investigator returned a week later to dig into the discrepancy between the vaccination cards.

He learned Switser first claimed she had received both doses of the vaccine, but when shown a copy of her vaccination card noting only the first dose, along with documentation from the Vermont Department of Health’s Immunization Registry indicating a single dose, she changed her story.

She reportedly told the investigator that she had written the second date herself and told Farnsworth that she had done that.

The investigator then went to Farnsworth, and as with Switser, the investigator reported that the administrator first tried to maintain Switser’s valid vaccination status but then admitted otherwise when presented with the conflicting documents.

The findings of the investigation required a plan of action to correct what the Division of Licensing and Protection called “deficient practices” at the Rehab. The first action listed by Rehab states, “The Administrator and DNS have been relieved of their duties.”

Probate Judge Suspended, Seeks Re-election Then Drops From Race

A local attorney elected to serve as Caledonia County Probate Judge was suspended for misconduct but put himself in position for re-election before pulling out of the race eight days prior to Election Day.

William Cobb had been the Caledonia County Probate Judge since being elected in 2018 to a four-year term. He was barred from serving in that capacity when the state Supreme Court issued a notice of suspension in June.

The decision by the justices relied on findings by the Professional Responsibility Board whose panelists determined in May that Cobb’s law license should be suspended for 15 months due to multiple acts of attorney misconduct.

Despite the suspension, Cobb petitioned to be on the ballot for re-election and his name appeared on the ballot. He also continued to be paid the probate judge’s salary, which is \$61,412 this year.

Probate judges must be licensed attorneys to serve. They handle estates, trusts and wills; alterations of birth, death and marriage records; and adoptions and guardianships, among other responsibilities.

Cobb’s decision late in the campaign season to depart from the race followed a state supreme court entry that noted with Cobb’s suspension from practicing law he would be suspended from serving as probate judge and he would not be getting paid.

Annette Lorraine, an attorney from Peacham, was elected county probate judge in November. She said she became a candidate for the position as an Independent because she was upset Cobb had been seeking re-election even though he couldn’t serve in the probate judge role.

Conroy Named New Superintendent Of St. Johnsbury School District

ST. JOHNSBURY - In May, The St. Johnsbury School District School Board selected Karen Conroy as its next superintendent. She was selected following a search to replace the outgoing superintendent of schools Dr. Brian Ricca, who departed to take a job in Rhode Island.

Board Chair Mark Avery said at the time of the announcement, “We chose Conroy for her enthusiasm, student-centered focus, and breadth of experience. We know that she will bring the same dedication to the St. Johnsbury community that she has exhibited in her current school district.”

Earlier, Conroy served as the Essex-North and Kingdom Choice superintendent. During her tenure, Conroy successfully implemented middle school career awareness and exploration programs, along with the integration of STEM Labs and project-based learning activities into elementary classrooms.

“I am honored to have been chosen for this position and grateful to be able to continue to serve students and families in the Northeast Kingdom. I was impressed with the high energy and positivity of the staff. I look forward to working with the entire school community to ensure we provide the best educational outcomes for all students,” said Conroy in May.

The search included focus group meetings as well as student, staff, and parent surveys. Candidates were interviewed by a 10-member stakeholder group, and Conroy’s candidacy was forwarded to the St. Johnsbury School District Board for a final interview.

The final board interview was preceded by a full-day site visit that included meetings with parents and community, faculty, staff and students, district administrators, and support personnel.

One teacher commented, “I appreciated her enthusiasm, authenticity, kindness, optimism, experiences, and professionalism. She sounds like a positive change agent.”

The board approved her hire unanimously. Conroy began her service to the St. Johnsbury community on July 1, 2022.

Premiere, Beloved, NEK Gravel Bike Racer Killed In Texas

EAST BURKE — Moriah Wilson, a 2014 graduate of Burke Mountain Academy and East Burke resident who was pursuing a promising career as a competitive gravel cyclist was identified by the Austin Police Department as a victim in an East Austin homicide at a home on May 11.

Police said they received an emergency call around 10 p.m. from a woman who said she returned to the Maple Avenue home to find Wilson unconscious and bleeding.

She had reportedly been shot multiple times and died minutes after emergency rescuers arrived.

Cycling magazine VeloNews, which broke the story, said Wilson was

in Texas for the Gravel Locos race in Hico. Wilson was an emerging cycling star and was favored to win the Hico race.

After BMA, Wilson attended Dartmouth College where she was a member of the alpine ski team, class of 2019. Her parents, Eric and Karen Wilson, both competed for the US Ski Team.

After Dartmouth, Wilson became a pro cyclist and worked for the Specialized bike company.

The U.S. Marshals Lone Star Fugitive Task Force identified the prime suspect as Kaitlin Marie Armstrong, 34, of Austin. She was later arrested after evading authorities and leaving the country for some time following the murder. She was apprehended in Costa Rica. On June 12, a celebration of Wilson’s life was held at Burke Mountain Academy.

Her family and friends are organizing a memorial bike ride for her in May, 2023 and will donate proceeds to a Northeast Kingdom children’s charity in her honor.

June



In June, the Littleton Select Board (left to right, Linda MacNeil, Carrie Gendreau and Roger Emerson) agreed to allow a prayer from members of clergy in town before their regularly scheduled Monday night meetings. In August, they took a formal vote, with Emerson, who later heard from residents concerned about possible lawsuits, voting against. (File photo by Robert Blechl)

Littleton Select Board Approves Pre-Meeting Prayer

The Littleton Select Board during their meeting on June 13, 2022, agreed, without a vote, to allow a prayer at the opening of their Monday meetings.

First raising the topic during the board’s April 25 meeting was Select Board member Carrie Gendreau, she had attended a New Hampshire Senate session in Concord, where a clergy member gave a prayer before the session.

Gendreau, who in November was elected to New Hampshire Senate District 1, said she found it refreshing and then asked fellow Select Board members Roger Emerson and Linda MacNeil how they would feel about having members of Littleton clergy, on a rotating basis, open up Littleton Select Board meetings with a prayer.

Gendreau spoke with Jonathan Cowal, an attorney with the New Hampshire Municipal Association, who said there is no New Hampshire statute regarding prayer at public meetings and towns have the legal authority to have it.

She cited a 2014 Supreme Court of the United States case in which the court ruled that prayer at a legislative meeting does not violate the Establishment Clause in the First Amendment of the U.S. Constitution.

Under federal law and following court decisions, municipalities can open prayer up to any established religious institution in the community, be it Muslim, Jewish, Christian, or other. Littleton currently does not have a mosque or synagogue.

During the Aug. 29 meeting, Emerson called for a formal vote on prayer.

Gendreau and MacNeil voted in favor and Emerson against, for a 2-1 vote.

“I think it adds a level of civility that public meetings should have,” said MacNeil.

After the August meeting, Emerson said several people had spoken with him regarding their concerns that prayer could open up the town to a lawsuit.

Emerson supports a moment of silence before meetings but not prayer.

“I just wanted to go on record saying I wasn’t for it, I don’t think it belongs there, and we are there to conduct town business,” he said.

To date, no one speaking during the public input session at board meetings has come out in support or opposition to the prayers, though some opposition has been expressed on social media.

Maple Center Motel Sale Falls Through

ST. JOHNSBURY — Separate buyers sought to purchase Maple Center Motel from St. Johnsbury Academy in 2022, but both efforts stalled.

The first attempt was by Rural Edge in June, which held an option to buy, but the housing organization withdrew the effort late in the summer because of funding issues.

Shortly after Rural Edge disclosed its effort to buy the motel another suitor for the property emerged. Maple Hill Terrace LLC, formed by Main Street neighbors, announced it was negotiating with the Academy to buy the property.

Neighbors Jerry Webber, Dan Hughes, David Roth and Todd Smith wanted to pursue a different outcome for the property than what Rural Edge had in mind. Their plan was to create approximately a dozen apartments available for rent rates dictated by current market forces.

The Maple Hill group anticipated the first “large, high-quality, energy-efficient” apartments would be ready for occupancy by mid-summer 2023.

Negotiations between the Academy and the Maple Hill Terrace group were on track for a deal but then fell apart at the end of September. Smith said details within the “legal language” could not be settled.

Now the Academy has opened up the property sale effort through an official real estate listing by Ernie Begin at Begin Realty Associates.

The motel was built in 1952 under the ownership of Arthur J. “Bob” (1908-1966) and Lucienne (1910-2005) Dubois. It opened at a time when the town was being marketed as the “Maple Center of the World.” Years later and after many years of ownership by Murphy Realty, B.J. Murphy gifted it to the Academy in 2008 as a space to house boarding students. Murphy, who died in 2013 at the age of 88, graduated from the Academy in 1943.

In June, Academy Headmaster Dr. Sharon Howell said the property has benefited the school with dormitory space over the years, but it’s been the hope of leadership for a while to house all boarding students on or much closer to campus.

Schuyler Sweet Dies At 74

Friends and community members mourned the death of Schuyler Sweet, a former Littleton selectman and Littleton Water and Light commissioner who served on a host of local boards and nonprofits in an effort to better his community.

Sweet, 74, who was an avid trout fisherman, died of natural causes on June 14, 2022, while on his annual fishing trip to Maine.

Sweet, who moved to Littleton after running a bus company in his native New York State, served for many years as a director of the Littleton Area Chamber of Commerce, was a longtime Littleton Rotarian and president of the Littleton Rotary Club Charitable Fund, was a member of the Littleton Industrial Development Corp., chaired the Northern Region Advisory Board for the New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, was a director at Union Bank, served as a board president

Female Inmates Sue Grafton County

Two female inmates sued Grafton County, its commission, Department of Corrections and jail staff and a former corrections officer accused of sexually assaulting them in 2019.

First filed at superior court in May before being moved to federal court in August because of alleged civil rights violations, “Jane Doe 1” and “Jane Doe 2.”

Both filed civil claims of negligence and argue that the defendants did not act after allegations of sexual assault surfaced against Max Fournier, 24, of East Ryegate, who faces his own separate criminal case at Grafton Superior Court.

In her seven-count lawsuit, “Jane Doe 1” alleges that between June and December 2019 Fournier had direct responsibility for maintaining her detention and during that time subjected her to physical and sexual assault and forced sexual acts.

Jane Doe 2 filed a nearly identical lawsuit with the same 2019 time frame but without the seventh count of negligence against Fournier, whom she alleges subjected her to physical and sexual assault, “including, but not limited to, rubbing plaintiff’s breasts for the purpose of sexual arousal.”

Both argue that the GCHOC and county commission had a duty “to protect the inmates, including the plaintiff, from sexual and physical assault and mental/emotional distress,” but failed to do so.

In March, Fournier was indicted by a grand jury on criminal charges of using his position of authority to sexually assault the inmates at the jail in North Havenhill.

Thaddeus Stevens School Moves To East Burke

EAST BURKE — The relocation of the Thaddeus Stevens School from the Lyndon Institute campus to a former inn property on Route 114 is a natural progression, said the school’s director.

“(Students) need to be in nature,” said Julie Hansen. “And that was the whole push originally.”

She said that’s part of what caused the school to initially move from its first home in Peacham to the LI campus, and it’s a big part of the recent move to East Burke.

“It just led us to here,” said Hansen from inside the former Willoburke Inn & Lodge at 638 Rt. 114 in East Burke on Friday afternoon.

Hansen added that Thaddeus Stevens hopes to collaborate with another school in the neighborhood, the East Burke School, which is located across Rt. 114.

Purchased from Brad and Olivia Libby in the spring for \$985,000, the spacious property covers 4.85 acres. A stream runs through it and a wooden bridge leads to an open area with a pavilion and other structures. It’s the first piece of property the school can call its own in its 23-year history.

Year one was in 1999 with seven 7th and 8th graders in a Peacham home. It was a fitting place to start a school named after former Peacham resident Thaddeus Stevens, a member of the United States House of Representatives from 1859 to 1868, who fiercely opposed slavery and fought for equal rights.

Hansen became the school’s first director and has held that role since.

In 2011, the school made the move to the LI campus.

Getting the school into a more visible and populous location also bolstered enrollment numbers. The school finished the most recent school year with about 30 students. The highest enrollment in its two-plus decades was about 60.

August



Gary Ely, an employee at Caplan’s Army Store for 67 years until its closing at the end of last year, sits near a front store window on Wednesday, Oct. 20, 2021. Every day Ely went to the empty store that was so much a part of his life. Chairs inside near the front door were set up as for his many friends to visit with Ely.

Gary Ely Dies

Longtime Caplan’s Army Store employee Gary Ely died on Aug. 22. The longtime employee at the Railroad Street, St. Johnsbury store died from heart-related issues. He turned 85 years old earlier the same month. The day of his death would have been the 69th anniversary of Ely’s start at the store. When he reached the 60-year employment milestone at Caplan’s back in 2013, he said he wasn’t interested in retirement. He said his only dream was to keep on working at Caplan’s. He continued to show up at the store daily after it closed.

“The truth is I’d like to die right here; this is my life,” he said.

His daughter, Anna Talbot, spoke fondly of the impact her dad had on her because he was such a people person.

“I thank God for the man that he was because he inspired me every single day,” she said. “He was like the mayor of St. Johnsbury. Everybody who ever met him would turn away with a smile.”

“Gary was an institution in downtown St. Johnsbury for as long as I can remember,” said NEK Chamber of Commerce director Darcie McCann in an email. “But despite the legacy he leaves in downtown St. J, he leaves a much bigger hole as one of the most decent and kind human beings you’d ever meet. He was not only an incredible presence at Caplan’s Army Store but he had a heart of gold and unparalleled empathy.”

Danville’s David Schilling Celebrated As Principal Of The Year

Danville School’s David Schilling was lauded in early August as High School Principal of the Year at an awards banquet at Killington Grand Resort.

Schilling received dual awards as both the National Association of Secondary Schools Principal of the Year for Vermont, and the Vermont Robert Pierce High School Principal of the Year by the Vermont Principals’ Association (VPA).

While the awards were announced last spring, the ceremony to celebrate his and other education officials’ accomplishments was held Aug. 2 at Killington Grand Resort.

Schilling served as Principal/Secondary Principal at Danville School for four years before proposing he step down as principal to run the school’s Danville Works CTE program. He previously served as principal at Cabot School.

In comments about Schilling’s recognition, Caledonia Central Superintendent Mark Tucker stated, “In his fourth year as Principal/Secondary Principal at Danville School, Dave recognized the impact of the



Dave Schilling

YEAR IN REVIEW

Covid-19 pandemic on some of Danville’s students who were already struggling to find a purpose in high school. He designed and proposed a new technical education track that focuses on hands-on learning, as a way to keep those students interested and engaged in their education until they were eligible to apply to a high school technical education program in 11th-12th grade, and then offered to step down as Secondary Principal to lead this new experiential program.”

“I believe our greatest gift in this moment is a blank canvas, and the realization that we don’t have to go back to normal if normal wasn’t working so well anyway,” said Schilling in his acceptance speech.

September

Local Man Sues Facebook

An Orleans County man filed a lawsuit in September against Facebook alleging that the social media giant caused injuries to his teenage daughter including self-harm, depression and eating disorders.

The 98-page complaint was filed against Meta Platforms, Inc. and its other companies including Facebook and Instagram in U.S. District Court in Burlington by attorney Shawn K. Jarecki of Stockbridge, Vt.

The complaint alleges that the daughter of Brownington resident Robert Turgeon quickly became addicted to the online platforms.

The complaint alleges Turgeon’s daughter started using Facebook when she was 12 years old and quickly became a heavy user.

The complaint alleges that the teen became addicted to the Facebook platforms due to the “recommendations and content” Facebook showed her.

“Shortly after registering to use Meta platforms at the age of twelve, Plaintiff began engaging in addictive and problematic use of the platform,” reads the complaint. “(Her) interest in any activity other than viewing and posting on Meta platforms progressively declined... Prompted by the addictive design of Defendants’ product (s), and the constant notifications that Defendants’ platform pushed 24 hours a day, (she) began getting less and less sleep.”

The complaint was filed against Meta Platforms, Inc., Facebook Holdings, LLC, Facebook Operations, LLC, Facebook Payments, Inc., Facebook Technologies, LLC, Instagram, LLC and Sculus, Inc.



Orleans County State’s Attorney Jennifer Barrett is administered the oath of office for the position of superior court judge by Vermont Gov. Phil Scott in the Statehouse on Friday, Sept. 23, 2022. (File Photo)

Jen Barrett Named Superior Court Judge

Raised in Brattleboro and a former prosecutor in a Bennington County courtroom, Jennifer Barrett was sworn in on Sept. 24th as a Vermont Superior Court judge serving in Orleans County.

Gov. Phil Scott swore Barrett into her new role as a Superior Court judge at the Vermont Statehouse.

Barrett was one of a dozen people, six women and six men, whom Gov. Phil Scott has appointed to Superior Court judgeships, according to a statement from Scott’s office sent to media ahead of the swearing-in ceremony in late September.

Barrett’s history includes having served as deputy state’s attorney in Orleans and Bennington counties. As state’s attorney, Barrett has prosecuted a range of cases, including homicides, kidnappings, sexual assaults and domestic assaults, as well juvenile cases, post-conviction relief cases and appeals.

“I am thankful for the confidence Governor Scott has shared with me,” said Barrett.

She added: “To the young women in the room, I want you all to know that the sky is the limit, and you can do anything that you want to do. ... Always remember that we lift others around us as we rise.”

Barrett was born in Brattleboro and attended Brattleboro Union High School, as well as the Vermont Academy of Science and Technology. She graduated from Champlain College in 2008 with a degree in computer and digital forensics. She attended the University of New Hampshire School of Law, where she completed an externship with Judge James Ware, U.S. District Court for the Northern District of California.



Firefighter instructor Jeff Whitcomb, right, of Littleton, assists Warren firefighters, Eric Brown and Chris Cardillo during a zero-visibility communication drill during the 44th annual Twin State Fire School at Blue Mountain Union High School in Wells River, Vt., on Saturday, May 4, 2019. In September 2022, the name of Whitcomb, who died while instructing a class in Concord, N.H., in October 2021, was added to the fallen firefighters memorial wall in Concord. (File photo by Paul Hayes)

Littleton Firefighter’s Name Added To Memorial Wall

The name of retired Littleton fire captain and state fire academy instructor Jeff Whitcomb was added to the New Hampshire Fallen Firefighter Memorial at the state fire academy in Concord on Sept. 25, 2022.

Whitcomb, who retired as a captain of Littleton Fire-Rescue in 2015, was a senior instructor for the New Hampshire Fire Academy and Emergency Medical Services when he died on Oct. 2, 2021, in Concord after sustaining injuries while training a new generation of firefighters.

Whitcomb, who was 53, is the 92nd name on the wall, and the first New Hampshire Fire Academy member and first firefighter north of the Notch.

On Wednesday, Justin Cutting, director of the state fire academy, spoke of the importance of adding Whitcomb’s name to the memorial.

“Firefighting is a dangerous profession,” said Cutting. “Jeff spent 25 years as an instructor and his students left his classes armed with the knowledge they needed to keep themselves safe and to provide the services that the people of New Hampshire rely on. Quality emergency services require effective, well-trained, safe firefighters and EMS providers which contributes to the quality of life for all of the people

of New Hampshire, and Jeff’s contribution to that cannot ever be forgotten.”

LFR Chief Michael McQuillen called Saturday’s ceremony, which included Littleton firefighters past and present as well as LFR’s ladder truck crossing ladders with the state fire academy’s truck, a somber event.

“It was good for all of us to be there to support the family and show the family that’s he not forgotten, that he’s part of the organization, and he’s going to be forever,” said McQuillen. “We try to remember him every day and try to ease the family’s pain by being there as much as we can. Jeff makes number 92 for the state of New Hampshire who have been killed in the line of the duty.”



Officials break ground for a new mental health expansion at NVRH on Sept. 23, 2022. From left are Jackie Zaun, project manager from NVRH, Desirea Falt, Lavallee Brensinger Architects, Meaghan Pennock, H.P. Cummings Construction from Woodsville, Dr. Michael Rousse, Chief Medical Officer at NVRH, Mary Parent, President of the NVRH Board of Trustees, Jim Vear, Yeaton Engineers, Shawn Tester, NVRH CEO, Dr. Ryan Sexton, Emergency Medical Director at NVRH, and Andre Bissonnette, NVRH CFO. (File)

NVRH Expansion Announced

ST. JOHNSBURY — In late September of this year, a long-envisioned expansion project at Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital was finally realized.

The project will see the new NVRH Mental Health Support Area constructed and opened to serve a longstanding need.

The increased area to support patients suffering from psychiatric issues is in response to a growing mental health crisis locally and nationally, officials said.

NVRH CEO Shawn Tester welcomed the crowd in the hospital’s lower parking lot.

Attending the fall groundbreaking were Jackie Zaun, project manager from NVRH, Desirea Falt, representing Lavallee Brensinger Architects, Meaghan Pennock, representing H.P. Cummings Construction from Woodsville, Dr. Michael Rousse, Chief Medical Officer at NVRH, Jim Vear, representing Yeaton Engineers, Dr. Ryan Sexton, Emergency Medical Director at NVRH, Andre Bissonnette, NVRH CFO and Mary Parent, President of the NVRH Board of Trustees.

Parent publicly thanked U.S. Sen. Patrick Leahy for securing a Congressionally Directed Grant worth \$3 million to construct the new hospital addition.

Paul Bengtson, former and long-time CEO of the hospital, also attended the ceremony.

The current nine Emergency Department exam rooms are used for mental health patients as well as for people seeking emergency medical care. The rooms offer limited space for a family member or caregiver in the room when providers and nurses are treating the patient. If the patient is experiencing a mental health crisis, a “patient observer” must also be in the room 24/7.

NVRH Emergency Department Medical Director Dr. Ryan Sexton describes as “small, windowless exam rooms with little privacy to care for these (psychiatric) patients.”

He said the NVRH ED treats 14,000 people annually, and using the space for people with mental health issues is “extremely challenging.”

The expansion is happening during the hospital’s 50th anniversary year.



Dog Mountain secured a grant for improvements to the popular St. Johnsbury dog park and art gallery that continues to operate as a nonprofit in the honor of its founders, the late artist Stephen Huneck and his wife, Gwen. (File photo)

Dog Mountain Secures Grant

ST. JOHNSBURY — Dog Mountain in September received a grant of \$5,000 from PetSafe brand’s Bark for Your Park awards to help build or support community dog parks around the country.

Amanda McDermott, the creative director at Dog Mountain, said at the time that the funds will go a long way in helping to pay for a handful of improvements from purchasing and installing pet waste disposal stations that allow the water to filter out, such as the ones in downtown St. Johnsbury, to new signage, and parking area improvements.

“There’s been a lot of needs that Dog Mountain has had,” McDermott said, but finding the funds to address those needs has been challenging. The grant will go a long way toward helping cover some of those needs.

Improved parking signs, as well as a new entry sign, are also among the plans for how Dog Mountain plans to use the grant, said McDermott.

She said at times, the dilapidated sign at the foot of the Dog Mountain entrance has led people to think the park is no longer open, “It doesn’t send the right message,” she said.

“It’s been on our wish list, but we didn’t have the money to do it,” she said. McDermott hopes the new sign will make it very clear that the dream of the Hunecks, husband-and-wife Stephen and Gwen, lives on. Their niece Ali Ide is helping to carry forward their vision and works with the local staff to keep Dog Mountain going.

While \$5,000 isn’t a lot of money, it’s enough to have McDermott and the board of the nonprofit “dreaming a little bit,” she said.

october

Maple Street Shooting Wounds 1

A Massachusetts man was shot and wounded at 72 Maple Street in St. Johnsbury in October.

Police have still not identified the shooter but two people have been charged with drug offenses related to the investigation.

The victim was identified as Xavion Martin, 21, of Springfield, Mass., who was shot in the stomach.

Martin was taken to Northeastern Vermont Regional Hospital in St. Johnsbury and then



transported by helicopter to Dartmouth Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H.

Tomas Gomez Salazar, 20, a Colombian National who lives in North Weymouth, Mass., pleaded not guilty in Caledonia Superior Court to a felony charge of fentanyl trafficking and three other misdemeanor charges after the car he was riding in was identified at the scene and later stopped in Lyndon after the shooting.

Salazar faces a possible sentence of up to 33 years in prison and over \$1 million dollars in fines.

Multiple St. Johnsbury Police officers then executed a search warrant at Apartment #3 in the Maple Street building which was home to Heather A. Smith, 44. Police said they found 260 bags of fentanyl, a gun and more than 2 ounces of marijuana.

Smith was then charged and pleaded not guilty in Caledonia Superior Court to a felony charge of fentanyl trafficking and misdemeanor charges of violating conditions of release and possession of more than 2 ounces of marijuana.

Smith faces a possible sentence of up to 31 years in prison and over \$1 million dollars in fines.



Sarah Willey and Zeb Overton cut the ribbon on Overton's new retail cannabis dispensary, The Green Man, on Oct. 15, 2022. (Photo by William Beddie)

Northeast Kingdom's First Retail Cannabis Shop Opens In St. Johnsbury

ST. JOHNSBURY — The State of Vermont began licensing cannabis stores in October, and the first shop to get a license in Northeast Kingdom is in St. Johnsbury.

The Green Man, owned by Zeb Overton, opened on Oct. 21.

St. Johnsbury, as an option for cannabis retail operations, was permitted in a townwide vote in April 2021. The measure passed by a thin margin with 785 in favor of marijuana shops in town and 754 opposed.

It was the vote result Overton said he was hoping for. “That vote kept me in St. Johnsbury,” he said.

The symbol for his business logo features the green face of a man within an array of marijuana leaves. It is based on imagery of the Green Man dating back centuries that symbolizes rebirth and represents new growth. The Green Man motif has many variations. Information online states branches or vines may sprout from the mouth, nostrils and other parts of the face. Now, with Overton’s business, the Green Man’s face takes form among the leaves of a pot plant.

The Green Man is located at 1591 Memorial Dr., St. Johnsbury Center.

The town’s second shop, Northeast Kannabis, opened on Dec. 9 on Railroad Street. The store, owned by Matthew and Aleha Racenet, is across the road from Jiffy Mart. For years the property served as a furniture store and most recently it was the home of Northeast Kingdom Learning Services.

Since the board started licensing in October, 31 retailers have been given the green light to open. Northeast Kannabis is among four in the Northeast Kingdom. In addition to The Green Man, other NEK retailers are Kingdom Kind, 290 Glover Road in Barton and The High Country, 5134 Rt. 5 in Derby.



Tpr. David Garces displays his plaque with VTrans State Highway Safety Office Administrator Allison Laflamme at the Highway Safety Awards ceremony at the Vermont State House on Wednesday, Oct. 26, 2022.

St. J Trooper Honored At State House

State Trooper David Garces from the St. Johnsbury Barracks was honored on Oct. 26 for his work as a Drug Recognition Expert (DRE) by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (AOT), the State Highway Safety Office and the Vermont Highway Safety Alliance.

“The Drug Recognition Expert Award is presented to Trooper Garces in recognition of his efforts and commitment to serving as a DRE in Vermont,” said the AOT at the ceremony on Wednesday. “Through these efforts, he has helped make our roadways safer for all users...He is a great asset to our state and the communities he serves.”

Tpr. Garces became a certified Drug Recognition Expert in October of 2021, and in less than one year he has completed over 50 evaluations on suspected drug-impaired drivers in the Northeast Kingdom of Vermont.

Garces was also honored for making himself available to all agencies in the Northeast region to assist with DRE services and his passion for traffic enforcement and recognizing its importance in saving lives.

The statistics show Tpr. Garces detected and arrested 33 alcohol and drug-impaired drivers in 2022. The AOT said Garces is also a mentor to other officers in the correct ways to perform field sobriety testing and additional observations to look for in DUI investigations. He assists new officers in helping them fine-tune their new skills in impaired driving detection.

In addition to enforcement, Tpr. Garces also focuses on education. He is currently scheduling presentations at schools about underage drinking/drug use and the dangers of using and driving.

NCH CEO Resigns

North Country Hospital CEO Brian Nall resigned in late October on the heels of a no-confidence vote passed by the medical staff the week before.

The hospital’s Board of Trustees announced Nall’s departure and the appointment of an interim October 24.

“Brian Nall, President & CEO at North Country Hospital has resigned this week, and we are pleased to announce Tracey Paul as the Interim Managing Officer until a search for a permanent CEO can take place,” said Frank



North Country Hospital's former CEO Brian Nall. (Courtesy Photo)

YEAR IN CR REVIEW

Knoll, chair of the NCH Board of Trustees announced in a statement released Monday.

The medical staff at the Newport hospital voted no confidence in Nall, with some reports citing workplace climate and staffing as part of the concern.

“The Board takes this very seriously and is aware of the vote and looking into the matter,” said Knoll in a statement at the time of the vote. “Because this is a personnel matter, we are of course not able to share any additional information at this time. We are deeply committed to the staff, patients, and community we serve and will always act in their best interest. We appreciate the community’s support and understanding.”

Nall joined NCH in the fall of 2018 after a five-month national search by a search committee, a cross-section of hospital staff and assistance from a nationally-recognized search firm. Nall had previously served as CEO of HSHS Holy Family Hospital in Greenville, Ill. Nall replaced former NCH CEO Claudio Fort, who left in the spring of 2018 to run Rutland Regional Medical Center.



Some of the players who participated in a memorial baseball game in honor of Hazen Union Athletic Director Jared Cushing at Legion Field in St. Johnsbury on Sunday, Nov. 6, 2022. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Hazen Union AD Dies At 21

Communities across the region mourned the loss of Hazen Union Athletic Director Jared Cushing, who died by suicide on Oct. 16. He was 21.

Cushing was full of promise. Over the summer he founded a Senior Babe Ruth baseball team and coached them to a state title, began his dream job as athletic director at Hazen Union, and purchased a 2020 Toyota Tacoma that he called his dream vehicle.

In the aftermath of the tragedy, those who knew the Blue Mountain Union alum hope to raise awareness.

His family announced a scholarship fund, with tentative plans for a memorial softball tournament as part of the fundraising efforts.

The family will also make an annual gift to BMU to pay for mental health and suicide prevention workshops so that staff and students are better equipped to help themselves and each other.

A pickup baseball game in Cushing’s memory was played in St. Johnsbury in November.

The game opened with remarks by Cushing’s friend and BMU classmate, Brookelyn Dennis.

“Jared’s favorite two words were play ball. He was always ready to lead the team to the next victory or to learn from the next loss. His leadership on and off the field is the leader we all strive to be. His happy place was on the diamond. Whether it was tossing to his catcher or fielding ground balls at second, win or loss being out there was everything. Whether it was the crack of the bat or the smack of the glove he was on the tips of his toes, ready for the next play. Jared was always looking for ways to motivate the team whether it was with magic beans or unicorns, anything to give them an incentive. Today is for him to go out there and have fun on a diamond where he cherished and loved and was so successful,” she said.

Academy Community Suffers Antisemitic Graffiti

ST. JOHNSBURY — Symbols of hate etched into St. Johnsbury Academy walls spurred school-wide attention, reflection, and administrative ire.

Referencing several carvings of Swastikas into bathroom walls, Academy Headmaster Sharon Howell told a chapel assembly of the student body and faculty, “We will not tolerate these acts of hate. There will be the most serious consequences for them.”

Dr. Howell first addressed the racist vandalism in morning chapel on Oct. 6, one day after Yom Kippur, a Jewish High Holy Day, ended. She said in that message she wanted to communicate “dismay” that such a symbol appeared on campus and asked for the person or people responsible to confess.

When another Swastika appeared shortly after, Dr. Howell said her message to the assembly had a different tone. She spoke in more forceful terms. “While my comments have been about forgiving and learning, I am less concerned about that this morning,” she said to the students. “These actions do not represent us. They are not who we are, they are not what we do, and they will not be tolerated.”

The Academy reported the incidents to St. Johnsbury Police. Dr. Howell said officials believed they had identified those responsible but want to be sure they engage with anyone connected to the incidents.

The Academy turned the incidents into a community-wide discussion and teaching moment with a poignant series of op-eds published in the Caledonian-Record.

NKHS Rights Ship And Receives Full Designation Status

In early fall Northeast Kingdom Human Services announced that it had completed the redesignation process by the Vermont Department of Mental Health following a couple turbulent years for the NGO that saw administrative turnover and staff and client concerns.

NKHS received the decision and approval from Department of Mental Health Commissioner Emily Hawes. The agency was “redesignated with minor deficiencies.”

The decision came after more than eighteen months of effort by NKHS since December 2020 when DMH alerted NKHS that it risked losing its designation and the agency was placed on “Provisional Designation with Intent to Designate” following a months-long investigation.

The major deficiencies noted in the state’s report issued at the time required a corrective action plan. The state investigation cited “ineffective organizational leadership oversight” and other concerns based on interviews, surveys and dozens of complaints. In the aftermath then NKHS CEO and President Thomas Jankowski resigned and retired NVRH CEO Paul Bengtson was named Interim Executive Director, stepping into the leadership role just as the agency needed to transform itself.

Bengtson was named the Interim Executive Director in January 2021 to help stabilize the agency while the search for a new executive director was launched. In September 2021, Kelsey Stavseth joined the agency as its new Executive Director.

NKHS leadership and staff worked closely with DMH to make the necessary improvements and Stavseth said in October the redesignation was a testament to the dedication and work of the NKHS team.

Over the summer, DMH gathered information from a variety of sources to assess the agency’s adherence to the corrective action plan and DMH expectations, including documentation, information from consumers, staff, Board of Directors, and local program standing committees, as well as comments from the general public. Additionally, representatives from NKHS met with State Standing Committees who, in turn, made their recommendations to the Commissioner.



Patricia Lyons, seated, of Littleton, is given an American flag in honor of her brother, Sgt. Alfred H. Sidney, a Korean War POW who died 71 years ago. His remains were identified earlier this year. After a graveside service on Dec. 8, Sidney was laid to rest in his hometown of Littleton. (Photo by Robert Blechl)

Korean War POW Comes Home

On Dec. 8, after seven decades, Sgt. Alfred H. Sidney came home and was laid to rest in his hometown of Littleton.

On May 18, 1951, Sidney, a member of the Army’s H Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, was captured in South Korea during the Korean War and marched to a prisoner-of-war camp.

He died two months later, at the age of 23.

Until August of 2022, Sidney’s remains, which, along with the remains of hundreds of other POWs, had been disinterred from Korea and moved to the Punch Bowl Cemetery in Hawaii for analysis, had not been identified.

But after a series of DNA and other tests, a positive match was made, and Sidney, a devoted son to his parents, Alfred and Hazel, and a big brother to three sisters and a brother, was finally brought home.

Following a graveside service, he was laid to rest at Glenwood Cemetery.

Patricia Lyons, 90, of Littleton, the eldest of the three sisters and the last surviving sibling of the family, called the day overwhelming.

“So many years went by,” she said. “I never expected to see this day. Now, it’s here. It’s a wonderful feeling to be able to go to the family plot, to know that he’s there beside our mother.”

Lyons described her brother.

“He was my great protector,” she said.

Patricia was 19 when the news that her brother was missing in action (Alfred was officially declared dead two years later, in 1953) was delivered to the family home.

“The lady came from the Western Union with the telegram and my mother went to pieces,” she said. “It took an awful toll on my parents.”

She thanked the military for assisting the family in getting her brother home and local community members and veterans for turning out to honor Alfred.

“It’s just been such an outpouring of respect and encouragement,” said Patricia.

November



An explosion and fire leveled a home at 82 Riverside Ave. in Lunenburg, Vt., on the morning of Tuesday, Nov. 1, 2022. (Photo by Paul Hayes)

Longtime Firefighter Ignores Serious Injury To Battle Blaze

Former Lunenburg Fire Chief Phil Harris and his wife, Elaine, escaped their single-family home at 82 Riverside Ave. on Nov. 1 following an early-morning explosion that rocked the close-knit neighborhood located along the western shore of the Connecticut River.

Once his wife was safely outside, Harris, who is in his 70s, drove himself to the nearby fire station in spite of serious burns and returned with a tanker in attempts to contain the blaze.

He and his wife remain hospitalized in the burn unit at Massachusetts General Hospital with non-life-threatening injuries.

The following day, Lunenburg Fire official Harvey Call marveled at Harris’ toughness.

“I’ve been burned myself and I honestly don’t know how he did it,” Call said. “I know the adrenaline was pushing him, but that guy is steel.”

The home was totaled and the cause of the fire remains under investigation.

Lunenburg Fire expects to hold fundraisers to assist the Harris, who are well-known and well-liked community members.

The explosion drew Good Samaritans who rushed to the scene and helped the husband and wife out of the home, according to state Fire Marshal’s investigators.

They included the man living next door, 62-year-old Lee Esposito, whose home had also caught fire.

Esposito’s home at 76 Riverside Ave. remained standing but will almost certainly have to be torn down due to damage from the explosion, fire, and water

Botzojorns Announces Departure From KESD

Jen Botzojorns announced in mid November her intent to resign as Superintendent of Kingdom East School District at the end of the school year.

Botzojorns notified the school board of her plans during their meeting Nov. 8, requesting that she be released from her contract that called for her to serve through the 23-24 school year.

School board chair Cynthia Stuart, of Concord, said the board reluctantly approved the request following an executive session where it was discussed. Stuart said the reluctance was because of all the good work and contributions Botzojorns had made to the district.

“With sincere gratitude and deep appreciation for her significant contributions to education in the Northeast Kingdom, the Kingdom East School District Board accepted Jennifer Botzojorns’ resignation effective June 30, 2023,” Stuart said in a statement.

Botzojorns notified the district’s senior leadership, faculty and staff, and school community families following the board’s decision in several emails.

This is Botzojorn’s seventh year as superintendent in the region. Her first year was as superintendent of Caledonia North Supervisory Union in 2016-17. She helped shepherd the creation of the Kingdom East School District through the Act 46 merger process and has served as KESD Superintendent since.



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SPORTS YEAR IN REVIEW

Another year, another memorable year of sports memories. From buzzer-beaters to state championships and everything in between, 2022 brought joy to athletes and fans around New Hampshire's North Country and Vermont's Northeast Kingdom. Here's a look back at some of the year's most unforgettable sports moments:

MARK COLLINS EARNS 500TH CAREER COACHING WIN IN GROVETON ROUT

JAN. 4: Groveton boys basketball coach Mark Collins recorded his 500th career victory, as his Eagles rolled past Division IV foe Gorham 48-25.

A former three-sport standout at Groveton, Collins has led the Eagles to seven state titles in 34 seasons — the first coming in 1998 and the last coming in 2017 — and 12 final four appearances over the past three-plus decades. His teams have two undefeated seasons, including a 73-game win streak from 1997-2001. He was inducted into the 2019 New Hampshire Interscholastic Athletic Association Hall of Fame.

DUNKLEE BACK FOR THIRD OLYMPICS AS U.S. SETS BIATHLON TEAM

JAN. 11: Susan Dunklee is headed to her third Olympics.

The Barton native, Craftsbury resident and St. Johnsbury Academy alumna is among the eight members of the U.S. biathlon team headed to China later this month for the Beijing 2022 Olympic Winter Games.

The 35-year-old Dunklee is the most successful U.S. female biathlete in history. Her best individual finish in two Olympics is 11th — in a mass start at the 2014 Sochi Winter Games. At the 2018 PyeongChang Winter Games, Dunklee recorded three top-20 finishes. The former Dartmouth skier is also the only U.S. female biathlete to win an individual world championships medal. She accomplished the feat twice in 2017 and 2020. Her father, Stan Dunklee, competed in the 1976 and 1980 Olympics as a cross-country skier.

GATORADE LAUDS ST. J RUNNER THORNTON-SHERMAN

JAN. 31: St. Johnsbury Academy senior Evan Thornton-Sherman was named the 2021-22 Vermont Boys Cross Country Player of the Year, Gatorade revealed on Monday.

Thornton-Sherman, headed to run track and field and cross country for University of Maine in the fall, is the second Hilltopper boys cross country runner to earn the Gatorade honor (Kyle Powers, 2007-08). A Waterford native, Thornton-Sherman claimed his first Vermont D-I individual state cross-country crown while leading the Hilltoppers to an improbable team title at Thetford Academy — the program's first championship in 63 years.

SOPHIE BELL SWEEPS TITLES AGAIN, PATS CAPTURE FIFTH STRAIGHT CROWN

FEB. 17: While the Winter Games were happening on the other side of the world, Sophie Bell had a golden moment of her own.

The Profile junior delivered the day's four fastest runs en route to the slalom and giant slalom crowns and guided the talented Patriots to the New Hampshire Division IV girls alpine ski title on Thursday at Croched Mountain. Makena Price got on the podium in slalom, five of the Patriots' six skiers seized top-10 finishes in both events and Profile earned a 39-point win over runner-up Derryfield to capture its fifth straight championship and 24th overall.

PROFILE BOYS TAKE BACK DIVISION IV ALPINE SKIING THRONE

FEB. 15: After watching Lin-Wood end the Patriots' four-year win streak last winter, the Profile boys turned in a dominant performance on its home hill, clearing runner-up Sunapee by 70 points at the New Hampshire Division IV state alpine skiing championships.

Profile went 1-2-3-4 and grabbed five of the top six spots in slalom, and had four of the top six finishers in giant slalom to finish with a whopping 785 points at Cannon Mountain's Mittersill race venue. It's the program's 21st state title. The Boissennault twins, freshman Troy and Dino, led the charge. Dino Boissennault was the victor in giant slalom while Troy Boissennault triumphed in slalom.



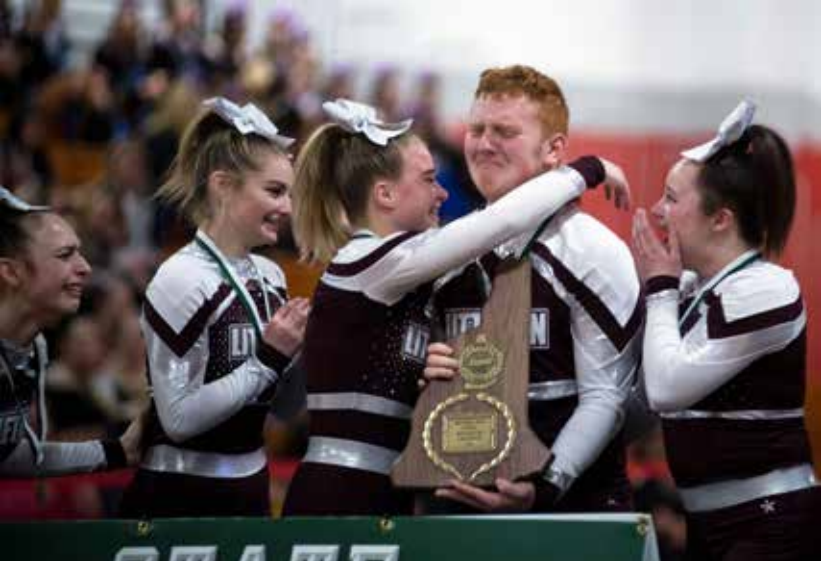
Fritz Hauser is mobbed after hitting the game-winner in top-seeded St. Johnsbury's stunning 42-41 overtime win over No. 9 Mt. Mansfield in the Division I quarterfinals at Alumni Memorial Gym on Friday, March 4, 2022. (Photo by Michael Beniash)



Jacob Dube gestures to the crowd after hitting the game-winning 3 that lifted fourth-seeded Blue Mountain to a 26-25 win over No. 3 White River Valley in the Division IV championship at Barre Aud on Sunday, March 13, 2022. (Photo by Michael Beniash)



Elijah Flocke, center, is congratulated by head coach Jamie Walker, left, and teammate Michael Maccini after top-seeded Engineers capped a perfect 22-0 season with a 58-49 victory over second-seeded Concord Christian at Keene State on Friday, March 11, 2022. (Photo by Paul Hayes)



From left Littleton's Max (Ryann) Lewis, Hailee Beane, Kierra Charest, Andrew Smith and Taytum Adams react with the Division III trophy at the 2022 New Hampshire state spirit championships at Pinkerton on Thursday, March 10, 2022. (Photo by Ben Conant/Monadnock Ledger-Transcript)

EX-HILLTOPPER STAR COWAN CROWNED AMERICA EAST PENTATHLON CHAMPION

FEB. 25: Former St. Johnsbury Academy standout Katherine Cowan claimed the women's pentathlon at the America East Indoor Track and Field Championships at Boston University.

The University of Maine senior captain won the high jump (5 feet, 5.25 inches), shot put (35 feet, 6.75 inches), and long jump (17 feet, 3.25 inches) on her way to scoring a career-high 3,491 points. She

was also third in the 60-meter hurdles and sixth in the 800 meters and finished 121 points ahead of the runner-up, University of Vermont junior Lauren Triarsi.

LYNDON'S IGA STEPNIAK CAPTURES STATE SLALOM TITLE AT BURKE

FEB. 28: Lyndon Institute junior Iga Stepniak won the Vermont high school girls slalom championship at Burke. Stepniak claimed the crown in a two-run time of 1:42.61, beating out Blythe Fitch-O'Leary of Rice (1:43.61).

HAUSER ALLEY-OOP SENDS NO. 1 HILLTOPPERS TO FINAL FOUR

MARCH 4: In the biggest moment, the biggest man stepped up.

Fritz Hauser banked in a lob pass off an inbounds play in the closing seconds of overtime to lift top-seeded St. Johnsbury to an epic 42-41 victory over No. 9 Mt. Mansfield in a Division I quarterfinal. The basket helped the Hilltoppers return to University of Vermont's Patrick Gymnasium for the fourth time in five seasons where St. J took on No. 4 Rutland.

WILLEY, FALCON BOYS CLAIM STATE SNOWBOARDING GS TITLES

MARCH 8: North Country took third place in boys and girls competition at the Vermont high school state snowboarding championships at Jay Peak.

The boys team won the giant slalom, with Dylan Willey, fourth overall, winning the state GS title for the third straight year.

FLOCKE, WOODSVILLE CAP PERFECT SEASON AS BACK-TO-BACK CHAMPS

MARCH 11: With Woodsville up a point in the fourth quarter, senior Elijah Flocke scored the game's next 12 points, helping the top-seeded Engineers surge to a 58-49 victory over second-seeded Concord Christian in the Division IV title game at Keene State College's Spaulding Gym.

Flocke, a 6-foot forward/guard finished with 18 of his team-high 24 points in the fourth quarter, Cam Tenney-Burt tallied 18 points and Cam Davidson added 11 points as the poised and experienced Engineers calmly salted the game away to cap an unbeaten 22-0 championship season.

FORMER HILLTOPPER LIA ROTTI LEAPS TO NCAA D-III NATIONAL TITLE

MARCH 12: In a historic day for the Tufts University women's track and field program, Jumbo junior Lia Rotti and classmate Jaidyn Appel both won individual national championships at the NCAA Division III Indoor Championships.

In a pair of record-breaking performances, Rotti, a former star at St. Johnsbury Academy (2019), won the national championship in the triple jump with a massive PR and school record distance of 40 feet, 8.25 inches.

DUBE'S BUZZER-BEATING 3 LIFTS BUCKS TO FIRST TITLE SINCE 2001

MARCH 13: Senior Jacob Dube's three-pointer beats the buzzer to give Blue Mountain Union a 26-25 victory over White River Valley in the Division IV boys basketball championship game at the Barre Auditorium.

Dube was mobbed by his teammates after his trey won the lowest-scoring Division IV title game of all time.

RIVARD, HAZEN STUN NO. 1 WINOOSKI FOR D-III THRONE

MARCH 13: Hazen Union center Tyler Rivard posted a monster stat line with 21 points and 22 rebounds to lead the second-seeded Wildcats past top-seeded Winooski 37-34 in the Division III championship at Barre Auditorium.

The 6-foot-4, 205-pound junior used strength and smarts to control the paint on both ends of the floor, hold off the long and athletic Spartans, and deliver the Wildcats their eighth title and first since 2016.

LITTLETON CHEERLEADERS SOAR TO ANOTHER STATE TITLE

MARCH 10: Littleton seized the Division III title at the 2022 New Hampshire high school state spirit championships at Pinkerton Academy.

The Crusaders finished their winning routine with a point total of 80.8, nearly four points better than runner-up Mascenic (76.7). It was Littleton's second title in three years and 10th crown in 18 seasons under head coach Danielle Cook. LHS won six straight from 2009-14.

EX-ST. J STAR SADIE STETSON IN BIG DANCE WITH AMERICAN UNIVERSITY

MARCH 13: Sadie Stetson, a junior guard at American University and former St. Johnsbury superstar, and her Eagles teammates punched their ticket to the 2022 NCAA Division I women's basketball tournament after winning their Patriot League conference tournament.

Seeded second, American University toppled No. 4 Bucknell 65-43 in the championship game to land the Eagles the automatic NCAA bid — their third trip to the marquee event in seven seasons and first since the 2017-18 campaign.

AFTER 45 YEARS AND 606 WINS, TRASK RETIRES FROM COACHING BASKETBALL

MARCH 30: Longtime Colebrook boys basketball coach Buddy Trask retired after 45 seasons and 606 career victories — a decision he said came at the end of the regular season.

The 67-year-old Hall of Fame coach put together a dazzling career. After guiding the Stratford High School boys for four seasons, Trask took over the Colebrook program at the start of the 1980-81 season. He leaves with a career record of 606-368 and three state championships with the Mohawks (1997, 2002, 2008), taking the tiny northern New Hampshire high school to 12 final fours and six state finals.

DANVILLE SOFTBALL COACH PAUL REMICK WINS 400TH GAME

APRIL 28: He gained win No. 400 in a familiar, if unwelcome, way — by freezing.

His softball team generated plenty of heat, however, as the Danville Bears topped Richford 12-9 for the 400th win of coach Paul Remick's career. The ballclub won the Division IV championship last year and Remick's sixth overall in 12 finals.

THORNTON-SHERMAN LOWERS 1,500 STATE RECORD AT SWELTERING BURLINGTON INVITATIONAL

MAY 14: Evan Thornton-Sherman continued his magnificent senior season, lowering his own state record in the 1,500 meters and winning the 3,000 later in the afternoon for the distance double at the 49th annual Burlington Invitational.

Thornton-Sherman was named the meet's Most Outstanding Track Athlete on a day when Vermont's top track and field athletes went toe-to-toe at the premier regular-season meet.


ST. J DOUBLES DUO SEIZES STATE TITLE

MAY 28: St. J Academy juniors Javier Berenguer and Agustin Gil breezed into the finals with a 6-0, 6-2 win over Stowe's JP Marhefka and Max Biedermann, and won the state title in straight sets Saturday over Burlington's Khiem Nguyen and Nevin Morton, 6-4, 6-2.

HILLTOPPER BOYS REPEAT AS D-I TRACK AND FIELD CHAMPIONS

JUNE 4: Behind superstar senior Evan Thornton-Sherman and a bevy of young talented runners, the Hilltoppers produced a bountiful haul of points on the track to overcome feisty runner-up Champlain Valley at the 2022 Vermont Division I state championship at Burlington High School's D.G. Weaver Athletic Complex.

Shut out from points in the throws and scoring just 25 combined in three jumping events, St. Johnsbury scored 88 points on the track — at least two athletes scoring in seven events — to topple the Redhawks 114.5-106 and capture its second consecutive state crown.



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SPORTS YEAR IN REVIEW

ADVANTAGE ST. J: HILLTOPPERS SERVE UP PERFECT SEASON, FIRST TITLE

JUNE 8: No. 2 St. Johnsbury rose to the occasion in a battle of Division I's two unbeaten, overpowering top-ranked Burlington 5-2 to preserve its perfect season and claim the school's first tennis championship.

Both teams entered Wednesday's match at Leddy Park in Burlington with identical 16-0 records and both teams had dominated their previous playoff opponents.

ROYER BAFFLES HORNETS, UNDEFEATED VIKINGS GO BACK-TO-BACK

JUNE 10: With two on, two out, and two strikes in the top of the seventh, Lyndon's Jaydin Royer turned to her changeup, sending it past a baffled Lilly Robtoy and sending the Vikings to their second straight Division II softball championship.

Royer had 13 strikeouts in LI's 5-3 win over No. 3 Enosburg at Castleton University in a rematch of last year's finale. For the majority of the strikeouts, Royer used her fastball to get ahead in the count, then delivered a devastating off-speed pitch that left the Hornets without answers.

DOMINANT WOODSVILLE REPEATS AS D-IV CHAMPIONS

JUNE 11: No. 1 Woodsville remained perfect in the Division IV championship after a 12-3 romp over No. 3 Portsmouth Christian at Plymouth State University's Chase Field.

Seniors Maddie Roy (5-for-5, four runs), Mackenzie Kingsbury (four RBI) and Anna McIntyre (four hits, two runs) led the way for the Engineers (21-0), who went undefeated and won back-to-back crowns for the first time in program history.

ST. J FOURSOME DELIVERS ALL-AMERICAN PERFORMANCE AT NATIONALS

JUNE 17: The Vermont state-record-holding distance medley relay (DMR) team of Evan Thornton-Sherman, Gerardo Fernandez, Hale Boyden and Andrew Thornton-Sherman delivered a historic fourth-place performance at the 2022 New Balance Nationals Outdoor at the University of Pennsylvania's Franklin Field.

The Hilltopper quartet ran a blistering time of 10:09.57 in the championship division to secure a top-six finish and become the first St. J Academy track and field athletes to earn All-American status.

ST. J STAR RUNNER THORNTON-SHERMAN POCKETS ANOTHER GATORADE POY HONOR

JUNE 29: Evan Thornton-Sherman, he 18-year-old Waterford native, was named the 2022 Gatorade Vermont boys track and field player of the year.

Thornton-Sherman, headed to run track and field and cross country for University of Maine in the fall, is the fourth Hilltopper boy and first since Ken Bunnell (2007-08) to receive the award.

NVU-LYNDON'S FALKENBURG NAMED NAC MAN OF THE YEAR

JULY 7: Northern Vermont University-Lyndon student-athlete Zach Falkenburg (Bridgeport, NY) has been named the North Atlantic Conference Man of the Year for 2021-22. The award encompasses all facets of the NCAA Division III Student-Athlete experience. The Man and Woman of the Year awards are the highest honors bestowed by the conference.

Falkenburg is the third Lyndon student-athlete to be honored as Man of the Year, and the first since 2012-2013. Cross country runners Craig Johnson (North Kingstown, RI) and Josh Gant (Nashua, NH) were back-to-back honorees in 2011-12 and 2012-13 respectively.

EAST BURKE SIBLING SKYRUNNERS HEADED TO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIPS

JULY 18: Naia Tower-Pierce, 19, and Finn Tower-Pierce, 17, a pair of East Burke siblings, raced at the 2022 Youth World Skyrunning Championships in Arinsal, Andorra.

The two locals were among five Americans, including Josh Taylor, Sophia Mayers and Benat Froemming, set to compete against fellow top skyrun-



Evan Thornton-Sherman reacts at the finish line with BFA-St. Albans' Ethan Mashtare after winning the 1,500 meters in state-record fashion at the 2022 Vermont Division I high school state track and field championship at Burlington High School on Saturday, June 4, 2022. (Photo by Michael Beniash)



Emma Newland, left, Molly Smith, center, and Molly Renaudette swarm Jaydin Royer after top-seeded Lyndon's 5-3 win over No. 3 Enosburg in the Division II championship at Castleton on Friday, June 10, 2022. The Vikings capped a perfect season with their second straight title. (Photo by Michael Beniash)



From left, St. J's Isaac Lenzini, Ari Leven, Charlie Krebs, Nathan Lenzini, Carson Eames, Andrew Thornton-Sherman and Nathaniel Bernier sprint to the front of the pack at the 2022 Vermont state championship at Thetford on Saturday, Oct. 29, 2022. (Photo by Michael Beniash)

AFTER 107 WINS AND THREE SOFTBALL TITLES, LYNDON'S CARR STEPS DOWN

JULY 20: Chris Carr took Lyndon Institute softball for quite a ride.

But it's the end of the road for the beloved Viking leader.

The seventh-year coach revealed that he is stepping down because of health issues — pain in both shoulders and knees. The announcement came a month after Carr guided Lyndon to an undefeated season and its second consecutive Division II state championship.

MILLER CLAIMS ANOTHER NATIONAL DOWNHILL CROWN

JULY 24: Riley Miller is again a national champion.

The 17-year-old Green Mountain star continues to feel right at home in the

Rockies, as the Kirby native claimed the downhill title in the 17-18-year-old category at the 2022 USA Cycling Mountain Bike National Championships in Winter Park.

THREE CORNERS ADVANCES TO 13-15 NE REGIONAL BASEBALL FINAL

JULY 26: Three Corners picked off host Keene (N.H.) 7-6 in nine innings in the Babe Ruth 13-15-year-old New England Regional tournament semifinals.

Jacob Putnam delivered the go-ahead double in the top of the ninth while Cage Thompson pitched the last four innings for TC, including the last two scoreless.

GREEN MOUNTAIN WILD CROWNED 16-18 BABE RUTH STATE CHAMPS

JULY 31: The Green Mountain Wild, compiled of players from Blue Moun-

tain, Danville and Hazen, won the Vermont Babe Ruth 16-18-year-old state championship after defeating Mount Mansfield, 8-5, at Norwich University.

The Wild jumped out to a 5-0 first-inning lead, giving starting pitcher Lyle Rooney a hefty cushion to work with. Ricky Fennimore relieved Rooney in the fifth and was tasked with preserving the now 5-4 lead. Fennimore gave up a run in the bottom of the seventh inning, but by then the Wild had already tacked on three more insurance runs en route to the 8-5 final score.

BERLIN POST #36 NAMED AMERICAN LEGION JUNIOR STATE CHAMPS

AUG. 2: Berlin Post #36 captured the 2022 New Hampshire American Legion Junior State Championship at Holman Stadium in Nashua.

Berlin fell to Exeter 5-3, for its first defeat of the tournament on Aug. 2. Needing to be beaten twice, the two teams played each other again immediately afterward and for the third consecutive time. Berlin, used to battling from behind, instead won in convincing fashion, 13-2. The Post #36 team is made up of players from Berlin, Gorham, White Mountains Regional, Kennett and Colebrook.

ST. J ALUM MINORS CARRIES FLAG, RUNS IN 1,500 AT COMMONWEALTH GAMES

AUG. 4: Former St. Johnsbury Academy star Dage Minors recently competed for Bermuda at the Commonwealth Games in Birmingham, England.

He was also awarded the prestigious honor of being a Bermuda flag bearer during the Opening Ceremony on Aug. 4. The 26-year-old was selected along with Emma Keane, Bermuda's first female squash player, as Team Bermuda flag bearers.

BURKE MOUNTAIN HOSTS ENDURO CHAMPIONSHIP

AUG. 14: For the first time ever, the Enduro World Series was held on the east coast, and Burke was chosen as the inaugural host. Racers from 35 different countries ventured into the Northeast Kingdom to compete and see just what the small Vermont course had to offer.

For some, it was a fun opportunity to race on a track close to home in front of family, friends and fans. For others, it was just another stop on a global tour as both amateur and professional riders took their turns down the mountain. Those competing on the EWS circuit had raced in Scotland, Australia, Slovenia, Italy and Canada.

VERMONT'S FIRST FEMALE FOOTBALL COACH KEARNEY JOINS HILLTOPPER SIDELINE

AUG. 16: Julia Kearney is in a league of her own.

The 25-year-old Northern Vermont University-Lyndon alumna became one of St. J Academy's newest assistant football coaches, in charge of running backs and cornerbacks under veteran Hilltopper leader Rich Alercio.

She also became Vermont's first fe-

male high school football coach.

WOODSVILLE BOYS SEIZE FIRST GOLF CROWN

OCT. 11: The Woodsville golf team took home the New Hampshire Division IV golf state championship, beating out Mascenic by four strokes to claim the program's first-ever state title.

Jackson Horne's 18-hole score of 77 led all Engineers at Mount Washington Resort Golf Club. Horne had four birdies and shot 5 over on the day. Josiah Hakala of Mascenic finished 3 under and leads the individual event. Mike Hogan and Monty Foster, both with 80, and Camden Clawson (86) also scored for Woodsville.

VIKINGS REIGN IN THE RAIN: LYNDON TOPS NORTH COUNTRY IN BARREL BOWL 15

OCT. 13: On the strength of five different touchdown scorers — via the offensive, defensive and special team units — Lyndon kept pouring it on and didn't let up en route to a wet and windy 33-20 Barrel Bowl victory over Division II rival North Country at Veterans Field in Newport.

RJ Kittredge, Jake Sanville, Cam Berry, Ethan Lussier and Colby Simpson all found the end zone; and the Vikings found themselves hoisting the coveted barrel for the 10th time in the rivalry game's history. The gridiron slug fests between LI and NC have been happening for over a century.

MURPHY PRODUCES 8 TDS, HILLTOPPERS SHINE ON SENIOR NIGHT

OCT. 14: Senior quarterback Quinn Murphy produced eight total touchdowns — six passing, one rushing and one defensive — as St. Johnsbury dismantled visiting Rutland 56-28 on senior night at foggy Fairbanks Field.

Classmate Alejandro Orozco hauled in four touchdown passes while senior lineman Dawson Wilkins spearheaded a stout, disruptive defense for the Academy, which led 35-14 at halftime, 56-20 in the third quarter, then finished the game with a running clock and their highest-scoring output of the season.

MURPHY, HILLTOPPERS MAKE IT 8 STRAIGHT WINS OVER RIVAL VIKINGS

OCT. 22: With time for one more snap before the half, St. Johnsbury senior quarterback Quinn Murphy turned a broken play into a Superman-esque diving touchdown — turning all momentum in the Hilltoppers' favor and sending the Division I visitors well on their way to a 48-14 victory and an eighth straight victory over rival Lyndon in the 117th playing of The Game at Robert K. Lewis Field.

Lyndon's RJ Kittredge rose up to bat down the Murphy pass attempt and, for a split second, looked to preserve the Vikings' deficit at just 14-6. But in a play that will go down as one of the rivalry's most memorable, the ball dropped back into the hands of Murphy, who caught it, broke to the outside and dove head-first into the front right corner of the end zone for one his four touchdowns on the day.

POWER PACK: TEAM-FIRST HILLTOPPERS REPEAT AS DIVISION I XC CHAMPIONS

OCT. 29: After ending a 63-year title drought last fall, the Academy repeated as Division I champions on a perfect late fall Saturday morning at Thetford Academy, edging runner-up Champlain Valley by four points at the 2022 Vermont high school state cross-country running championships.

Led by Andrew Thornton-Sherman's third-place finish, St. J put three runners in the top nine, five scoring runners in the top 13 and all seven Hilltoppers crossed the line in the top 17. Remarkably, they all finished within 69 seconds of each other.

RAIDERS END RANGERS' MAGICAL RUN IN SEMIFINALS

NOV. 1: No. 10 Lake Region's magical postseason run came to an end and No. 3 Stowe came one step closer in its search for a Division III three-peat.

The Rangers hung tough with the two-time defending champions, battling to the final whistle in a 2-1 defeat in the Division III girls soccer semifinals. It was LR's first-ever trip to the final four after knocking off No. 7 Randolph and No. 2 BFA-Fairfax in the first two rounds.