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## MAGAZINE

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Beaten Track**  
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scenic spots and waterfalls

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**Victoria Chertok** - writes from her home in Southern Vermont. She covers arts and entertainment for the Brattleboro Reformer, Southern Vermont Landscapes and Vermont News & Media's Southern Vermont A&E, where her photographs also appear. Hiking Putney Mountain on a clear blue sky day with her two sons is her idea of a perfect day in the Green Mountains.



# UpCountry

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On the cover: Visitors enjoy the view looking north on Mount Equinox, which is the second highest Vermont peak at 3,848 feet.

Photo by Gillian Jones



## Publisher's Note

Hello fellow UpCountry readers. I write to inform you all about the new and positive changes we are constructing for the future of our beloved UpCountry magazine. In case you missed the news (how dare you!), UpCountry Magazine has changed hands of ownership from New England Newspapers to Vermont News and Media.



What does this mean? It means we will move the UpCountry footprint to the greater Southern Vermont, New Hampshire and Western Massachusetts area. Additionally, it means we will have a spotlight on Vermont and a more in-depth perspective on this beautiful area and all it has to offer for residents and visitors alike.

Our unique region is one to be admired. People

from far and wide look to the greater Vermont region as a true destination and a special place to frequent. Our goal is to share all our region has to offer in our award-winning magazine (yes, two-time New England Newspaper and Press Association's top pick for magazines) and inspire even the most seasoned Vermonters with new and exciting things to experience. From outdoors activities and scenic areas, to food and drink, and entertainment venues, our focus will be to spotlight these hidden gems.

If you love Vermont like we do, you will love our newly dedicated UpCountry Magazine.

Thanks for reading and keep enjoying all our beautiful area has to offer.

*Jordan Brechenser,  
UpCountry President & Publisher*

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# Off the Beaten Track

A mix of outdoor destinations in  
Vermont for varied ages and abilities

By Mark Rondeau

**VERMONT HAS AN ENDLESS ARRAY OF OUTDOOR ADVENTURES.** What follows is one person's selection, keeping in mind different ages and abilities.

If you're looking for a beautiful, but accessible spot to visit as a family, or if you or a loved one faces physical challenges, then **Lower Thundering Falls** or **Otter View Park** may well be worth the drive. These are beautiful places.

In the moderate hike category are the **Lake Trail** to Griffith Lake, the **Mt. Bluff Trail** to Robin's Lookout and the hike to Little Rock Pond.

Much more strenuous are the hike to the summit of Baker Peak, Haystack Mountain, the Brownsville Trail up Mount Ascutney and the hike to Bourn Pond.

Be prepared, especially for the more strenuous hikes. Look ahead at the weather forecast, bring adequate clothes, water, and print out a map. Don't rely on your smart phone for directions or to get you out of trouble. Get good footwear. Check out the website of the **Green Mountain Club** for more hiking tips and advice.

What follows are just 10 of probably hundreds, if not thousands, of opportunities to get outdoors in Vermont. Happy trails!

Lower Thundering Falls, accessible by a boardwalk

All Off the Beaten Track photos by Mark Rondeau



# 10 Vermont peaks, hikes, scenic spots and waterfalls

## LAKE TRAIL TO GRIFFITH LAKE – PERU

**Griffith Lake is part of a scenic National Recreation Area set deep in the forest between the Big Branch Wilderness and the Peru Peak Wilderness.** There are several strenuous hikes to get here, but this one is a relatively easy ramble from a trailhead at the end of Forest Road 58.

From the parking area at the trailhead, a flat trail with a few dips and rises follows an old carriage road to the scenic lake. About a half mile in, there is a large beaver pond on your right, a great opportunity to look out for wildlife. It's about a two mile walk from the trailhead to the wide-open north end of the lake.

After a picnic lunch on rock near the shore, follow the same path back to your car.

**Directions:** From Route 7 in Manchester, take Route 11/30 east. Stay on Route 11, past the junction with Route 30, past Bromley Ski Area, and turn left into the town of Peru. Turn left onto Hapgood Pond Road and follow it for a mile and then turn left on North Road (Forest Road 22). Take North Road for half a mile, turn left onto Mad Tom Road (Forest Road 21), drive approximately two miles, and turn right onto Forest Road 58. Continue to the gate at the end of the road, where the parking area and an informational kiosk are located.

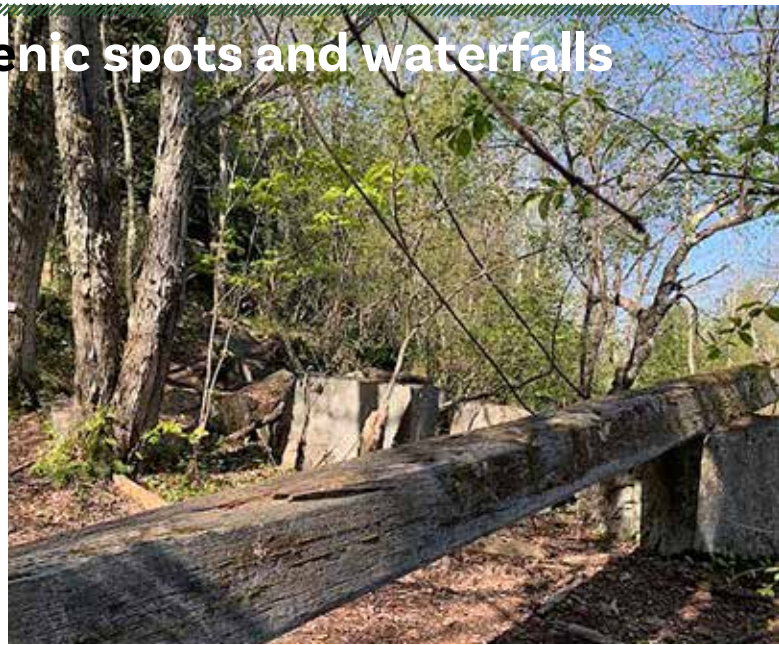
## MT. BLUFF TRAIL AND ROBIN'S LOOKOUT, MANCHESTER

**While mighty Mount Equinox is the crown jewel of the Equinox Preservation Trust, the preserve offers plenty of other scenic hikes requiring less time and energy.** One of these is this hike which passes by Equinox Pond and rises about 550 feet over a mile until you reach a spur trail which leads to a lookout with a magnificent view to the southwest. From here you can see below you the pond with its pavilion.

From the main parking area and trailhead, hike briefly on the Red Gate Trail to its Intersection with Flatlanders Pass, which you will follow south for half a mile. At a four-way trail intersection keep ahead onto the Pond Loop which takes you along the east side of Equinox Pond. As you curve around the south end of the pond you will reach the start of the Mt. Bluff Trail, which rises uphill moderately. At first the path heads west, then takes a right turn north, eventually heading back to the southeast.

Before long, you will see on your right the short trail to Robin's Lookout, with its view which is well worth the effort to reach. After enjoying the view, return heading southwest and take a left on the Snicket Trail which will take you back to the Red Gate Trail and the parking area.

**Directions:** Heading north on 7A, take a left onto Seminary Avenue to West Union Street on your right. Follow West Union Street until it terminates at the trailhead parking lot.



An old wooden boom and steel cables at the abandoned quarry on Mount Ascutney.

## THE BROWNSVILLE TRAIL TO THE SUMMIT OF MOUNT ASCUTNEY – WEST WINDSOR

**This rugged 3.2-mile hike rises from an elevation of 750 feet at the trailhead to the 3,144-foot summit.** Along the way, find many interesting features, especially the abandoned Norcross Quarry about a mile along. In addition to the fun of old equipment lying about, the nearby lookout features a beautiful view to the north.

The trail is extremely well marked. This is needed in the middle section because you'll be climbing over and around rocks on a steep and winding slope. At two miles you'll reach the Knee Lookout, elevation 2,370-feet, from which you can catch a glimpse of the Connecticut River off the northeast. Two more lookouts lie further along, including the North Peak Lookout at 2.4 miles. At 3 miles in you will come upon the foundation of a historic stone hut.

Just two tenths of a mile ahead, you will reach the summit. It is a bit of an anti-climax, with no view and two huge telecommunications antennas within a large circle of trees. However, there is a viewing tower from which one can see the countryside.

One can hike back the way one hiked up, or go down the Windsor Trail, which comes out at a trailhead on Route 44A. From there walk northwest to Route 44 to the Brownsville trailhead parking lot about a mile away.

**Directions:** Heading north on Interstate 91, take the exit for Route 5, follow Highway 5/12 north and take a left at Back Mountain Road (Route 44A). From the Mount Ascutney State Park office, go 1.8 miles north on Route 44A to the junction with Route 44. Turn west on Route 44 and travel one mile to the Brownsville trailhead on the left.

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## OTTER VIEW PARK, MIDDLEBURY/WEYBRIDGE

As you turn from your car in the parking lot, at your right is a wide boardwalk, with numerous places to sit, that leads over wetlands to a striking view at Otter Creek. At left is a grassland, partly mowed. One helpful sign informs you of the birds you might see there; another describes the life and virtues of the meadow.

This is a low-intensity place for the whole family not far from downtown Middlebury. The boardwalk through the wetlands is especially accessible. Plants such as cat-o-nine tails seem nearly within reach. As the website of the Middlebury Area Land Trust states, this is a great place for wildlife observation, bird watching, walking, biking and other outdoor activities. Based on my one visit in July, it's also a place for young couples to have deep conversations.

**Directions:** The parking area and main entrance is located at the corner of Weybridge Street and Pulp Mill Bridge Road. Heading north on South Main Street in Middlebury, go almost completely around the traffic circle onto College Street. From College Street, take the first right onto Weybridge Street/Route 23. Follow this for about 2,000 feet and an entrance to the park will be at the right.



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The view of Otter Creek from the end of the boardwalk at Otter View Park, which sits in Middlebury and Weymouth.

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## BAKER PEAK, MOUNT TABOR

The Appalachian Trail runs across a ridge here in the Big Branch Wilderness and includes Baker Peak, a 2,828-high summit.

From the trailhead on South End Road in Mount Tabor, follow the Lake Trail up to the McGlinn Brook Crossing and take the Baker Peak Trail to the north, on your left. This trail meets up with the Appalachian Trail, climbing over bare ledges. The view from the top is spectacular. Across the valley and Route 7 to the southwest rises Dorset Mountain, at 3,760 feet, in Danby, and other mountains of the Taconic Range. Off to the northwest you can see the Adirondacks in the distance.



A bridge along a cliff side on the Baker Peak Trail.

The round trip from your car back to your car is 5.6 miles. The elevation change is 2,100 feet making this a moderate to difficult excursion. Overall, this is a magnificent hike.

**Directions:** Head north on Route 7 past Emerald Lake State Park and take a right on South End Road. Follow it for about .4 mile to the trailhead.



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A stretch of the easy, level path to Little Rock Pond.

## LOWER THUNDERING FALLS, KILLINGTON

**According to the U.S. Forest Service, this is the sixth tallest waterfall in Vermont. Here, however, I want to focus here on the lower falls, which is very accessible by young and old.** There is wheelchair accessible parking on River Road in Killington. From here a boardwalk travels 900 feet through a lush meadow toward the falls. There is a brief stretch of level dirt path, and then a viewing platform at the lower falls.

For those who also want to access the upper parts of the falls, head west briefly on River Road and take a right on Thundering Brook Road. On your right, within a quarter mile, you will see two breaks in the woods with paths leading toward the upper falls, the second break has a small parking area.

**Directions:** From the intersection of Vermont Route 100 and Route 4 in Killington, drive 2 miles east to an intersection with River Road on the left. From here drive 1.5 miles to a wheelchair accessible parking lot on the left. On leaving the upper falls parking area, following Thundering Brook Road west and south will bring you past Kent Pond, source of the falls, and back to Route 100.

Bourn Pond in the Lye Brook Wilderness, with Stratton Mountain in the distance.



## HAYSTACK MOUNTAIN, WILMINGTON

**The blue-blazed trail up Haystack Mountain is a moderate hike, a 4.8-mile hike round trip, with a maximum elevation change of 1020 feet.** From the top, which is partially covered with woods, views include Haystack Pond and Mount Snow to the north, Harriman Reservoir to the south, and the large windmills of the Deerfield Wind developments to the southwest.

According to the U.S. Forest Service, the trail “follows an old gated road on a steady moderate incline to Binney Brook ravine. Turning southwest (left) at about .5 miles the trail then begins to climb steeply to the west ridge of Haystack Mountain. This section of trail is mainly a snowmobile trail, so look for and follow the orange snowmobile signs. The trail makes a few turns leading through different forest types until reaching the summit trail junction. Turn right and follow the blue blazes, again making a few more turns until the trail reaches the summit.”

**Directions:** From Route 7 in Bennington, take Route 9 east for about 20.8 miles (5.8 miles past the junction of Route 8) and turn north (left) onto Haystack Road. Follow Haystack Road into Chimney Hills Development. Take the second left onto Chimney Hill Road. at a staggered four-way junction. At the next junction, turn right onto Binney Brook Road and begin a steep and winding climb past several intersecting roads of the Chimney Hills development.

At the stop sign at the end of Binney Brook Road, turn right on to Upper Dam Road, then bear left at the next intersection. The trailhead, which is marked with a USFS sign, will be on the right. There is no dedicated parking lot for this trailhead; limited roadside parking is available in the vicinity. (U.S. Forest Service directions)



## ANGEL FALLS, JAMAICA

**One of the best falls I have seen in the Northeast Angel Falls was running strong after hard recent rains the morning I visited.** It is part of a multi-faceted site, part of the Army Corps of Engineers Ball Mountain Lake Project.

From the first parking area on Ball Mountain Road, cross the road to a pavilion and then walk behind the guardrail southwest (back toward the way you came in) for about 200 feet to find the marked trailhead. From here the hike to Angel Falls is about 1.2 miles.

Descend down the marked trail, following the purple blazes and purple West River Trail signs, until you come to sort of a T-Intersection, continue downward to the left. You will eventually come to a wooden bridge with a nice waterfall. This is not Angel Falls, however. As you keep on the path, you will reach a lowland near the banks of the West River. In about .2 mile you will come upon Angel Falls on your left.

Thoughtfully, the Army Corps placed slabs across the brook at the base of the falls so you can enjoy and photograph them head-on without falling in the water. You can also climb up the falls from the far bank to get a better view of the cascade crashing down toward the river.

**Directions:** From the junction of Route 100 and Route 30 in East Jamaica, head northwest on Route 100 for 4.4 miles – through Jamaica –and turn right onto Ball Mountain Road. You will be entering Army Corps of Engineers property, but don't be intimidated. Continue about .8 mile to the parking area across from the pavilion.

**Note:** After your hike, if you continue northeast on Ball Road from the parking area you will come to a dead end high above the impressive Ball Mountain Dam project. Completed in 1961, the dam is 265 feet high and 915 feet long.

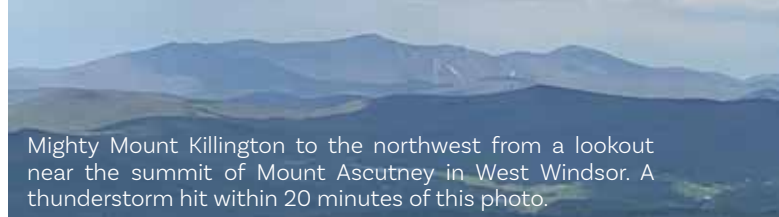
## LITTLE ROCK POND, WALLINGFORD

**This is a mostly level, two-mile hike along the Appalachian Trail Leading to a magnificent clear-water pond.**

Once you get there and enjoy the view, you can take the loop trail that circles the pond. Even though it is deep in the woods, this is a fairly popular spot. You also may run into through hikers.

**Directions:** From Route 7 in Danby, turn east onto Brooklyn Road (Forest Road 10). Take FR 10 for approximately 3.5 miles to the Appalachian/Long Trail crossing, where there will be a parking lot to your right.

People heading back to the accessible parking lot on the Lower Thundering Falls boardwalk.



Mighty Mount Killington to the northwest from a lookout near the summit of Mount Ascutney in West Windsor. A thunderstorm hit within 20 minutes of this photo.

## BOURN POND, SUNDERLAND

**In my hiking adventures in Vermont, one place I've found definitely to be on the beaten track is Lye Brook Falls.**

That's why I did not include it in this article. It is a very popular destination. However, when you are at the Lye Brook Wilderness trailhead in Manchester, another destination beckons – at least it did to me – Bourn Pond. While the falls is 2.3 miles from the trailhead, the pond is a much longer 7.1 miles away.

After one hike to the falls, I did three more hikes past the turn-off to the falls on toward Bourn Pond. I stopped each time and turned around before reaching the pond. Then one day, I arrived at the Manchester trailhead at dawn, determined to get to the pond. The hike up to the falls follows mostly a very rocky course rising from about 760 feet above sea level at the parking area, to about 1,440 feet at the falls. On the way up, once you've done lots of hard hiking ascending the trail, it splits in two. To the right, heading somewhat down, is the spur path to the falls, a 20-minute walk away. Rising up to the left is the trail into the interior of the park.

From here you keep ascending along the mountainside on what appears to be an old logging road until the path levels off at around 2,400 feet. At this point you are now on the plateau on which most of the wilderness area sits. The pond, still several miles away from this point, sits at about 2,500 feet elevation.

Soon the terrain changes to moist, marshy and at times boggy. You see more ferns, mushrooms, moss and cross more patches of mud. Climbing up from the trailhead, the path was mostly straight. Now, there are frequent twists and turns — you go up a rise here and down a dip there to a small stream bed.

As you get closer to the pond you will come across wide open patches of wetlands. At one point you will have to cross a bog on precarious groups of sticks set atop it. Bourn Pond, when you get there, is a beautiful place, but don't expect to sit on a beach or go swimming. It's a wilderness pond, and hemmed in by reeds and other flora on its banks.

One you've seen the pond, you can head back the way you came, as I did. I got back to my car at the trailhead in Manchester 12 hours and 20 minutes after I left it. This is not the only option for hiking to the pond, however. From the Branch Pond trailhead on Kelly Stand Road, it is a mere four-mile hike to Bourn Pond. The best option if you're not hiking solo would be to leave one car at each trailhead and do an 11-mile hike one-way.

**Directions:** From Route 7 in Manchester, travel about a quarter mile east on Route 11/30 to East Manchester Road. Follow East Manchester Road south for about one mile and turn left onto Glen Road, just before the overpass. Follow Glen Road and bear right at the fork onto the Lye Brook Access Road. The trailhead is located to the east of the parking lot at the end of the Lye Brook Access Road.



# Wilderness Rescue

## Who Gets Lost, Who Gets Found and How?

By UpCountry Magazine

In the dimming late afternoon light, you think that stump looks familiar. Maybe. Or is it just another of the hundreds — thousands — of similar stumps in this re-grown old logging area?

You're tired, it's getting late and your feet hurt, so who the hell can tell? You feel a boil of panic start to swirl in your gut. You're disoriented, maybe lost. Now what?

You've literally clocked tens of thousands of solo miles on rugged, high-altitude mountain trails. In the outback, in

open wilderness, across glaciers, in high desert, deep in some of the most remote areas of the world. People like you aren't supposed to get turned around, lost in the woods or worse. Yet here you are. And it doesn't feel very good.

### **Any day in the woods can turn south.**

Getting lost isn't usually high on most bucket lists of "fun things to do while on vacation." But the fact is, any day out in the woods, on a trail, or in the mountains can turn south quickly, even for the trained. Fortunately, here in the second least-populated state, Vermont has dedicated personnel that work to ensure more people have safe returns if and when the unexpected happens.



The Vermont Department of Public Safety has statewide jurisdiction for people who find themselves lost, hurt or missing in the backcountry, in remote areas, or on the 7,100 miles of rivers that crisscross the Green Mountains. Paul Van Dyke is the search and rescue coordinator for the department, and assists the Vermont State Police Search and Rescue Team, collaborating with multiple state, federal and local agencies, including the volunteer search and rescue organizations that provide additional local support.

### Good teamwork saves lives.

"Making sure our teams are all communicating effectively, well-trained and operating using similar protocols is a big part of my job," he said. Van Dyke organizes statewide trainings where nearly 100 people from all over Vermont gather to network, trade stories and train together.

Drew Hazelton is the chief of operations for Rescue Inc., a recognized leader in rural rescue and emergency medicine. Drew also confirmed it's critical to meet other people involved in search and rescue before actual incidents occur. Good teamwork saves lives. Hazelton's group is headquartered in Brattleboro with a station in Townshend, and is an all-volunteer team. They work closely with Van Dyke and the Vermont State Police Search and Rescue teams.

"The most essential life-saving factor is our training, search and rescue involves a number of different skills, all of which have to be practiced regularly for our teams to remain proficient. The second factor is planning. Knowing the many types

**"Making sure our teams are all communicating effectively, well-trained, and operating using similar protocols is a big part of my job."**

Paul Van Dyke

of incidents that may occur, how, where and having a plan to how to approach them, leads to a more effective and coordinated response. We have to know in advance what resources are available, the capabilities of each and how to request them. Not every team is skilled or qualified in all aspects of search and rescue."

### Tip box

Pack plenty of food, water and clothing.

Be prepared for darkness by bringing a flashlight or headlamp.

Save battery power on your phone in case of emergency.

Bring a map, familiarize yourself with the area before trekking out and let someone know your plan ahead of time.

# STRENGTHEN



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Members of Rescue Inc. load a boat on the shores of the Connecticut River to help in the search of a man in his 20s who fell into the river. Photo: Brattleboro Reformer

Van Dyke said while the state doesn't have "perfect data" on all its search and rescue incidents, he estimates Vermont has about 100 incidents annually, with almost half of them resolved without an actual response.

"Many people call for help, but sometimes their situation resolves itself," he said. "In some cases, people who call to say they're 'lost' can be assisted by providing directions and support over the phone. For the rest of the incidents, local or state responders need to head out in the field to provide direct assistance."

Vermont's forests cover roughly 4.6 million acres of land. That's equal to 78 percent of the state, a level that has remained steady since the 1980s. Vermont lies within a biological transition zone between the northern boreal forests and the southern deciduous forests. The northern hardwood mix of beech, birch and maple dominates Vermont's forests, accounting for 71 percent of the forest cover, with sugar maple making up about 20 percent of the balance. In such a region, it can be easy to feel like you've seen that same bend of trees before.

Search and rescue team members have to be capable of working with each other in different environments, prepared for all kinds of weather and temperatures, and trained in land navigation during nighttime and daytime hours. Their ready-go backpacks each contain gear needed to spend multiple nights out in the nastiest of weather, with food, water, fire-starting

tools and tools to build a small shelter. Rescue teams are also trained in search theory and management, with the latest and best practices to locate lost people in remote areas. Rescue Inc. even has a team trained in flying drones with high-resolution cameras to help search hard-to-access areas.

And with all the high-tech resources he has at his fingertips, Hazelton still doesn't recommend getting lost. The first part of that is a bit of preplanning, preparation. "If you plan on hiking into the backcountry, making sure someone knows where you're going and when they might expect you back is helpful. Because if you do get lost, it's easier for everyone coming for you if we know what your original plan was, and how to narrow our search."

### **Always bring appropriate clothing,**

The weather can and does change quickly here in Vermont, and what starts out as a warm and sunny day can turn cold and deadly with rain and wind, even in summer months. Your ability to stay warm is likely the single biggest factor in your survival. So always bring sufficient and appropriate clothing. A couple of extra layers can make a very big difference.

So can a trail or topographic map, extra snacks, food and water. Throw a lighter and a small flashlight or headlamp in your day or backpack, too, especially in the fall when darkness comes on sooner. And a fully charged mobile phone is useful for more than just selfies. Leave it off or on airplane mode unless it's really needed. Many parts of rural Vermont don't have coverage so while this can't be your only safety net, most smartphones have very useful weather, light and compass apps and features. Keep it in a Ziplock baggie if you think there's rain in the forecast.

**Many rescues in Vermont involve helping people who've underestimated the difficulty of their hike, have gotten lost in the dark, and simply can't see to walk out.**

Paul Van Dyke

Van Dyke said starting longer hikes earlier in the day allows you plenty of time to complete a trip in daylight. "Many rescues in Vermont involve helping people who've underestimated the difficulty of their hike, have gotten lost in the dark and simply can't see to walk out. With a little planning this is completely avoidable."

An interesting book on survival once said that most people who die lost in the wilds, die of shame. "What did I do wrong? How could I have gotten myself into this?" They berate themselves, stuck in their own dark and negative feelings. Confused and feeling ashamed of their situation, they remain lost and die, sometimes close to roads and trails that could have led them to safety. Because they stopped doing the one thing that would have saved their lives: Thinking.





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# BRAIN FOOD:

## On How to Be More Than Just Garden-Variety Abnormal

Gerd Altmann from Pixabay

By Paul van Winkle

**This bears repeating:** Your brain (which is connected to your central nervous system) is the critical organ in navigating a pleasurable, organized experience here on this chaotic earth, and inside your own skin.

How much do you know about your brain and how to properly feed it for a better, more optimal performance?

Like most things today, there are a lot of myths and misinformation about the brain. This is understandable. The study of the human brain is one of the least explored, most complex areas in science. Even brain

experts agree that there's more unknown about the brain than currently known. Fortunately, in recent years knowledge of the brain has expanded dramatically, and most of what we do know has been discovered in the last 15 years. Many of these brain facts just haven't yet found their way outside the science research hubs or a place in the public's awareness. Most of us are pulled in a lot of busy directions these days, after all.

So, in the interest of optimization, here are a few known knowns about our brains, and below those knowns, a few suggestions to help improve your brain's performance for a better tomorrow.

### SEVEN ESSENTIAL BRAINIAC FACTS

**1. About 75 percent of the brain is made up of water.**

This means that dehydration, even as small as 2 percent, can have a negative effect on brain functions. Dehydration and a loss of sodium and electrolytes can combine to cause acute changes in memory, focus and attention. To prevent any such loss of body or brain function, take steps to always keep your body properly hydrated, and maintain a good mineral balance by eating a range of foods noted below.

**2. The human brain contains about 100 billion neurons.**

That's about the same as the number of stars in the Milky Way galaxy. These neurons are connected by trillions of connections, called synapses. Neuroscientists call this a "neuron forest," and information runs between these neurons in your brain for everything we see, think, feel and do. These neurons move information at different speeds. The fastest speed for information to pass between neurons is about 250 mph. (Obviously there



Metro Creative Graphics

The study of the human brain is one of the least explored, most complex areas in science. Even brain experts agree that there's more unknown about the brain than currently known.



are some slower drivers out there, plodding along in the HOV lanes.) Regardless, ensuring our own brain has quicker responses and optimized interconnections can be more than just useful, it can be lifesaving.

**3. It's a myth that humans only use 10 percent of our brains.** We actually use all of it. Yes, some more efficiently and effectively than others, of course. We're even using more than 10 percent when we sleep. Though it's true that at any given moment all of the brain's regions are not concurrently firing, brain researchers using imaging technology have shown that, like the body's muscles, most are continually active over a 24-hour period. The key to improved brain function, then, is how best to feed and assist its many interconnections.

**4. Size doesn't really matter after all.** Like other organs, the human brain gets smaller as we get older. Human brains keep developing until you're in your late 40s and 50s, and some research indicates — to the degree it's fed and exercised and maintained — even long into the twilight years. It's the only organ in the human body to undergo development for such a long time. It also sees more changes than any other organ. Around midlife, the brain will typically begin to shrink in size and volume. However, size doesn't matter in the brain. There's no evidence found so far that a larger brain is smarter or better than a smaller one. A healthy brain is what actually matters.

**5. Your brain uses about 20 percent of the oxygen and blood in your body.** And so needs a constant supply of rich oxygen. As little as 5 minutes without oxygen can cause some brain cells to die, leading to severe brain damage or worse. Also, the harder and more you think, the more oxygen and fuel your brain will use from your blood — up to 50 percent. Clean air and lots of it helps.

**6. Exercise is just as valuable and important for your brain as it is for the rest of your body.** Aerobic and rhythmic exercise raises your heart rate and increases blood flow and synaptic supports to your brain. As your increased movement and breathing pumps more oxygen into your bloodstream, more oxygen is delivered to your brain. This leads to neurogenesis — the active production of neurons — in certain parts of your brain that control memory and thinking. Neurogenesis does sometimes increase brain volume, and this cognitive reserve is believed to help buffer against the effects of dementia — so get and keep moving. Your brain will thank you.

**7. Regular exercise also promotes the production of neurotrophins,** leading to greater brain plasticity, and likely to improved memory, cell maintenance, mood and learning. In addition to promoting neurotrophins, exercise results in an increase in neurotransmitters in the brain, specifically serotonin and norepinephrine, which boost information processing and mood. Brain-derived neurotrophic factor is found in the brain and other organs of the body. It's a protein that helps support the survival of existing neurons, encourage the growth of new neurons and promote chemical processes vital to learning, memory and higher thinking. Who among us

doesn't want to ensure we have a better mood balance with all the stresses of modern life?

## YOU THINK HOW YOU EAT

**There's growing evidence that your brain function is directly tied to what you eat.** While you might not literally transform into the things you eat, your daily nutritional choices play a really important role in your brain and overall health. Here's what we do know.

Eating certain foods (and avoiding others) has been definitively shown to improve many brain functions, slow brain aging, balance moods, heighten senses and lessen the chances of developing Alzheimer's and other diseases. This isn't some trendy diet of the moment. It's based on looking at the multi-generational eating habits of millions of people across the globe, with decades of research behind it, including the many benefits of following a foundational Mediterranean diet.

A Mediterranean dietary program is very good for you. And it's based on these simple, core elements: olive oil (organic is best) as a main source of fat. Fresh fruits and vegetables, legumes, nuts and seeds, also organic if and when possible. Whole non-GMO grains. Fresh fish. With minimally or unprocessed foods being best.



About 60 percent of your brain is made of fat, and half of that fat is omega-3 fatty acids. So, to perform at its best, the brain needs a specific type of fat: essential polyunsaturated fatty acids, which include omega-3 and omega-6 fatty acids with their anti-inflammatory lipids to promote health and wellness, and prevent disease. Your brain uses omega-3s to build brain and nerve cells, and these fats are essential for learning, memory and positive mood. Saturated fats found commonly in Western diets are simply not good for the brain. A typical American high saturated fat diet is associated with a 4 to 6 times increase in the risk of developing cognitive and heart deterioration later or eventually in life.

Frequently consume fresh fish with such good fats — sardines, anchovies, mackerel, herring, rainbow trout and wild salmon — and you'll ensure you get the highest amounts of brain-healthy fats, including DHA and EPA. It's also recommended that you minimize the amount of tuna, swordfish, catfish, sea bass, and tilefish that you consume, since these tend to be higher in mercury. By eating fish just twice a week, those over 65 and older can reduce their risk of Alzheimer's by up to 70 percent.

For healthier brains, eat red meat only on rare occasions. Regular and commercially raised meats are load-



ed with antibiotics, chemicals and antibiotic resistant strains of bacteria, none of which align with good health outcomes of any kind. Eggs instead for protein (especially from organically raised sources), however, are both good sources of protein and a rich source of important B vitamins and choline, important for regulating mood and promoting proper brain function and development.

Red wines taken in light moderation with your meals makes for happier brains. But avoid sweets, cakes and dairy desserts. Eating and drinking moderately with small meals in the company of good friends and other friendlies ensures you have a regular, enjoyable, happy event and good digestion. And add in moderate and regular physical activity, and you not only have a healthier brain, mind, body and soul, but you're likely to have better connections with others, too. In these polarized times, isn't that a triple benefit?

Note: While moderate alcohol intake can have positive health effects, regular excessive consumption can lead to memory loss, behavioral changes and sleep disruption. Particularly high-risk groups include teenagers, young adults and pregnant women.

Those who regularly eat a Mediterranean diet have far healthier brains and better emotional health than those eating a typical American diet. This is backed up with reviews of MRIs and brain scans. Processed foods typically found in American diets contribute to excess fat around the organs, which is associated with a decline in brain functioning and essential tissue itself. Additionally, Western-style diets might increase brain inflammation and impair memory, learning and brain plasticity.

The popularized ultra-low-carb and high-saturated fat diets (including the keto-diet) are not good for you or your brain. The brain needs glucose for fuel. It can burn fat. But the brain's preferred energy source is glucose. The key is to provide the brain with glucose without raising glucose/serum blood level. You do that by avoiding sugar and eating plenty of organic fresh produce sources that convert into glucose.

A healthy brain diet also includes prebiotic and probiotic foods, for ensuring a healthy microbiome. Prebiotics include onions, asparagus, artichokes, garlic and bananas, foods rich in carbohydrates called oligosaccharides, which help lower cholesterol, prevent cancer and prevent buildup of toxins. Probiotics and foods that include live good bacteria are also key, like sauerkraut and other fermented foods.

There are three (3) main mechanisms that aid in "cleaning up" the internal infrastructure of your brain: sleep, especially during the deep-sleep period that activates the cleansing glymphatic system; aerobic and rhythmic exercise, that boosts enzymatic activity and help dissolve plaques in the brain; and intermittent fasting, 12 to 14 hours of non-eating that actually aids in a periodic cleanup of the brain.



If coffee is the highlight of your morning, you'll be glad to hear that it's good for you. Many controlled studies in humans show that coffee improves various aspects of brain function — including memory, mood, vigilance, energy levels, reaction times and general mental function.

Two main components in coffee — caffeine and antioxidants — can help support brain health, alertness and improved mood.

Seeds, nuts and berries are the perfect brain snacks. Blueberries are packed with antioxidants that might delay brain aging and improve memory. Pumpkin seeds are rich in micronutrients important for brain function, like copper, iron, magnesium and zinc. And research has shown that eating nuts can improve heart-healthy markers, and having a healthy heart is linked to having a healthy brain. One study found that regular consumption of nuts might be linked to a lower risk of cognitive decline in older adults. And another 2014 study found that women who ate nuts regularly over the course of several years had a sharper memory compared with those who did not. Nutrients in nuts including healthy fats, antioxidants and vitamin E might explain their beneficial effects on brain health. And while all nuts are good for your brain, walnuts might have an extra edge, since they also deliver anti-inflammatory omega-3 fatty acids. So, add in more nuts to your diet, and you'll likely be less nuts.

So, if a better life and better living is ultimately the real wealth that we all desire and crave, doesn't it pay to eat well, and take better care of your brain, to be able to enjoy more of everything? This author thinks so. And with a brighter, more adaptive view on the road ahead, one never knows what good things might simply fall into our laps.





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# 45 Harris Road, Dover, VT

4 bedrooms • 3.5 baths • 3850 sq. ft. • \$1,899,000



This exceptional property offers a great location with privacy & solitude looking over the Vermont countryside with distant views. This gorgeous Post & Beam home is for the discerning buyer who appreciates all that it has to offer. Enjoyable in all seasons with extraordinary features includ-

ing a gorgeous infinity pool & 12' stone patio, expansive new Mahogany/IPE decks, a shooting platform & stone firepit, complete with special additions including a shooting storage shed, beverage fridges, LP connected gas grill, a waterfall feature viewed from the covered front porch, an invit-

ing outdoor hot tub, a Sonos sound system throughout. You can work remotely from the home office. Add a heated three car oversize garage w/a full second story for workshop or recreation, 12 acres w/a rolling landscape & lovely views. There is nothing missing in this exceptional offering! It

is truly an escape from everything and just minutes to The Hermitage Club, Mount Snow & southern lakes. 4 hours to NYC and 2 1/2 to Boston.

\$1,899,000

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# 925 Hinesburg Road, Brattleboro, VT

5 bedrooms • 5+ baths • 7430 sq. ft. • \$795,000



This beautiful home offers the best of both worlds! Tucked into a quiet neighborhood that is minutes from downtown Brattleboro, it sits on 18+ acres of land. As you enter the foyer, you are met with attractive terra-cotta tile, practical for VT's ever-changing weather. Continuing into the

large living room, you'll find a fully functional fireplace. As you pass through the pleasing formal dining room to the kitchen, you'll find your chef's dream has come true with a six-burner brushed chrome professional Viking gas range. On the other side of the kitchen is the family room, featuring a Hearthstone

soapstone wood stove. Upstairs are five large bedrooms, four en-suite, all with luxurious closet space. The nicely finished attic is perfect as a reading nook or fun spot for a ping-pong table. The lower level which houses the pool table, could easily be converted into a large studio apartment. During Vermont's

beautiful summer you will love the in-ground 20' X 40' pool, complete w/a pool house, featuring a kitchen & an outdoor shower.

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# 1456 Branch Hill Road, Readsboro, Vt.

5 bedrooms • 2 baths • 3,263 sq. ft. • 17.5 acres • \$599,000



**SPARK OF MAGIC!** If you are looking for a home that will take your breath away, come see this one! The view is stunning, long range to Mass with layers and layers of hills and our own Hog Back Mountain. Close your eyes and picture wisps of mists, Currier and Ives winter scenes and explosions of color in the fall.

The back line is a mountain stream with trout for breakfast! Hop on your snow cat and ride directly onto the Vast Trails. Forget light pollution, you will have your own sky to gaze and wonder at the universe. This home was lovingly handcrafted by the local logger owner and his wife, every log and piece of wood carefully chosen and finished with love to create this incredible display of art in wood! Sited perfectly, the living room has a wall of glass to the view, framed by natural tree supports for a bit of intrigue, the kitchen features a working Sterling wood cook stove (a simmering pot of stew would be lovely). Day or night, pop off to the secret get away at the very tip top of the house for a tree house view of the land and sky, ever changing and ever beautiful! The heart of the home is the 4 sided stone fireplace built by a local stone mason with wood box, fireplace and wood stove hook up. When friends visit, tell them about the 1902 Deerfield Mining Gold Mine. There is so much more to offer...greenhouse, screened porch, trails and gardens.

MLS #4874416



## More information:



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CRS, CBR, GRI

Brattleboro

Area Realty

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Office: 802-257-1335

Chris@BrattleboroAreaRealty.com



# 3358 Vermont 100, Whitinham, Vt.

5 bedrooms • 4 3/4 baths • 3,108 sq. ft. • 3.5 acres • \$579,000



**A new life in Vermont starts here!** This amazing home has so much to offer! Picture yourself all summer, rocking on the huge wrap porch, gazing at the view all day and stars at night. Or move to the back and sit in the gazebo and ponder the lovely pond with a lighted fountain, surrounded by groomed grounds and catch the hillside breeze. The kitchen is large enough for more than one cook, so invite your friends to join in the fun...be careful, they will come often and stay long. The dining room opens with glass doors to the living room where you can gather around the pellet stove on chilly nights, entertain all year and flow out to that gorgeous Farmer's porch. Slip away to the secret hang out hidden by the incredible high ceiling-ed, well thought out workshop that could double as a garage. Tuck away at the "bar" and play games or chat the night away. This will fit a large family, a cluster of friends, a gaggle of guests or just enough extra rooms for hobbies. Ski, hike, boat or just be lazy and read a book.



Every inch of this home says "love me." Enjoy the best of both worlds! If you have ever wanted to come to Vermont to run a Bed and Breakfast, this is a great opportunity. Currently being operated as a B&B, this home has a great history with 5 bedrooms, 5 baths and lovely large living and dining rooms. What an amazing home to decorate and enjoy your holidays! Open your hearts to Vermont and your home to your friends!

MLS #4871757



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414-416 DORSET HOLLOW ROAD, DORSET, VT  
MLS # 4830516

19.1 ACRES | 4 BEDROOMS | 4 BATHS

\$1,595,000

This estate with sweeping mountain views on 19 secluded acres in Dorset Hollow is just 1/3 mile to the village of Dorset. Stone pillars greet as one gently climbs the meandering drive to this historic 1930's "Enfield" house, moved to this site where it received a renewed foundation and new life surrounded by a mix of open fields and hardwood forest. A 2004 restoration opened the circular floor plan, offering gathering spaces centered around a well-appointed country kitchen featuring a large marble island. The great room has vaulted ceilings, enhanced architectural interests with natural light and a fireplace. The dining room extends to the outside deck and leads to an additional living room. All gathering spaces boast wood burning fireplaces! The main level master suite features a private wood paneled study with fireplace, marble tile bath and views. The center hall staircase leads to 2 additional bedrooms and baths. The lower level offers a private bedroom suite with its own entry, a garage, laundry room and ample storage. Most of the furniture is included in the sale. In addition to all of this, a charming one-bedroom guest cottage with fieldstone fireplace offers ideal guest lodgings or income opportunity. The possibilities are endless with space to expand and enhance.

Listed by Steven Bryant of TPW Real Estate



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23 VALLEY VIEW DRIVE, LANDGROVE, VT  
 MLS#4875342  
 TIMBER FRAME WITH SOUTHERN EXPOSURE  
 BUILT 1998  
 3 BEDROOMS | 3 BATHS | 5.2 ACRES  
 \$599,000

This elegant timber frame home captures the true feeling of Vermont. Located in the middle of 5 acres of land, this home is oriented with an open southern exposure providing sunlight year-round. Offering 3 bedrooms and 2.5 baths, it's very private and quiet, surrounded by trees, yet conveniently located a quarter of a mile off the paved Route 11 road and less than five minutes from Londonderry shopping. A short drive to every key destination defining this region - including Manchester shopping, Stratton, Bromley and Magic Mountains, cross country skiing, golf courses, tennis, hiking, restaurants, playhouses and other recreational amenities and destinations. Sold furnished.

*Listed by MaryKate Grey of TPW Stratton.*



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# Surreal Estate: Vermont's Abandoned, Haunted and Mysterious Past (& Present)

Visit the so-called Bennington Triangle, if you dare. It's an expanse of wilderness surrounding Glastenbury Mountain in the Green Mountain National Forest. Though its exact boundaries are undefined, the area is home to long-forgotten ghost towns and a string of mysterious occurrences and sightings dating back to at least the 1800s.

Chad Abramovich photo

By Meg McIntyre

**Drive down any country highway in Vermont, and before long, you'll run into something spooky.**

There are the cemeteries, of course, with weather-worn gravestones jutting up like billboards for the underworld. Austere churches rise starkly against the mountain landscape, both serene and foreboding at once. And in the village centers, town halls and historic homes alike project the strange haze of bygone eras.

What gives these locales their character, though, is more than just the vibe — it's the history and folklore passed down about them. And here in Southern Vermont, there are so many sites at the center of strange and mysterious tales, you'd probably need more than a weekend to visit them all.

One could easily start such a ghoulish pilgrimage at **Equinox Golf Resort and Spa** in Manchester, commonly known as The Equinox. A tavern first began operating on the spot in 1769, and the property has taken on many names since, including Widow Black's Inn, Vanderlip's Hotel and The Taconic.

Joseph A. Citro, author of forthcoming reprint "The Vermont Ghost Experience" and many other titles on Green Mountain folklore, has called it "Vermont's answer to the Overlook."

"I always feel a certain tension in a place like that: a place that is trying to be historic and modern at the same time," Citro says. "It creates a certain tension, a temporal-psychological tension, I think."

Reports of paranormal goings-on there are numerous: Belongings vanish and later reappear in different places, chairs and other objects are found ominously piled into haphazard



pyramids, and voices seem to whisper just behind the listener's ear.

There are a few theories around the identities of the lingering guests. One story speculates the ghosts of Mary Todd Lincoln and her children took up residence at the hotel following Abe's death, as the family often vacationed there.

Some also point to William Marsh, the original owner of the tavern who was stripped of his land upon being discovered as a Tory. And then there's George Orvis, a one-time owner

### IF YOU HAD TO PICK, WHICH WOULD BE YOUR FAVORITE SOUTHERN VERMONT HAUNT?

"It is so difficult to pick favorites. If I gun-to-my-head had to pick one I guess it would be the Equinox. That is such a weird story with so many unsettling possibilities. When I was writing 'Green Mountains, Dark Tales' I visited the hotel and the staff members were very friendly and helpful. They showed me around and told me about many fascinating encounters. Nowadays there seems to be a new staff with different priorities. Maybe the attitude of the ghosts has changed, too..."

- Joseph A. Citro, folklorist and author

"The Equinox, because it was also the site of a visit by wealthy real estate developer Edward West 'Daddy' Browning and his wife, Frances, known as 'Peaches.' Married in 1926, theirs was a scandalous May-December romance — Frances 16, Edward, 52. They traveled with their pet, an African gander, which lodged with them in their bedroom. You can't make this stuff up."

- Thea Lewis, author, historian and founder of the Queen City Ghostwalk

"The Bennington Triangle. I mean, you can't really go wrong — you've got a ghost town, you have mysterious disappearances, you have a whole slew of theories and strange phenomena. This is what I find the most fascinating because at the end of the day, people get shudder shruggy. No one really knows what happened."

- Chad Abramovich, writer and researcher, [ObscureVermont.com](http://ObscureVermont.com)

### WHAT ADVICE DO YOU HAVE FOR THOSE INTERESTED IN VISITING SOME OF THESE SPOOKY SITES?

"I'd just caution people to get permission to enter or explore. They need not fear ghosts, but a startled landowner with a 12-Gauge is another matter." - JC

"Sometimes even planned 'down time' like a vacation can be too rushed. If you're in a well-documented haunted space, mindfulness is important. [When staying] in an environment like that I will often wake myself at 3 a.m. — a time that's more conducive to ghosts because they contend with fewer distractions — to see if 'anyone' interesting might also be up." - TL

"Always research before you go, familiarize yourself with the story and kind of keep an open mind. And be aware of your environment. ... A personal rule of thumb for me is to always try to respect where you are." - CA



An old railroad spike, pictured here in the Green Mountain National Forest. Chad Abramovich photo.

who set off for a nearby pond and never returned (at least in corporeal form). With such a rich history, there's plenty of potential for these and other ghosts.

"People like the Green Mountain Boys have spent time in the Marsh Tavern," notes author and historian Thea Lewis, who founded the Queen City Ghostwalk. "So it's definitely got a lot of great Vermont cachet going for it."

About 25 miles to the south along Route 7A, there's more mystery to be had in Bennington. And according to legend, the area may have even inspired a fictional haunt.

Local lore maintains that acclaimed horror author Shirley Jackson, who lived in North Bennington for the better part of two decades, modeled *"The Haunting of Hill House"* after the **Jennings Music Building** at Bennington College. The mansion was the former home of Frederic B. Jennings and his wife Laura Hall Jennings, who made a large donation to help start the institution. Over the years, students and staff have reported many odd occurrences in the imposing stone hall, including strange noises, cold spots and windows flinging open with no explanation.

Others, including Jackson's biographer, think the book could have been inspired by the Edward Everett Estate on the former Southern Vermont College campus. But no one's quite sure if either version is true.

"As far as I know Shirley Jackson never let on which house was her inspiration. Quite possibly she just pulled it out of her imagination or cobbled it together from attributes of a bunch of different houses. I really can't say," Citro says. "But I will say this: If I were making a movie based on her book I'd want to film it at the **Everett Estate**."

## HIGH ADVENTURE ♦♦♦♦

The property sits five miles to the south of Bennington College and was built in the 1910s by Ohio businessman Edward H. Everett for use as a summer home. His first wife, Amy, died in 1918, reportedly of declining health after a surgery, but rumors of suicide have long been passed down on the campus. The mansion was featured on an episode of “Ghost Hunters” in 2015.

Pupils and faculty alike have recounted brushes with the “White Lady,” a ghostly apparition said to roam the library and press her icy fingers to the back of an unwitting neck on occasion. There are also stories of “three-dimensional shadows” lurking across the banks of the grounds’ Upper Pond, notes Chad Abramovich of [ObscureVermont.com](#).

With the college now shuttered, the mansion isn’t currently accessible, but the network of trails surrounding the property is open for public use. And the building still manages to look pretty menacing from afar.

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White Rocks Trailhead, 449 North Branch St., Bennington, VT 05201

Contact: Bennington Recreation Center, 802-442-1053, [benningtonvt.org](#)

### EVERETT MANSION AT SOUTHERN VERMONT COLLEGE

Estate closed to the public, but Everett Path Trail via Hops and Vines Trail offers views of the mansion from above

Parking at Southern Vermont Medical Center, 100 Hospital Drive, Bennington, VT 05201

Contact: [batsvt@gmail.com](#), [batsvt.org/trails](#)

### JENNINGS MUSIC BUILDING

Bennington State College

59 The Orchard, North Bennington, VT 05257

Campus Information: 802-442-5401, [bennington.edu/visit](#)

### THE WHITE HOUSE INN

178 Route 9 East, Wilmington, VT 05363

Bookings: 802-464-5005, [vermontwhitehouseinn@gmail.com](#), [whitehouseinnvt.com](#)

### ROCKINGHAM MEETINGHOUSE

11 Meeting House Road, Bellows Falls, VT 05101

Open 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. through Indigenous People’s Day

Contact: Rockingham Historic Preservation Commission, [clg@rockbf.org](#)



At the White House Inn, innkeeper Christa Hunter shows one of the establishment’s hidden doors. The inn is a Victorian mansion built in 1915 for lumber baron Martin Brown. It’s now an 18-room hotel with a ghostly reputation, and room number nine is said to be a supernatural hotspot.

Photo by Kristopher Radder

Next, those who dare can visit the so-called Bennington Triangle, an expanse of wilderness radiating from Glastenbury Mountain in the Green Mountain National Forest. Though its exact boundaries are undefined, the area is home to long forgotten ghost towns and a string of mysterious occurrences and sightings dating back to at least the 1800s.

There were once logging towns among the trees, and even a summer resort for a brief time, which all fell to ruin after the mountains were stripped of lumber and the railroad washed away. But the area is perhaps most well-known for the disappearances, including that of hunting guide Middie Rivers in 1945 and the famous case of college student Paula Welden, who vanished from The Long Trail in 1946. And then there are the bizarre sightings, from Bigfoot to UFOs to the “Bennington Monster.”

Today, hiking in is a significant trek, but those who do can see remnants of the long-gone communities. Abramovich says the old rail bed is still visible — once believed to be the steepest railroad in the world — along with railroad spikes and other debris. He may have even located the crumbling foundation of the old hotel.

“It makes me wonder what else is out there,” Abramovich says, “because those woods are thick.”

Head east on Route 9 and eventually you’ll arrive at the White House Inn in Wilmington, a Victorian mansion built in 1915 for local lumber baron Martin Brown. It’s now an 18-room hotel with a ghostly reputation, and room number nine is said to be a supernatural hotspot.

“It seems like the most prominent of ghostly residents is Mr. Brown’s wife [Clara], who in her days of being a material being was quite a piece of work and a tough task mistress,” Lewis says. “And there’s a story that says she was angry with





The Rockingham Meeting House was built in the late 1700s and restored in the early 1900s, and is designated as a National Historic Landmark. There have been reports of pump organ keys playing by themselves and box pew doors swinging open and closed for invisible parishioners.

Photos by Kristopher Radder

one of the gentlemen who worked for her in the house, and that he was chained up in a vault down in the basement and actually died there.”

Many believe Mrs. Brown is still there and asserting her authority. Her ghost is said to have awakened a guest, also named Mrs. Brown, and told her, “There’s only room for one.”

**“It seems like the most prominent of ghostly residents is Mr. Brown’s wife [Clara] ... And there’s a story that says she was angry with one of the gentlemen who worked for her in the house, and that he was chained up in a vault down in the basement and actually died there.”**

*Historian Thea Lewis*



On another occasion, a mirror inexplicably moved from one wall to another while no one was looking. Maybe the late Mrs. Brown was redecorating.

The last stop on this grisly trek lies to the north near Bellows Falls. The Rockingham Meeting House was built in the late 1700s and restored in the early 1900s, and is designated as a National Historic Landmark. There have been reports, as told to Citro, of pump organ keys playing by themselves and box pew doors swinging open and closed for invisible parishioners.

Historic Preservation Coordinator Walter Wallace doesn’t know of specific ghost stories connected to the structure. But some people get the sense they’re not quite alone there. Could this presence be Daniel Pulsipher, the town father buried in the churchyard, who donated the land for the building?

“When I open the meeting house on Sunday mornings my habit is to ascend the pulpit and read from scripture or a 17th or 18th century Puritan sermon,” Wallace says, “and every-time I finish, the Pulsipher pew door slowly creaks open.”

Whether or not these sites actually harbor otherworldly spirits will be up to you to interpret. But one thing’s for certain — each is undoubtedly brimming with history, and that’s well worth the trip, too.





# Sip Artisanal Dry, Sparkling Ciders in Berkshire Cider Project's Tasting Room

Berkshire Cider Project recently added a tap room in its space at Greylock Works in North Adams.

Photo provided by Berkshire Cider Project

**By Margaret Button, The Berkshire Eagle**

NORTH ADAMS, Mass. — Berkshire Cider Project owners Matthew Brogan and Katherine “Kat” Hand want to dispel people’s expectations that hard cider should be taste sweet and unflavored.

“People are now seeking us out because we make dry, sparkling ciders,” Brogan said. “Cider is supposed to taste like wine.” He added the current market is comprised of “really, really sweet” cider, like Angry Orchard, although dry cider is becoming the trend.

**“Don’t make cider from juice from the grocery store or what you can get in Brooklyn; it would be very dry.”** *Matthew Brogan*

The husband-and-wife team recently opened a tasting room at Berkshire Cider Project’s location in the Greylock Works on State Road.

The tasting room offers glasses of hard cider, flights of ciders, pairings of ciders, and light snacks, as well as the opportunity to purchase bottles of the cider.

The cidery currently offers six wines — all dry and sparkling.

**Dry Cider** is made from the Golden Russet, the “champagne” of cider apples. Dabinett apples, a traditional bittersweet variety, is added for balance. “The problem with cider in the United States is that apples are not specifically for cider,” Brogan said. “They were up to Prohibition and then they were torn up. They [Dabinett apples] are still grown in the UK.” Juice from the UK is imported by the cidery.

**Bittersweet Cider** is also made from Dabinett apples and other varieties found in local markets. Brogan said he also did a lot of “foraging, begging and borrowing” from family and friends for the crabapples used in the cider.

**Windy Hill Cider** is made only with apples grown at Windy Hill Orchards in Great Barrington. “The apples are pressed on an old wooden press at Windy Hill,” Brogan said. “No yeast is used [in the fermenting process]; the cider gets yeast and character from the press, which has been there for around 100 years. No one is pressing on a press like that anymore.”

**Champagne Cider** (in honor of the cidery’s first anniversary at the mill) was released this month. “The Champagne-style cider takes a whole extra year to age,” Brogan said. “It’s put into the bottle to age, which we then recork after pouring off the sediment.” The cider is well-suited for weddings and special events. “It is very similar to Dry, but with more depth and character.”

**Pet-Nap** “Petillant Nature,” is a very limited release that is bottled before fermentation is complete. “The carbonation is natural and captures the flavors of fermentation itself. It has more character,”

**Community Cider Project No. 1** is the result of asking people in the community to donate their unwanted apples. “People loved participating. We had 10 to 15 ordinary people bringing in apples — from a bucketful to a careful.” He added customers love the story behind the cider and the idea of using backyard, forgotten apples. “The flavors of wild apples is hard to get in ciders found in stores,” Brogan said. “This cider is close to what cider was made of 100 years ago. It’s like stepping back in time.” The Community Cider Project will be an annual event, he said.

**Sour Quince**, also a limited release, is the result of Brogan



Berkshire Cider Project's Sour Quince and Dry ciders. Photo provided by Berkshire Cider Project.

Right: Berkshire Cider Project's Dry, Bittersweet and Windy Hill Ciders.

Photos provided by Berkshire Cider Project.



and Hand foraging a crop of quince from trees in Hand's parents' backyard. The quince was blended with cider that underwent natural fermentation, for a lightly sour taste.

They are planning to debut a rosé cider this fall, which will be fermented on grape skins to give it color and tannins.

**Berkshire Cider Project** began about nine years ago in a closet in the Brooklyn, N.Y., apartment the couple were living in prior to their marriage. "It's really bragging to say you have an extra closet in Brooklyn," he added.

"And that starts the journey," he said, cautioning, "Don't make cider from juice from the grocery store or what you can get in Brooklyn; it would be very dry." Their first attempts produced 1 gallon of cider.

They moved the cider-making equipment — "typical homebrew equipment," Brogan said — to Hand's parents' basement in Lenox four to five years ago. "We were coming up frequently and making a lot of cider for our wedding," Brogan said. "We went from [producing] one gallon to five gallons to 40 gallons for the wedding."

The couple moved to Washington, D.C., where Brogan worked part-time. "It gave us the time to put together a business plan and we ultimately found Greylock Works, which was looking for a cidery, Brogan said. "Cider should be a Berkshire County thing because of all the orchards and trees here."

The couple opened **Berkshire Cider Project** on the July

Fourth weekend in 2020 — in the middle of the pandemic. "We were sitting on 3,000 gallons of cider, what were we going to do?," Brogan asked. So, they opened a takeout window with limited hours on the weekend, selling bottles of cider to customers. "It's summer, it's the Berkshires," Brogan said. "Why not have a bottle of sparkling cider with your picnic?"

The couple hope to bring the window back this summer. "People liked it; it was very charming," Brogan said.

Brogan said, despite the pandemic, business last summer was good and they sold out of all the cider. "Tourists loved showing up outdoors, doing a tasting and having conversations."

Reflecting back on last summer, Brogan said, "We could have never done it on our own. Being part of the community at Greylock Works is a big part of why we did it and why we enjoy it."

Brogan said the tasting room draws "a couple hundred" people on the weekends. "People are still discovering the tasting room and its vibe. We're still figuring it out, too."

Future plans for the cidery include making more cider than the 4,000 gallons they produce annually now, but to still only sell it in only in Berkshire County. "We want to be a destination and have our cider remind you of the Berkshires when you bring it home," Brogan said. "We want to stay in Berkshire County, but stay a specific destination."

**Margaret Button can be reached at [mbutton@berkshireeagle.com](mailto:mbutton@berkshireeagle.com) or 413-496-6298.**



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# From their roots to branches, these local financial firms love growing in Lee

By Kelly L. Anderson

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Copy Editor Karen Davis

LEE, Mass. - The COVID pandemic may have slowed and even halted some businesses over the last two years, but in this small town, a strategic alliance between two of the state's key financial organizations is seeing steady movement in helping residents maneuver the economic climate.

But, helping locals figure out the best financial decisions for them isn't all that these organizations share.

Lee Bank and October Mountain Financial Advisors is an alliance bringing together the two storied companies - both of which share commu-

nity and client values.

"Through the last six years, and working with local businesses, I have seen the way a community bank can support its neighbors...by helping to start or grow businesses that in turn employ its residents, hire other businesses for goods and services, and so on...the economic impact can really snowball," said David Harrington, Vice President of Commercial Lending at Lee Bank. "I previously worked for insurance companies that operated nationwide, but I find working in the same community that I live much more fulfilling, and particularly for a community bank."

## A strategic location

Some may not view the Town of Lee as the ideal place to locate a business like October Mountain, which is a full-service wealth management practice. However, the decision by Lee Bank and October Mountain on where to locate was strategic.

"Everyone who works here and who came out of a publicly traded bank environment (was) looking to escape from that and work within a more locally-focused business, not driven by shareholders, Wall Street expectations, and profit margins," said Gary Schiff, Managing Director for October Mountain Financial Advisors.

Instead, he said, what they really desired was to "be more along the DNA of Lee Bank, which is a century-and-a-half-old mutual savings bank with its entire business in the Berkshires," he said.

"Our business (October Mountain) is spread out nationally, but obviously most of our clients have some connection to the local area, Berkshire County in particular," Schiff said. "But, to be a more accessible fiduciary and do what we do in a way that doesn't have the distractions that the larger more publicly-traded entities do... that was a real plus for the bank and for October Mountain."

And it's not just the long-

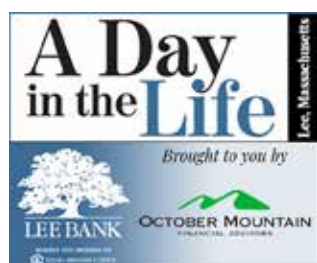
time residents of Lee who benefit from the local alliance. The employees benefit as well, both Lee Bank and October Mountain agreed.

"It was a very attractive value proposition for our employees who could really go anywhere in this business, they are all really talented people, so they could be in Boston or New York or some other place," Schiff said. "But, for one reason or another, they all happen to like living in the Berkshires. So the ability to be in our line of work and sit in Lee is a little bit unique, but is appealing to our employees."

## Strong branches, deep roots

For example, take Susie Brown, Lee Bank's Senior Vice President of Administration. She epitomizes the bank's motto that appears on their Website: "Strong Branches, Deep Roots."

Not only has she lived in Lee her entire life, she's worked for Lee Bank for more than 41 years. Her first job with the





bank was as a part-time teller at the Stockbridge office. Initially, her goal was to work at the bank for six months and then go to nursing school.

"But I'm still here 41 years later and have never regretted my decision to stay at Lee Bank," said Brown, who heads the office's human resources, security and building and maintenance, among other duties. "Lee Bank is a community bank. The camaraderie in Lee... and all the businesses have been here a long time, whether it's the hardware store, or whether it's the lumber yard, some of the eateries, everybody's been here and there's a lot of wonderful new businesses coming into Lee."

Harrington, who works with those new businesses in town and the surrounding area, loves being a lender and agrees the bank and the alliance's reach can be seen all over the town.

To "drive down the road and be able to say 'I supported this business, that business'... I love that," he said.

### Pride in a hometown feel

Employees take pride in knowing the bank helped local businesses flourish, and that businesses have maintained that hometown feel. That can be seen in a variety of ways.

"It's great to be in a grocery store and somebody who

knows me, and is comfortable with me, can say 'Can I call you on Monday? I just got my mail and I'm concerned about a few things.' Or they feel comfortable enough to call me at my house on the weekends or at night," said Paula Gangell-Miller, Lee Bank Vice President of Deposit and Retail Operations. "I wouldn't trade it for anything in the world because it really boils down to this for me: Treat people like you expect to be treated."

Gangell-Miller said serving on local boards and in certain offices helps keep her in tune with the local atmosphere. She is president of BHS Hyde Place, Vice President of Lee Youth Association, and also

involved with the food pantry.

### Giving back to the community

October Mountain is a sponsor of programs created by the Community Access to the Arts, an organization that enables people with disabilities to learn how to paint and get their pieces sold, said Carlo Centeno, Vice President & Marketing Director for St. Germain Investment Management.

"There are a lot of nonprofits that are in need and certainly worthy, based on their particular pursuits and challenges," Centeno said. "But, art and outreach for this particular nonprofit, I think it touches



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everyone in a special way. It's been a nice relationship and mutually beneficial. One thing we addressed in Lee when the office opened, was to contribute to various charities. We called out to different parts of Berkshire County, and it was through that particular introduction to the community that new relationships were born."

Gangell-Miller, who has been at Lee Bank for 32 years, agrees that giving back to the community is mutually beneficial.

"It's great because I can see some of my customers, or the bank's customers in a different light than being in the bank and helping them in different situations. One of the best things about the town of Lee: People rally around when there's difficulty or times of need, or just even when good things happen to people."

Gangell-Miller began working processing mail for Lee Bank when she was still a high school senior. "My job entails really making the bank run; with electronic banking the deposit side of the house is what I specialize in, as well as compliance," she said.

## New ways, same great service

While Lee Bank has kept pace with electronic banking, prior to the pandemic quite a few customers preferred to visit their local branch, Harrington and Gangell-Miller agree.

Now, they are helping those people do their banking electronically.

"For the past year and a half, the one thing that I can

**"At a time when we're literally dispersing from our offices here in Lee, to our homes, to work, we're also needed... to support businesses in the community."**

David Harrington

## Personable service and local decisions

Harrington said they also have noticed an uptick in their service to the local real estate economy. That interest is coming from people who are buying residential properties and looking for business opportunities here.

"The real estate market has been on fire," he said. "And we see that reflected in prices. But what we've also seen in that hot market, you have an influx of people from the cities. We've seen it from Boston and New York. But we're also seeing a lot of inquiries for loans come in from California."

While the interest is coming from all over, there seems to be a common recognition among those callers that speaks to the bank's personality, he said.

"I would say almost universally the loan applicants that I've talked to that are not from the area are shocked to get a person on the phone and to have access to that person throughout the process to ask a question," Harrington said. "And I'm talking to people who have relationships with regional banks across the country... Because we're local, our decisions are made locally. Even if I need management approval on a loan application, they sit in the office next door."

Scott LeProvost, president

of Henry's Electric, Inc. in Lee, also appreciates the camaraderie in Lee. He and his brother John, vice president, are celebrating Henry's 75th anniversary in the community this year.

Henry's does business with Lee Bank and has for as far back as he can remember, "they've been a great partner to us," Scott LeProvost said.

He believes Lee has always been a proud town that has been self-sufficient. Town residents learned to lean on each other during tough times – such as during the pandemic – and employed the "buy local" motto when it came to supporting local restaurants and businesses, when they struggled to keep the doors open.

"We believe very much in community reciprocity," LeProvost said. "This community and nearby communities have been good to us, in terms of buying local, staying local and we've always given our support to local schools, high schools, sports programs, organizations, events. ... We try to give back whenever and wherever we can."

Some have asked what the future of the town will be. "This town is consistently looking forward and reinventing itself," he said, noting the historic papermill town is now focusing more on tourism and continuing redevelopment. By all accounts, the future looks bright.

*October Mountain Financial Advisors is a d/b/a of St. Germain Investment Management in the Berkshires. Banking and trust administration services are provided by Lee Bank.*



# Plan

*"I think many people spend more time planning their vacations than their financial future."*

Bill Johnson-VP, Financial Advisor



There's a bit of truth in that. Preparing and planning for your financial future can't start too soon, and often requires effort and a willingness to think outside your comfort zone.

Just this past year, various events have brought on unprecedented change. However, planning can increase awareness for things we can control.

An October Mountain financial advisor can help bring clarity to your financial goals and your future. And they just might help your future vacation plans.



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## NOT YOUR AVERAGE ANTIQUE STORE

**Finders Keepers offers treasure trove of antiques**

### Finders Keepers

53 Main Street

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Facebook page <https://www.facebook.com/finderskeeperslee/>

Veteran antique-hunters may be accustomed to spending hours in a store and walking away with nothing. The owners of Finders Keepers say they are not that store - there's something for everyone at their supersized facility! They feature 3,000 square feet of unique treasures from the past and "not-so-distant past," including furniture, textiles, mid-century art, advertising, jewelry, primitives, repurposed products, industrial pieces and more. They offer a variety in products as well as price range. Shoppers beware: their inventory changes quickly -- with new items added daily -- so it's best to stop by often! They also provide real estate sale services for Berkshire residents looking to move or downsize.

## A DAY IN THE LIFE

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Residents and tourists don't have to travel far to experience the creamy, freshness of quality dairy products. High Lawn Farm, a family-owned business located in the heart of the Berkshires, offers a wide variety of dairy, produced on-site from their own herd of Jersey cattle. At the Farmstead Creamery Store, visitors will find artisanal ice cream, cheese, butter and milk, all produced onsite. The store also carries locally produced specialty foods, such as local meats, crackers, charcuterie, eggs and more. Visitors can enjoy a farm-fresh ice cream cone or an artisanal cheese board at one of the High Farm picnic tables, not far from where their Jersey cattle graze in the field nearby. Then, take a stroll around the idyllic property, see where the herd is milked and enjoy "some of the best views in the Berkshires." The trip to the 100-year-old family is sure to be fun for all ages!

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Family-owned Henry's Electric, Inc. spans four generations

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## A DAY IN THE LIFE

tors and split air conditioner systems. Their extensive lines of home appliances include Sub-Zero, Bosch, Thermador, Wolf, Whirlpool, KitchenAid, GE, Frigidaire, Bertazzoni and more.

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# Five Groovy Places to Stay in Southern Vermont

By Victoria Chertok

PUTNEY — Southern Vermont is a great place to spend a night, a weekend, a week, a vacation or an extended stay. Whatever events you choose to relax — a yoga retreat, a rural biking tour, a kayak river adventure, or a cozy B&B getaway for two — you're sure to breathe easier when you arrive in the Green Mountain state. You'll be just a short drive from Western Massachusetts, New Hampshire and New York, and Southern Vermont has plentiful lodging options, with some of the best cuisine, culture, hikes, brews, views and sunsets in the state.

## Brattleboro

Start with the bustling town of Brattleboro, the first exit off Route 91 in the southeastern corner, its vibrant downtown overlooked by Mount Wantastiquet (1,335 feet high with 520 acres of forest) and bordered to the east by the majestic Connecticut River. Brattleboro's rich local arts and culture scene includes a lively, fun-filled block party known as Gallery Walk, thrown on the first Friday of every month from 5:30 to 8:30 p.m.

And do check Retreat Farm's weekly food truck roundup, complete with live music, craft beers and a broad array of great foods all in a historic farm setting (just a short walk to downtown), drawing tourists and locals from July through September.

Brattleboro can keep you busy — so grab a beer at Whetstone Station, named one of the Top 50 Craft Beer Bars in America, with a unique waterfront location serving inspired pub fare with two full bars and an open-air rooftop bier garden. Or enjoy fine white-table-clothed dining at Peter Havens, and catch the latest movie at the historic art deco Latchis Theatre. Stroll the Farmers Market in West Brattleboro, tour Vermont Shepard and sample their award-winning mountain cheeses in Westminster, grab a maple latte at Mocha Joe's Cafe, hit the links at the Brattleboro Country Club, and tour the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center near the downtown Amtrak station. And maybe finish your day with a stunning sunset and waterfront dining at the Marina Restaurant. It's all within easy reach of downtown Brattleboro.

All COVID-19 protocols are in place to make travelers feel safe and welcome in Vermont.

UpCountry reached out to several local notables to find out what makes Southern Vermont unique for them. Here they are, in their own words:

**Shannon Barsotti, community development director, town of Bennington:**  
[vermontbeginshere.com](http://vermontbeginshere.com)

There are so many wonderful attractions in Bennington, population 15,000. The Bennington Performing Arts Center is on Main Street near the Four Corners — the intersection of Routes 7 and 9. BPAC's Oldcastle Theatre Company has great live theater all summer. Across the street is the new W Collective, a vintage clothing and home decor shop. The Bennington Bookshop and new Coffee Bar are around the corner in the newly refurbished Putnam block. There are four different brewery/restaurants you can visit: The Farm Road Brewery, Harvest Brewery, 421 Craft Bar & Kitchen and Madison's Brewery. Bennington is home to two home brew festivals (one in summer and one in March). The Millers Toll, a downtown cocktail lounge, which has a speakeasy vibe and delicious fare, is another place to check out.

Exploring the historic downtown is really easy since it's walkable. There is a splash pad park for kids and delicious gelato and treats at the Village Chocolate Shoppe. A short drive west lands you in Old Bennington for history lovers. You will enjoy historic walking tours of the Bennington Battle Monument, Old First Church and the old cemetery where Robert Frost is buried. Bennington Museum is a huge cultural attraction with an outdoor sculpture park, great regional collection of art and history. Every Friday night there is live music in the courtyard at the museum. North Bennington, a little village north has fine dining with Pangaea, global cuisine, and a fun coffee place called The Roasted Bean. Another site, the Park McCullough Historic Governor's Mansion with the Mile around Woods and Hiland Hall flower gardens, is spectacular. The mansion has tours and on Sundays they have a farmers market. Lake Paran in North Bennington is also great to swim or kayak and has a nice walking trail around the lake.

**Keith Marks, executive director, Next Stage Arts Project, Putney:**  
**nextstagearts.org**

Located in Putney, Next Stage serves Southeastern Vermont as a regional cultural hub, arts producer and instigator of meaningful cultural experiences. The venue has a 200-seat state-of-the-art, fully accessible theater and a commercial kitchen, visual art gallery and community room. The organization produces a variety of diverse programs including music, theater, film, dance, humanities, food and community-focused events.

Southern Vermont is rich in natural beauty, like many parts of New England, but what we have that's unique to our county of 40,000 residents, is a rich, diverse arts ecosystem. Off the top of my head, I can list 15 to 20 vibrant arts organizations that cover theater, circus, visual art, performance art, and that's not even counting the number of arts-focused schools that exist. My family and I came from a city in Florida with a million people, and we didn't have the depth and range of arts offerings that Windham County boasts. The other unique aspect to living here is that we're blessed to live in a place that values community.

When the pandemic first took hold, my wife and I were moved by the amount of community action around making sure everyone in our community was fed, housed and looked after. With its dedication to supporting local food systems, nature out your door, a rich arts ecosystem and a compassionate community, this is the place we're proud to raise our kids and call home.

**John Burnham, executive director, Manchester Business Association:**  
**manchestervermont.com**

The thing I love about Manchester and Southern Vermont is the breathtaking scenery. The Green Mountain range and the Taconic Mountain range create a unique visual experience for anyone traveling to this area. With many different lodging options, from budget-friendly campgrounds to some of Vermont's best resorts, hotels, inns and motels, travelers will find the best of the best to lay their heads down for the evening. Local farm-to-table restaurants, bakeries and numerous craft breweries and distilleries offer a taste of Southern Vermont that is second to none.

Whether you're taking a tour of Hildene, the Lincoln Family Home; experiencing the sounds of the Manchester Music Festival or Taconic Music; or enjoying a play during the Dorset Theatre Festival, Manchester is alive with arts, culture and history in every season.

Manchester has just over 4,000 year-round residents, and brings back many part-year residents during the summer. People want to get outside and enjoy the outdoors where four-season experiences abound. Some of the local winter favorites are: snowshoeing or cross-country skiing at Hildene, downhill skiing or snowboarding at Bromley or sleigh rides at local farms. Summertime offers the best hiking trails in the

region. Whether it's the Equinox Preservation Trust trails, designed for all experience levels, from Flatlanders Pass to the Blue Summit. Avid hikers can reach the top of Southern Vermont's second-tallest mountain, Mount Equinox, at 3,850 feet, in a matter of hours, or they can experience Vermont's tallest cascading waterfall, Lye Brook Falls, in East Manchester. It's a moderate 2.5-hour hike through the National Forest. The seasons offer different activities: kayaking, canoeing, tubing down Emerald Lake and Lake Shaftsbury and the Batten Kill, and we have horseback riding. The Land Rover Driving Experience puts you in the driver's seat while you navigate and explore off road trails. We even have the Green Mountain Falconry School. There are endless experiences in Manchester throughout the year, and we invite everyone to come play, stay and enjoy.

**Brian Keefe, president, Hildene, Manchester: hildene.org**

Hildene, The Lincoln Family Home, sits on a spectacular property with some of the most gorgeous views in all of Vermont. Built in 1905 by Robert Lincoln, President Lincoln's only son to survive to adulthood, the 24-room Georgian revival summer home was occupied by only Lincoln descendants until 1975, longer than any other Lincoln residence. The formal gardens, which have been in existence since 1910, are a popular destination for garden clubs, especially during peony season.

In addition to our historic and scenic attractions, we have a host of animals, including our registered Nubian goats, from whose milk we make cheeses at our on-site creamery. Other animals include Randall cattle, Vermont's official heritage breed, along with sheep, alpaca, chickens and pigs. Our entire property is a pollinator sanctuary, with honey from our apiary available at our museum store.

At our meticulously restored 1903 Pullman Palace railcar, we tell the story of Robert's term as president, and later, board chairman of the Pullman Co. We also tell the story of the Pullman Porters, their founding of the first Black labor union in America, and their activism in the civil rights movement, up to and including their role in organizing the 1963 march on Washington. This exhibit has earned us a spot on the Vermont African American Heritage Trail.

Manchester and the surrounding towns make this one of Vermont's premier destinations, with numerous restaurant and lodging choices. Recreation opportunities abound, whether at the town park or on forested trails such as the Appalachian Trail or at the Equinox Preserve. We have quarries and lakes for swimming, and Bromley and Stratton mountains for skiing. You can even take the toll road to the top of Mount Equinox for great views and high elevation hikes.

Manchester boasts great shopping opportunities, including locally owned gems such as the Northshire Bookstore, Vermont Kitchen Supply and the Mountain Goat. Lately, we've seen an influx of new residents, many with young families, who appreciate our numerous school options, including our outstanding high school, Burr and Burton Academy.



**Anne Corso, executive director,  
Southern Vermont Arts**

**Center: svac.org**

SVAC is a multidisciplinary arts organization founded in 1952, with a four building campus, a contemporary museum, 10 galleries and a 1917 historic home that houses rotating art exhibitions. We also host concerts and performances in our 400-seat theatre. We hold education classes in a variety of art media for adults and kids alike. We have a 100-acre sculpture park with nearly 100 sculptures in it. A new restaurant, curAte Cafe, serves upscale American fare with indoor and outdoor seating. In the summer season, we are home to the internationally acclaimed Manchester Music Festival. The Dorset Theatre Festival performs outdoors on our campus from July through September. We have over 20 exhibitions per year, and have a museum shop and many handmade and unique items for sale along with the artwork.

Other great local establishments are: Silver Fork restaurant in the historic Mark Skinner Library, a chef-owned restaurant with beautiful architecture and artwork; Northshire Bookstore, an independent bookstore and community gathering place. Union Underground is a fun, casual and creative place. Chanticleer is a wonderful restaurant, which is known for French continental cuisine. Charlie's Coffeehouse is a great space for people to meet. The gardens at Hildene are a must see. The Reluctant Panther is a charming, elegant, bed and breakfast, with a wonderful restaurant. Wilburton Inn is known for stunning views.

## GROOVY PLACES TO STAY IN SOUTHERN VERMONT

### 1. Casablanca Motel

5927 Main St., Manchester Center

802-362-2145

[casablancamotel.com](http://casablancamotel.com)

[casablancamotelvt@gmail.com](mailto:casablancamotelvt@gmail.com)

Facebook: [casablancamotelvt](https://www.facebook.com/casablancamotelvt)

Instagram: [casablancamotelvt](https://www.instagram.com/casablancamotelvt)

Yankee Magazine calls Casablanca Motel "Vermont's best retro escape." What's its secret? Ten charming restored cabins offering a vintage vibe with modern amenities, friendly innkeepers and realistic



The Casablanca Motel

rates, recalling the heyday of American travel.

Casablanca Motel captures the magic of a simpler time so that you can escape, explore and unwind. Relax on your own individual covered porch, toss a few horseshoes or fire up one of their charcoal grills on a warm summer evening. Their 3 acres of grounds offer ample opportunity to unwind and explore while social distancing.

Manchester proper features a vibrant mix of indie shops, galleries, antique centers, designer outlets and historic and cultural sites. We have the region's best recreational opportunities — golfing, skiing, hiking, horseback riding — all within driving distance. And when it's time to eat, the area's top-notch restaurants can accommodate every dining style. As always, free parking, free Wi-Fi and dog friendly (in select cabins only). Everyone is welcome and free to be themselves! Winner of Trip Advisor's certificate of excellence for the past 10 years!

### 2. The Lodge at West River

1086 Vermont Route 30, Newfane

802-365-5001

[lodgev.com](http://lodgev.com)

[info@lodgev.com](mailto:info@lodgev.com)

Facebook: [thelodgewestriver](https://www.facebook.com/thelodgewestriver)

Conveniently located in Newfane, between Brattleboro and Townshend on the West River and situated on 42 acres with a breathtaking view of the Vermont Green Mountains, the Lodge makes a great starting point for year-round adventures in Southern Vermont. We are minutes away from Townshend State Forest/Park and Jamaica State Park with amazing hiking and views. A perfect base for skiing in the winter, just 20 miles from Mount Snow and 21 miles from Stratton. Offering spectacular views of the West



The Lodge at West River

River valley during fall foliage, and a hop, skip and a jump away from swimming holes like Rock River and Townshend Lake, hiking, biking and a multitude of outdoor activities during the spring and summer seasons.

The Lodge at West River is a family-operated business by innkeepers David Serpa, a Marine veteran, and his husband, Oliver Finch. The Lodge, built in 1969, has 19 rooms with handcrafted pine furniture made by Pioneer Furniture in Townshend. Lodge features include: a microwave, refrigerator and flat screen television in each room; free Wi-Fi, free parking, business services and conference facilities; some rooms are pet-friendly. Delicious continental breakfast is included.

### 3. Karin's Place/ Orchard Air, LLC

Carpenter Hill Road, Pownal/Bennington

802-823-2635

[karinsplacevt.com](http://karinsplacevt.com)

[karinsplacevt@gmail.com](mailto:karinsplacevt@gmail.com)

Facebook: [karinsplacevt](https://www.facebook.com/karinsplacevt)

Karin's Place is a home. You can have your company/corporate meetings in the Grand Room while having your downtime in the spa. You can have your family reunion or Big Chill weekend with your 20 favorite family members and friends. The Grand Room is also perfect for yoga, meditation, music making and performances. Host an organized residency or retreat of any kind!

This home is unique and grand. Karin's Place is an 8,000-square-foot home nestled in the woods of Bennington on 22 acres of land. Far enough off the road for solitude and listening to birds and animals rustling in the woods yet just 4 miles from the town of Bennington and 9 miles from Williamstown, Mass. Karin's Place is in the middle of nowhere and close to somewhere.

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#### 4. The Nutmeg

153 W. Main St., Wilmington

802-380-6101

[thenutmegvermont.com](http://thenutmegvermont.com)

[frontdesk@thenutmegvermont.com](mailto:frontdesk@thenutmegvermont.com)

Facebook: [thenutmegvermont](https://www.facebook.com/thenutmegvermont)

Instagram: [thenutmegvermont](https://www.instagram.com/thenutmegvermont)

As the sun rises over the Green Mountains of Vermont and the morning mist hangs over Lake Harriman, a special bed and breakfast is coming to life, brewing the coffee, preparing breakfast and stoking the dining room fire. The Nutmeg Vermont, a gem in the Deerfield Valley with its 1777 farmhouse, has been a sanctuary for friends and guests for more than 60 years and continues to build on its well-earned reputation as one of the best places to stay in Wilmington.

The charm of The Nutmeg lies in its cozy rooms, its nooks and crannies, its friendly service and its perfect location in Southern Vermont. Nestled in the Green Mountains, the local amenities give a wide choice of activities and for much of the year.

The Nutmeg offers 10 rooms and three suites, all with private bathrooms, cable television, Wi-Fi and central air-conditioning, and in-room heat controls. There are a handful of living rooms and dining areas, a heated open-air swimming pool open from Memorial



The Reluctant Panther

Day to Columbus Day and a couple of well-maintained acres of property to meander around. The Nutmeg also has direct access to the VAST trail network for hiking and snowmobiling, as well as parking for snowmobile trailers.

Impeccable customer service is key at The Nutmeg, but the fresh chocolate chip cookies in your room upon arrival and the fresh farmhouse breakfasts are the real highlights. The Nutmeg sources local and organic ingredients to offer guests a home-cooked breakfast to start their days of adventuring on the right foot.

#### 5. Reluctant Panther Inn & Restaurant

39 West Road, Manchester

802-362-2568

[reluctantpanther.com](http://reluctantpanther.com)

[stay@reluctantpanther.com](mailto:stay@reluctantpanther.com)

Facebook: [reluctantpanther](https://www.facebook.com/reluctantpanther)

Instagram: [reluctantpanther](https://www.instagram.com/reluctantpanther)

The Reluctant Panther Inn & Restaurant is Southern Vermont's premier small luxury hotel. Located in the heart of Manchester Village, the Reluctant Panther has been a Manchester institution since the 1960s. With 20 luxurious guest rooms and suites in three distinct locations: the Main House, the Mary Porter House and The Carriage House. Each guest room has its own unique design, featuring antique furnishings, gas fireplaces, marble baths and museum-quality artwork. Their award-winning, on-site restaurant creates an intimate atmosphere, with emphasis on local, farm-fresh cuisine and perfectly complimented by their Wine Spectator award-winning and expansive wine list.

No matter how long it's been since your last visit to the Panther, you can always



The Nutmeg

expect to be treated like part of the family. Their staff is dedicated to making sure every trip there is as memorable as the last, and attention to detail and high-quality service is their No. 1 priority.

It offers seasonal specials and packages including "A Vermont Epicurean Experience," which includes: two-night accommodation and one memorable dinner in its top-rated gourmet restaurant. Its award-winning chef Sigal Rocklin, honored as the Vermont Chamber's 2018 Chef of the Year, will prepare tantalizing menus.

And the "Just Say I Do — Elopement Package," which includes an intimate garden or indoor setting for you and your loved one's special day. Allow us to do all the heavy work in preparing for your special moment with an intimate garden ceremony. The Panther can help with all of the details: justice of the peace and marriage license, bouquets and/or boutonnieres, sparkling wine and chocolate truffles in your room, three-course dinner for two in the Reluctant Panther Restaurant and a complimentary in-room breakfast basket for two.



Guests gather around the fire pit at the Casablanca Motel.



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# Clear Sky Cannabis: the Berkshires' friendliest dispensary

North Adams dispensary pays homage  
to its totally sweet, iconic location

(previously published by *The Berkshire Eagle*)

By **Hannah Van Sickle**

*Eagle sponsored content contributor*

NORTH ADAMS, Mass. — Take a spin along State Road and follow the Hoosic River as it winds from Williamstown to North Adams. Along the city streets, you can clearly see the vestiges of Sprague Electric and the fallout from its closure in 1985.

Thankfully, these are just shadows of a bygone era. Today, the growing former mill town is attracting entrepreneurs at a pace that's caused the oft-overlooked corner of the county to become a super-hot destination for food, lodging, avant-garde art — and cannabis, since the city's first dispensary opened in March.

Enter **Clear Sky Cannabis**, and a vision for braiding the community's past, present and future together begins to emerge.

CEO Anthony Parrinello has been in the business for close to a decade and is committed to delivering on the promises his team made to the community.

**Clear Sky's** resuscitation of a local landmark, the Friendly's franchise that operated from 1964 to 2014, reflects a commitment to the future of North Adams while building upon memories from the past.

"It became apparent that developing a property that had been a key part of the community would be advantageous for everyone," Parrinello says of choosing the former scoop shop as **Clear Sky's** home.

Observing residents' pride of place, Parrinello says a memento at his North Adams dispensary pays homage to local history.

"The building's original front door is refinished and hanging on the wall," Parrinello says of the instantly recognizable red script letters, etched upon the very glass door generations of

mill workers and their families passed through for over a half century. Parrinello shares similar memories, recalling his trips to Friendly's after band concerts in grade school.

Now, steeped in all things Massachusetts, **Clear Sky's** parent company — Evergeren Strategies LLC — has a forthcoming location in Belchertown. The Worcester facility is now open for business at 143 Southwest Cutoff in Worcester MA 01604.

Call it an economic shot in the arm for North Adams, but Parrinello simply identifies with the myriad entrepreneurs he now calls neighbors.

"All these folks — Public, Tres Niños, The Break Room, A-OK BBQ, Brazeau's Butcher Shop, and Tourists — are betting on the Berkshires, betting on North Adams," he says..

Joining the resurgence of a community that is re-emerging created an opportunity to meet another of the company's values: taking care of the employees, and supporting the communities, in the markets they serve.

"We hired a local, diverse workforce and offer a very competitive living wage," says Parrinello with pride. They've eye-balled Berkshire Food Project as doing "really, really important work," tackling food insecurity, which makes supporting the nonprofit, through volunteerism and donations, a no brainer.

**Clear Sky** offers a well-curated menu with a wide variety of products for consumers of all needs. A quick scan of online reviews reveals Parrinello has exceeded his goal of assembling, "staff that is well-versed in both products and customer service." Comments echo iterations of, super-friendly service, awesome, knowledgeable staff, stellar team and great experience (not to mention great selection and premium buds).

A scant 90 days since opening in North Adams, is seeing traffic from New York and Vermont, as well as from all over the Berkshires, all while working to provide customers with a unique and satisfying experience.



Clear Sky Cannabis in North Adams, Mass.

“Cannabis has had this stigma for so long,” which is why products like hot-for-summer infused seltzer and chillums (glass pipes with a pre-pack of flower) “are helping to normalize the still-emerging industry.”

In the market for a summer road trip? Head to the friendliest adult-use dispensary in the Berkshires, one strategically built on the past with a vision for the future of cannabis — and

North County — that is evolving.

With plans for a state-of-the-art marijuana grow facility in West Boylston well underway, vertical integration (the ability to cultivate and market the products they sell) is just around the corner.

Nostalgic for the past? The iconic walk-up window — once boasting sugar cones wrapped in paper napkins and dripping with jimmies — is back in business and staffed by knowledgeable wellness advisers eager to meet customers’ cannabis needs.

It’s a model Parrinello is proud to stand behind: “When you have an opportunity to make a positive impact on a community, that’s good for everybody.”

Visit [shopclearsky.com](http://shopclearsky.com) or stop by at 221 State Road, call 888-540-2343 or email [info@clearskycannabis.com](mailto:info@clearskycannabis.com).

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# HANG TEN: GET ON THE LIST YOU DESERVE TO FEEL GOOD

Ten MORE Products. Two Stores.  
One You. Let's Boogie.

By **CANNA PROVISIONS**  
Copy Editor: Kelly Anderson

Hey, you.

Yes, you. Right there. We couldn't help but notice that look in your eye that said: "Oh, great magazine before me, tell me what I desire of the world of cannabis, for it is I who stand here today and proclaim: 'I deserve to feel good!'"

We also noticed that you noticed this same piece in last month's issue (your eyes remain sharp as ever). If the model isn't broken, why fix it, right?

So, we went ahead and made a Top Ten list for those 21-plus adults who are seeking that same satisfaction – complete with a sparkling new roster of goodies and all for the same deserving reasons.

Maybe keep this handy and come see us.

## You Deserve Enhancement vs. escape

### Levia **ACHIEVE** Water-Soluble Tincture

This lab-tested uplifting tincture can be added to any beverage and is recommended as a delivery method. It's water-soluble vs oil based as most tinctures are, so it dissolves better in liquid, and in you for that matter. (You're mostly water). Sure, they are known for their extremely popular cannabis-dosed THC non-alcoholic adult canned beverages, but the water-soluble tincture of LEVIA Achieve seltzer is like a concentrated version, without the seltzer – that you can keep in your pocket.

Cresco Disposable Sativa Vape: Cresco continues to deliver some of the most consistent and enjoyable disposable cannabis vaporizers. Using high purity cannabis distillate and a quality heating base and battery. That means whenever you desire to make the world around you enhanced – the way you love a good sativa flower to do for you – this is your new one-off purchase as you explore or just continue to enjoy cannabis as a means for enhancement versus escape.

## You Deserve: Motivation for exercise, having energy for the day Heirloom Collective Energy Chews

As one of the perennially bestselling local products at Canna Provisions in Lee in the Berkshires and Holyoke in the Pioneer Valley, The Heirloom Collective are no slouches in the chews department. And now they've taken their delicious tangerine flavored low-THC dosed (5mg each) soft chew and combined Green Tea extract, Vitamin B12, and uplifting energy terpenes (ie: essential oils and flavors) into a chew that can defeat any misconception that cannabis = laziness.

1906 GO Drops A simple pill to swallow (free tip: don't chew these, yuck). 5mg THC and 5mg CBD. But the key is the added caffeine and L-theanine for a burst of alertness and motivation, and also Galangal plant extract known for enhancing mental focus without a caffeine "crash". If you notice some increased blood flow to your brain and body that's the theobromine that's in there as well. THC, CBD, and three plant extracts. The treadmill awaits. Or maybe just a nice walk outside.





## You Deserve: Not feeling anxious, relaxation and having a good night's sleep

### Cranberry Pomegranate 1:1:1 (THC:CBD:CBN)

Gummies Maybe you've heard of CBN, the cannabinoid created when THC ages, and it's reported effects of sleepiness and drowsiness in concert with THC and CBD. Maybe you've heard of Coast Cannabis, a small husband-and-wife owned company on the coast that does nothing but make great edibles. Maybe you've heard of these tasty 1:1:1 gummies. If that was a "no" to all of the above, you can now change that to a "yes".



Betty's Bedtime Chews Imagine you live in a world where sleep isn't easy for everyone. Now also picture those that want a little boost to relaxing right before heading off to bed. Imagine being walked into dreamland by way of a real-fruit, soft, Agave-kissed lemon chew that has low THC and even lower amounts of Melatonin but is designed to help someone rest. Now stop imagining. That world exists, and so do these. Get some.

## You Deserve: Relief from tension

### Heirloom Collective Muscle Salve

Since we introduced you to their energy chews above, we thought it rash not to tell you they've just released a fantastic salve and body balm rich in mint, rejuvenating oils, rosemary, and top-shelf distillate. The peppermint and rosemary help penetrate the skin and the aroma promotes relaxation while it pleases the olfactory experience.



The Healing Rose CBD 4x Balm Now that the state of Massachusetts allows hemp-derived lab-tested CBD products into cannabis dispensaries, it was important to make sure independent women entrepreneurs running small CBD businesses got some shelf space, especially as a woman-owned independent cannabis retailer. And when you pick up some of The Healing Rose's lemon-ginger 4x strength balm for your aches and pains, you'll see why.



## You Deserve: Stimulated intimacy

### Purient Bedroom Cannabis

Created by an African American husband-wife team - which credits cannabis for saving their marriage - this cannabis infused pre-foreplay personal lubricant is all natural. It is coconut oil based and designed to be applied before foreplay to enhance one's sexual experience. The Bedroom Cannabis Plus version also has added CBD in the infusion. Yes, it's portable for your next romantic sojourn.

Sanctuary Medicinal YMCA Transdermal Gel As most will recognize, the biggest sex organ on the body is the one sitting on your shoulders, and if your mind and body is at ease the real fun can often begin in the bedroom. Feel free to use this YMCA cannabis strain-infused silicone gel (with menthol for deeper skin penetration). But be prepared for fast onset effects. It also helps one, you know, sit back. Relax. And just go with the flow. Maybe see the previous product at that point...

While we are not here to tell you what feeling good means to you (after all, we're not doctors), we can tell you that there are some wonderful products available to adults looking to explore how legal cannabis products can help you #betteryourjourney.

### And we have the best. See you soon.

VITALS: Canna Provisions, with stores in Lee (Berkshires) and Holyoke (Pioneer Valley), right off the highway. [www.cannaprovisionsgroup.com](http://www.cannaprovisionsgroup.com).

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The flower room at Berkshire Roots.

Photos provided by Berkshire Roots

*Sponsored Content Contributor*  
**Copy Editor Karen Davis**

**By Kelly L. Anderson**

Pittsfield, Mass. – Berkshire Roots could easily add “the Root of All Goodness” to its name, in its continuing efforts to position itself as the premier, craft cannabis and dispensary operator on the East Coast.

Nestled snugly in Berkshire County (in the highest elevation in the state), Berkshire Roots’ trailblazing approach to cannabis production in the early days of Massachusetts legalization – seed to sale – is helping elevate the organization as a leader in the industry throughout the state.

A new cultivation facility, new state-of-the-art extraction lab, its innovative partnership with Berkshire Community College and its newest location in East Boston, is establishing **Berkshire Roots** as a brand leader in the Massachusetts cannabis industry.

“Our new lab now allows us to extract with hydrocarbons, which results in a better terpene profile, while extracting a higher concentration of cannabinoids and leaving out more of the chlorophyll and other undesirables,” said Cayla Pagano, **Berkshire Roots** lab director.

That’s especially good news for medical patients who rely on the full spectrum of cannabinoids and terpenes to potentially help to ease anything from pain to anxiety, but have trouble finding the right product consistently.

“We are now able to produce higher quality products in quantities that will keep them on the menu consistently,” said Pagano, who oversees the day-to-day operations of the lab. “For medical patients, that’s big for them. When they find a product that meets their needs, it’s good for them to be able

to come back however often they need to and know we’re always going to carry that product.”

While adult-use sales now far exceed those of medicinal sales, **Berkshire Roots** continues to be dedicated to helping medicinal users navigate the heavily regulated industry, including guiding potential patients towards obtaining a medical card.

“We are deeply rooted in the medical market,” Matt Culkin, **Berkshire Roots’** senior director of production, said of the organization’s commitment to holistically treating medicinal users. “We like to stick to that. We prioritize medical patients both in the store and by ensuring our full menu is available to them as well as specific products only offered to medical patients.”

Additionally, Culkin said many people purchasing from the adult-use menu may need the medical relief but just don’t have a medical card.

Those users can learn the benefits of getting a card, such as no state sales tax and higher potency, he said. Those with medical cards can purchase up to 10 ounces in a sixty-day period. Adult-use customers are limited to one ounce of cannabis per day, as per Massachusetts law.

If it all seems too much to process, **Berkshire Roots** has a bevy of resources to help educate medical patients and adult-use customers. In addition to free virtual workshops, such as the one held July 22, which focused on how cannabis reacts with your body, the organization’s Web site, [www.berkshireroots.com](http://www.berkshireroots.com), lists many sources for additional cannabis knowledge.

You can chat directly with a customer care team member during normal business hours on the site. They also offer free virtual/phone consultations with a BR team member.

Pittsfield resident Patty J., who preferred her last name be withheld, did just that. She had a virtual consultation then visited the dispensary and is now a medical patient.

"I had never tried anything like this before, nervous and not knowing what to expect. I called and set up a telephone consultation," she said. "It was wonderful. I got to ask questions, the associate was so knowledgeable. They helped me walk through an online order and saved me time. It really was a great experience."

## Medicine Roots

That's the kind of customer experience **Berkshire Roots'** CEO, James Winokur, says the organization wants. He helps make sure the organization doesn't forget its medical patient origin and keeps on top of new developments in the fast-paced medical cannabis industry through his continuing involvement on the medical side.

He serves on the Board of Directors for the Association of Cannabinoid Specialists. The association's diverse leadership includes national and international medical professionals, educators, attorneys, scientists, entrepreneurs, researchers, award-winning authors and noted medical cannabis experts.

The group's mission statement reads in part: "We provide evidence and experience-based education for patients, cannabis clinicians, referring clinicians, and lawmakers to help them understand cannabis medicine and make informed decisions."

Being in tune with the industry and medical advancements in cannabis assures that Berkshire Roots continues to develop products that are geared towards patients as well as adult-use customers as they take advantage of their recent lab, kitchen and cultivation expansion.

Along with innovation, product safety and quality is top priority.

"Our products undergo rigorous purity testing by independent third-party laboratories licensed in Massachusetts for testing cannabis," Winokur said.

He said products are tested for potency, purity, cannabinoid, and terpene levels and are screened for heavy metals, pesticides, mold, and other contaminants. Berkshire Roots has a stellar track record amongst its peers in the state.

**Berkshire Roots** continues to rack up awards for its business practices and products. The company won "Best of the Berkshires" awards from the Berkshire Eagle in 2019 and 2020. And in 2019, they won a best businesses award from the Berkshire Record and top product awards for its Pink Lemonade Chews (edibles) and Orange Chameleon Sativa flower, its signature strain. Berkshire Roots was also voted Best Medical Dispensary in Boston by Boston.com.

## Seeds Across Massachusetts

While **Berkshire Roots'** East Boston location is more than 140 miles east of its original campus – the intent was to give those buying in the city a taste of the Berkshire's atmosphere,



Inside Berkshire Roots.

Winokur said during a recent visit to the newest location.

The outside of the storefront resembles most of the storefronts in the city – sandwiched in a neighborhood block that includes a local Colombian bakery, a beauty supply shop and wireless phone store.

Winokur watched as customers buzzed in – some still holding hot bakery items – produced their IDs and proceeded to the counter for their personal consultation.

Even though the location is smack dab in the middle of a bustling neighborhood, once customers walk in, they are greeted with warm vibes and earthy tones.

Customers are invited to "think of this as an oasis in the city" – bringing the Berkshires to Boston is a mood, a feeling of the great outdoors," Winokur said.

To **Berkshire Roots**, running a holistic cannabis industry means taking care of its local community as well. The organization is active in many community events, including helping to fight domestic and sexual violence, supporting local Pride efforts and participating in local and national efforts to fight social injustice.

**Berkshire Roots** and its customers have supported a diverse set of charitable organizations with donations and volunteers, including:

NAACP Boston  
NAACP Berkshire Branch  
The Massachusetts Bail Fund  
Campaign Zero  
ACLU  
Official George Floyd Memorial Fund  
Last Prisoner Project  
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But perhaps one of its more innovative partnerships is with Berkshire Community College. In late 2019, Berkshire Roots partnered with BCC to offer a one-year Cannabis Industry Certificate, which provides students with the skills to work professionally in the fields of cannabis cultivation, processing, outreach and getting the product ready for retail sale.

Participating students take courses in business, communication, biopsychology, and horticulture, and receive specific training via cannabis-related labs, lectures and hands-on training. An onsite rotation program takes place at the Pittsfield facility with potential for job placement opportunities for students upon completion.

**"It's really neat to have them come in, because you can read about extraction methods a lot, but until you actually see it happening it's really hard to click for people."**

Cayla Pagano

According to the college, the program prepares students for careers as an assistant grower, cannabis consultant, cannabis retail associate/ general manager, dispensary associate or assistant manager, infusion manufacturing associate, patient advocate, post-harvest associate, processing technician or trimmer, production technician, and other job titles.

**"It's really neat to have them come in, because you can read about extraction methods a lot, but until you actually see it happening it's really hard to click for people,"** Pagano said.

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# Three Timely Killer Vermont Drinks

There's Nothing Better Than Slowing the World Down with A Distinct Vermont State of Mind Mixed Drink Made by A Skilled Vermont Bar Jockey.

"So, who's in a hurry?"

A good hedonist will always choose his or her surroundings as carefully as the right mixed drink for the right effect. Sure, sober reflection is always an option. But in times of high stress, cozy places with distinct grog can and do provide fast-act-

ing soothing for when the cold winds blow.

If you can resist the urge to simply shiver and keep moving, these two uniquely Vermont cocktails made with spirits from our Green Mountain State will help you slow down and appreciate just how tasty and warm an UpCountry life can be.

## Spicy Raspberry Paloma



- 2 ounces Espolon Blanco Tequila
- 1 1/2 ounces raspberry, cilantro, jalapeno simple syrup
- 2 ounces Fresh squeezed grapefruit juice
- 1/2 ounce lime juice

Put into a shaker, shake and strain over ice. Top with club soda. Garnish with grapefruit slice & jalapeno slice.

## A Vermont Sour



Sapling Maple Rye is hand-made in small batches in Saxton's River, Vermont from aged rye whiskey, blended with maple syrup and oak-aged a second time, for a rich, full body and a light maple finish. And Glögg (from Boyden Valley Winery in Cambridge, Vermont - pronounced like glug) is a mulled spice wine made from a traditional Swedish recipe, using a premium

blend of vintage red wine, spiced with cinnamon, cardamom and cloves, then aged. Mixed together, these are best served heated with sliced almonds and raisins for a smooth, warming drink perfect for hectic winter holidays and après ski.

### Vermont Sour

- 3 ounce Sapling Maple Rye from Saxton's River Distillery
- 1 ounce lemon
- 1 ounce simple syrup
- 1 ounce sliced almonds and raisins
- 1/2 ounce Glögg from Boyden Valley Winery

Combine Sapling Maple Rye in a shaker with ice, Pour into a rocks glass over ice sphere, and Pour 1/2 oz of Glögg over a spoon with almonds and raisins, to make eating these delicious alcohol-infused snacks easier.

## A Mexican Russian



Combining aspects of a White Russian and a Mexican Coffee, this cocktail features Metcalfe's Vermont Maple Cream Liqueur from Vermont Distillers in Marlboro, VT.

### Mexican Russian

- 1.5 ounce Metcalfe's Vermont Maple Cream Liqueur
- 1.5 ounce Catamount Vodka
- 2 ounce Cold Brew or Iced Coffee
- A dash Chocolate Bitters
- A dash of Cinnamon

Shake all ingredients with ice, strain into your favorite glass, and serve it neat or over ice.

## CONTACTS:

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421craftbar@gmail.com

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# Three Strikes in Pursuit of a Totally Transformative Experience

By Kathleen Hawes

## STRIKE ONE

Last month, at a quaint New England farmer's market nestled in the green mountains of Vermont, you tried to score some illicit drugs. Fiddles strummed and bare-foot kids romped through lush grass. Chalkboard signs advertised raw milk cheese, hand-packed gelato, paraben-free bars of soap. With the mask mandate recently lifted, woodsmoke and pine needles never smelled more divine.

You loitered near a booth set with a dozen cardboard

pints filled with delicate brown ovals of local fungi. After inspecting the chalkboard for a long time, you tried to act casual. "Which one is the lion's mane?"

The lady behind the table thumbed the straps of her overalls and looked apologetic. They had sold out of everything, save the blue oysters. It was a shame too, she said, because lion's mane was not only delicious cooked up on steak, but "excellent for improving brain activity."

This was your opening: "What about the other kind of mushroom? I've heard those are also good for your brain." You leaned in. "You know, like, the magic kind?"



Photo: Marco Allegretti -Unsplash

The woman's husband, busy with a Venmo payment for the last pint of chanterelles must have overheard because he turned sharply. "We don't know anything about those kinds of mushrooms." His smile was tight. "Psilocybin is illegal in Vermont."

It was strike one in your pursuit of a totally transformative experience.

A while back, a friend told you he had a magic mushroom epiphany. "I realized while I was high that I've suffered from social anxiety my whole life." He was breathless over the phone. "But for those four hours I was absolved of a weight that I didn't even know I had. No internal monologue, no doubting myself. I never felt so free."

Now this friend keeps a quarter pound of dried mushrooms handy in his freezer. Three mornings a week before he shaves, puts on a tie and heads to his cush job at a multi-billion-dollar software company, he pops half a stem. It's called micro-dosing, and it is all the rage.

**"I realized while I was high that I've suffered from social anxiety my whole life... But for those four hours I was absolved of a weight that I didn't even know I had. No internal monologue, no doubting myself. I never felt so free."**

*a friend of the author*

In the 1950s and '60s, "**magic mushrooms**" were closely studied by psychologists, neuroscientists, and all sorts of academics in pursuit of mystical experiences. Recently you came across a 1955 article from LIFE entitled THE MAGIC MUSHROOM. Caption reads: A New York banker goes to Mexico's mountains to participate in age-old rituals of Indians who chew strange growths that produce visions. The article details two nights where the author, R. Gordon Wasson, trips his face off with some locals. The story is cringy for all sorts of modern reasons: othering, cultural voyeurism and appropriation, to name a few. Still, Wasson shows not just an open curiosity for psychedelic mushrooms, but a profound reverence, often referring to them as "the divine mushroom." He includes a collection of delicate drawings that depict various mushroom species, one of which caught your eye; a pale, wispy stemmed toadstool that grows in volcanic grass. The name of the mushroom below the picture was translated from Aztec: Children of the Waters.

Then, late in the sixties, hippies ruined everything. Bad trips, mostly on LSD, resulted in big scares. Research on psychedelics became very uncool, thus, underfunded. In the 1970s, most psychedelics were criminalized.



Psilocybe Semilanceata contains psychoactive compounds psilocybin and baeocystin.

Photo: Pretty Drugthings - Unsplash

But today, many Americans think these laws are antiquated. Stigma that once hovered around marijuana is old news. The catastrophe of the War on Drugs, a campaign that disproportionately impacted communities of color, has brought new awareness to the challenges that come with classifying certain drugs as addictive or more dangerous than others.

Anyway, it's clear the social deviance once assigned to psychedelics is on its way out for other reasons. Coined by the New York Times as "the new Prozac," psilocybin has been at the center of several medical studies, including one backed by 17 million bucks at Johns Hopkins, that claim the drug can be used to treat PTSD, severe anxiety, depression, and even addiction. Oregon is now the first state to legalize psilocybin for therapeutic use, and a handful of other states have similar legislation on the table. The drug has been decriminalized in Washington DC, Oakland, CA, and Denver. You've read that it's only a matter of time before magic mushrooms are approved for therapeutic use by the FDA.

So, what's taken the purportedly left-leaning state of Vermont so long to catch up? Surely, the green mountains are not exempt from real-world problems like addiction and mental illness. Though Vermont may have served as a temporary oasis from the raging death toll that swept the country over the last year-and-a-half, winters here are long, and the isolation has been real. Seven months into the pandemic, state officials reported alcohol sales in Vermont were up 10%, despite the fact that bars and restaurants had closed their doors. Across the state, the number of people in mental health crises doubled from the previous year. The more distressing elephant in the room: the opioid problem. Opioid related deaths in Vermont went up 38% over the course of 2020. Could it be that methadone and suboxone, drugs used to treat opioid addiction, just aren't cutting it?

Still, if you are looking for alternative options, know if you get caught with mushrooms in Vermont, you face a felony conviction. Of course, there's nothing wrong with window shopping.

## STRIKE TWO

Happy Mushrooms for Sad People is the tagline for Curative Mushrooms, a health and wellness website that offers Three All in One Grow Bags Delivered Right to Your Door. Their Facebook page has tutorials for the beginner grower: Q&As that answer things like, "How do I tell when my grow bag is too dry?" as well as pertinent info on the Federal law loophole that makes this whole business legal.



////////////////////

### *How do they get away with it?*

First you must purchase online three grow bags filled with a special mix of fungal-dominant compost. After that, you click on a coupon code below to redeem your free spore syringe. The syringe kind of looks like a turkey baster filled with pee. Technically, it does not contain psilocybin, which is the compound classified by the Federal Government as a Schedule 1 controlled substance. Your grow kit and spore-filled syringe will arrive separately (and discreetly) at your door. The magic won't happen till you inject the spores into your grow bag, wait three to five weeks for some healthy mycelium to colonize, and ...voila!

After much research, you soon realize it's harder than all that. Temperature, light, and humidity are make-or-break factors in mycelium success. There is also expensive equipment you'll have to purchase. You are broke and own only a few withering house plants, so maybe DIY is not your thing.

**Not to worry.** Rick Doblin says his organization will soon safely and legally administer happy mushrooms to sad people all over the world. Rick, founder and executive director of Multidisciplinary Association for Psychedelic Studies (MAPS) is wispy haired with kind eyes, and maybe a touch of social anxiety himself. While you watch his Ted Talk on your laptop, there are awkward pauses in his speech that make it hard to tell whether he's terrified of public speaking or just burnt out from his own supply. Doblin has researched psychedelics since the eighties, and explains that, unlike psychiatric drugs that must be administered daily and that only treat symptoms of illness such as addiction, depression, and PTSD, just a few doses of psilocybin treat the root problem. He also claims the profound experiences people have on psilocybin could be "an antidote to tribalism, fundamentalism, and genocide."

*How will these mystical mushrooms rid the world of misery and evil?* Basically, by making you nicer.

**Here is how:** The default network of your brain, in particular, a thin sheet of neurons called the claustrum buried in your neocortex, is believed to be responsible for consciousness and awareness; essentially, your ego. It filters information according to your priorities and personal needs. But, pop some



The underside of the *Psilocybe semilanceata* has 15-27 gills. When injured, these mushrooms quickly turn blue.

Christopher Ott - Unsplash

shrooms, and activity in that default network decreases. Your ego leaves the foreground, which allows you to see "a larger field of awareness." Doblin analogizes the invention of the telescope; Copernicus and Galileo's discovery that, in fact, the earth was not the center of the universe. This awareness-shift creates a sense of connectivity to the larger world that can result in feelings of altruism and may even relieve fear of death.

**Seems plausible.** You've read up on several medical studies, some of which date back to the sixties, where similar feelings of connectivity were reported by control groups after the ingestion of psilocybin.

Doblin hits his stride near the end of the Ted Talk. The audience hoots approval when he announces folks at MAPS anticipate thousands of psychedelic clinics will open over the few decades. That his specially trained MAPS therapists will soon administer MDMA, ketamine, and psilocybin to people in search of personal growth, couples' therapy, or mystical and spiritual experiences.

But if a few decades seems too long to wait—if you really want to get your hands on some mushrooms now—there's always Jamaica.

### **STRIKE THREE**

You know how it goes when you want to plan a psychedelic get-away. First you figure out the basics: Beach or mountains? Adventure or relaxation? Psilocybin or Ketamine? If you are a mushroom gal, MycoMeditations will intrigue. The website

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claims to bring another level of relaxation and restoration to your psilocybin experience. Their most luxurious retreat option boasts glittering villas on the sugar white sand of Bluefield's Bay. Included with your villa is daily laundry service and your very own butler. Over the week, you'll receive three doses of psilocybin—ground up, blended, and encapsulated in .5-gram increments. Dosages will increase each time and are determined by body weight, personality type, and one-on-one meetings with your facilitator. Participants are asked to respect dosage recommendations. After you spend the day unlocking repressed memories in a guided therapy session, appetizers are served, followed by a unique three-course meal curated by local chefs. All of this: just \$8,950 per person.

## "Humans have a sacred birthright to have access to plant and fungal-based medicine and the government shouldn't get in the way of that."

State Rep. Brian Cina

Bleyksi from Illinois gives MycoMeditations five stars on Trip Advisor: My first trip was out of this world – I felt unconditional love, even saw myself being born and my mom holding me for the first time with tears of joy....I asked the facilitator to come over and I squeezed Justin's hand for probably 20 minutes....Additionally – the accommodations are comfortable. The hospitality is very nice. and some of the food was local and fresh. Oxtail! Grilled lobster tail! So yum.

Pharmacygirl3 weighs in with only two stars: There is no supervision in the evenings and guests are left alone. This woman was hysterical in the ocean after dark and swam away from shore leaving me and another guest to call to her believing she was drowning. This woman was allowed to scream and yell hysterically for several hours inside and outside the villas. At midnight I tried to reach a Myco staff member as the hysteria was frightening. No staff member at any time came to the Villa to address the situation.

Aside from the hefty MycoMeditations price tag and the whole screeching banshee on the beach thing, Jamaica is a long haul from Vermont. There are already posh clinics opening in anticipation of FDA approval in Los Angeles, New York, Atlanta, Houston, and Chicago. Maybe it's best to wait till a psychedelic retreat pops up on a cow path near you.

Or maybe, waiting for big pharma to make fungi fungible is socially negligent and allows our shameful history of colonization and ruthless capitalism to deny the little guy what should be a basic right for all humans. That's what progressive democrat, and State Rep., Brian Cina tells you on a phone chat. Brian loves all things Bernie, dislikes moderate democrats who are turning Burlington into a playground for

the rich, and pushes the point that drugs like psilocybin must be decriminalized in Vermont before they are legalized for medical use. So far, he has tried to pass two bills decriminalizing plant and fungal-based medicines. He says resistance to these bills is thinning. Maybe two years till more Vermont legislators get on board.

"Humans have a sacred birthright to have access to plant and fungal-based medicine and the government shouldn't get in the way of that." He sounds passionate. Sure, there should be pathways for professions to administer these medicines, but that shouldn't be the only way to get access. "It's another way for the pharmaceutical companies to profit, and they are the ones that created the opioid problem in the first place. If these medicines are controlled by one or two companies, we run the risk of going down a pathway that shifts to oppression."

Hard to disagree with Brian there. Hallucinogens like ayahuasca and peyote have been used in religious ceremonies for centuries. There are religious exemptions for their use, meaning, right now the DEA is not breaking up the drum circle. But what happens when these drugs become legalized commodities?

Secondly, since psilocybin has undergone a few promising studies as a treatment for opioid addiction, the prospect that the very pharmaceutical companies who helped create this epidemic might soon hold lock and key on the cure, is troublesome. After your phone call to Brian Cina, you can't help but think of Rick Doblin's Ted Talk promise that only specially trained MAPS therapists will be able to administer psychedelic drugs.

### A WITHERED HOME RUN

At great length you finally get your drugs the old-fashioned way: Instead of asking your 63-year-old neighbor for a cup of sugar, you hit her up for hallucinogens. She's resistant, says she can only give you a little bit since she's got to save her stash for a transformative couple's weekend planned with her new boyfriend. But you push and she feels sorry for you.

As you stand in her kitchen and inspect a two-inch shriveled toadstool on the counter, VPR spouts news about a Delta variant. You get gloomy with the thought of another winter in isolation. Last year, four months into the pandemic, you picked up cigarettes after three years. Sleep became rare, red wine was not. For the first time in your life, you were prescribed a psychiatric drug to calm your anxiety. Also, to curb the smoking—which hasn't worked. The parallel timeline of US political upheaval not only bolstered this anxiety but highlighted for you the suffering that arises when a monstrous ego takes the foreground.

Weirdly, political strife and a devastating virus have made you more aware than ever how connected humans are—for better or worse. Everyone is swimming in the same giant pool, and if one of us takes a piss, all of us drink it. Still, as you stare down at this modest little mushroom on your neighbor's counter, you feel some comfort in a connection: Like, maybe loneliness is just a state of mind? Maybe, at the end of the day, we are all Children of the Waters.

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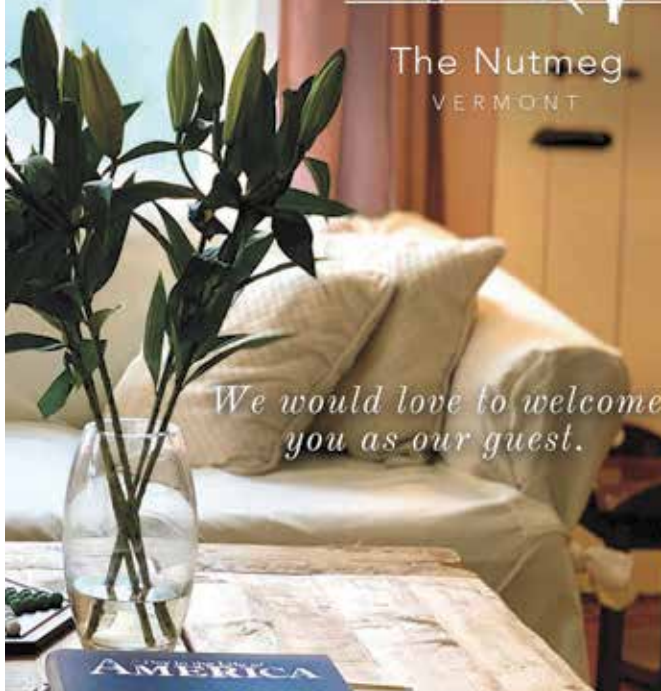
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# 4th New England Street Food Festival coming to Southern Vermont

By UpCountry Magazine

DUMMERSTON — You can't beat the smell of sizzling grills in the summer and fall air.

We get that, and at the fourth New England Street Food Festival, on Sept. 25, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. at Kampfires on Route 5, Vermont News and Media will be taking over all of your senses with an array of fresh and diverse food, beverages, entertainment and eclectic vendors from near and far.

There truly will be something delicious for all ages and tastes, said VNM publisher and president Jordan Brechenser, who came up with the idea of the Street Food Fest in 2017 with VNM sales representative Richard "Bud" Lolatte.

"When we first kicked off the New England Street Food Fest, it was with the idea that people could find a cool place to come together and enjoy a variety of different foods, live music, entertainment, and of course, wine and beer," said Brechenser. "With the past year's event canceled because of COVID, we felt like the time was right to kick this off again and give people something really enjoyable to get out and do as a community. I think everyone is really excited and looking forward to attending and getting back to normal outdoor events like this."

Lolatte said attendees can expect the Kampfires grounds to come alive with the scents of heavenly paella to barbecue and thai and much more

He said that this year's food vendors include a who's who of

mobile and traditional eateries: **Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery**; **Andrzej's Polish Kitchen**; **The Collective**; **Amy's French Macaroons**; **Fine Swine BBQ**; **Anon's Thai Cuisine**; **Zoomies Grill and Fill**; **Dan's Catering/Tandoori Cuisine (vegan)**; and **Salsa Sisters Salsa**.

**"This year has a 'welcome back' vibe,..." said Lolatte.**

A highlight for many, Whetstone Brewery and Vermont Beer Makers will be providing beer. Regular beverages include libations from Maple Mama and World Coffee.

Other vendors include Jen's Jewelry Chest; Vermont Maple Farms; and Hamster Wheel Snowcone (kids use their own power to crush ice for their treat).

Musical acts will be Your Friends, the opening act, with Wild Nightz, as the main act; the New England Center for Circus Arts will have shows at 1:30 and 3:15 p.m., a sight for the whole family.

BSA Scout Troop 461 will be handling parking. There's a suggested donation of \$2 to help defray the troop's ongoing programs.

Lolatte, also VNM's Street Food Fest organizer, expects this year's fest to be bigger than ever.

"This year has a 'welcome back' vibe. This is one of the reasons



**Rules of Thumb** – A rule of thumb is a home-made recipe for making a guess. It's an easy-to-remember guide that falls somewhere between a mathematical formula and a shot in the dark. A hundred years ago, people used rules of thumb to make do for a lack of facts. Today, people use them to help with an overabundance of facts.

#491 – On the survival rule of three – You can live three seconds without blood, three minutes without air, three days without water, and three weeks without food.

#628 – On things that bite – As a matter of biology, rather than sexism, if something bites you it's probably female.

#855 – On the peeper rule of three – Don't count on spring until you've heard the peepers in full voice for three consecutive nights.

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The smells and sounds of great home food cooking radiate from Andrzej's Polish Kitchen.

Kristopher Radder/Brattleboro Reformer Photos

why we do not charge an entrance fee. We want the community to come out and celebrate the end of summer and the beginning of autumn, this year more than ever," said Lolatte. "We have events, like NECCA and the Hamster Wheel, for kids of all ages, and wonderful food and drink for everyone."

The previous three festivals have drawn about 3,000 people to each in 2017, 2018 and 2019.

Attendees will receive a free Koozie to keep drinks cold, sponsored Berkley & Veller Greenwood Country Realtors.

There is no entry fee; however, a suggested donation of \$5

is requested to benefit the Born to Run Foundation, whose mission is to provide specialized prosthetics to young adults and children.

Born to Run founder and motivational speaker Noelle Lambert was a three-sport varsity athlete when her leg was severed in a moped accident in 2016. She competed in Japan in the Olympics this year.

Whetstone co-owner Dave Hiler is a runner who lost his leg to cancer; he named a house brew Born to Run Blood Orange Gose, and vows to run the marathon again with the help of a prosthetic.

Lolatte said the Street Food Fest is all about forging these kinds of relationships.

The Street Food Fest's main sponsor is Brattleboro's Whetstone Station Brewery and Restaurant, with cornerstone sponsors Fenton Family Dealership, C&S Wholesale Grocers, and Brattleboro Area Realty, as well as Vermont News and Media, parent to the Brattleboro Reformer, Bennington Banner, Manchester Journal and UpCountry Magazine.

The musical sponsor is Turn It Up records.

In addition to donations received for parking and entrance fee, Vermont News and Media is donating \$300 to the BSA troop 461 and \$300 to the Born to Run foundation, said Lolatte.

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