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MAGAZINE



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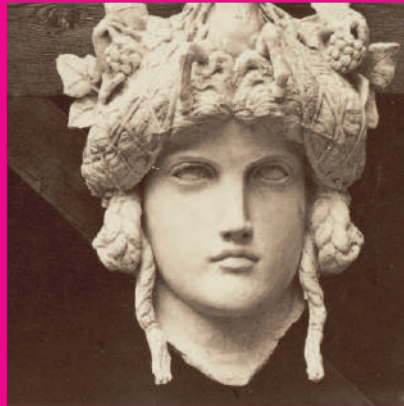
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Chris St. Amand photo

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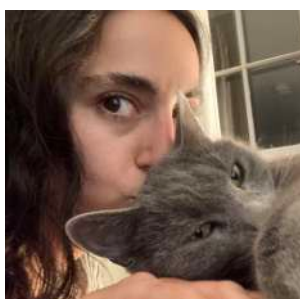
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On the cover: Powder at
Stratton Mountain.

Stratton Mountain photo



4

Person of Interest

Hall of Famer with Northshire ties, Jim Kaat looks back

- 2** Contributors
- 6** Slowing it down at Stratton Mountain
- 8** Resolve to see these New Year's inspired movies
- 13** UpCountry Homes
- 19** Top 5 family-friendly ski spots in Southern Vermont
- 22** A day in the life in Pittsfield, Mass.
- 32** New Year's Resolutions? Many seek help from experts

TABLE OF CONTENTS



10

Fat Bike:

The perfect tool to end the winter blues

- 34** Valentine's Day: Finding love during the pandemic

- 40** Wedding Guide: Vermont businesses dodge the pandemic

- 42** Wedding Guide: 10 films to watch before you get married



36

Wedding Guide

For one couple, the fourth wedding date was the charm

- 49** Herbalist: New Year, New You: Berkshire Roots

- 52** Herbalist: New Year, New You: Canna Provisions

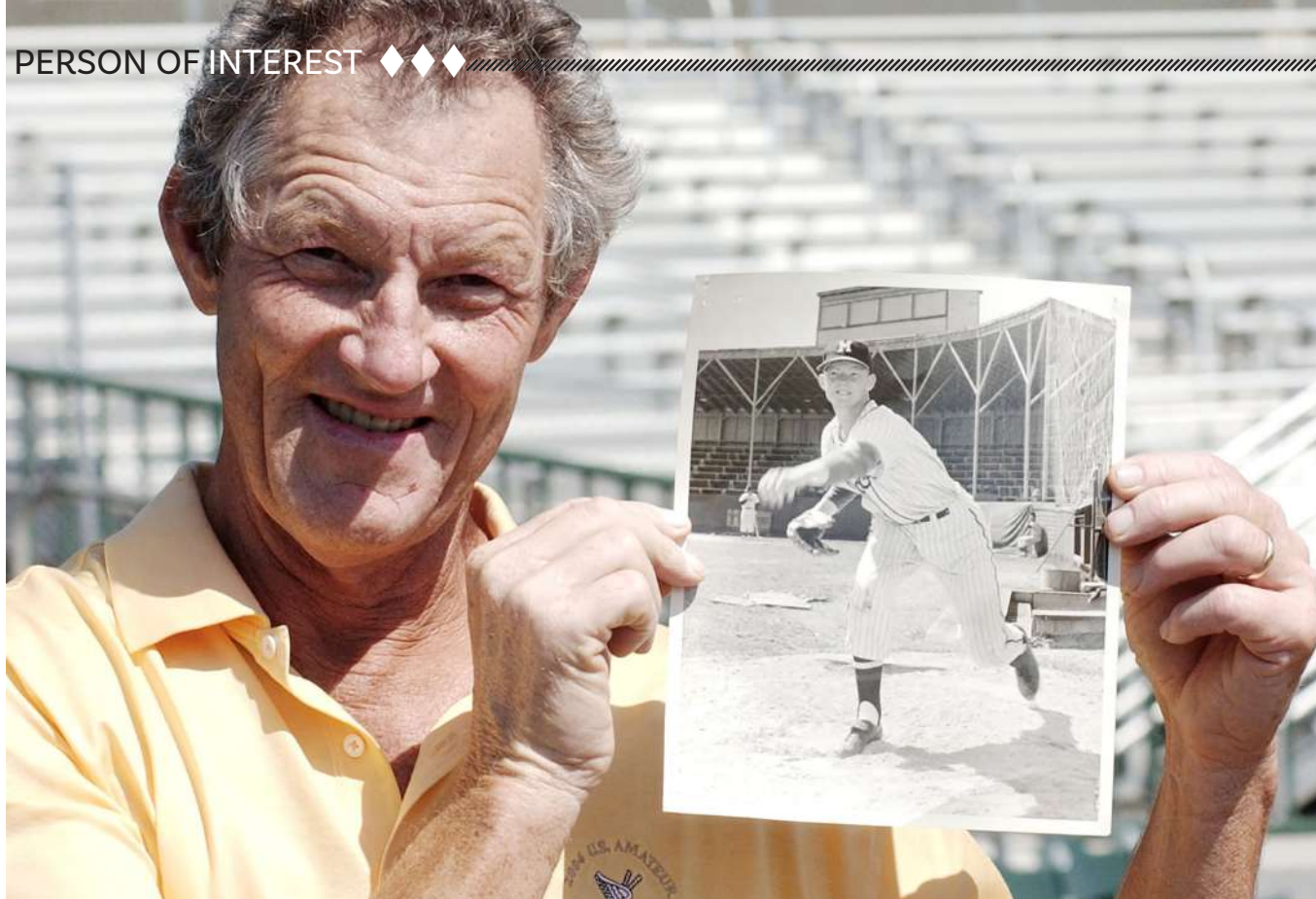


46

After dark in Brattleboro

Getting in tune, on the town

- 54** Herbalist: Theory Wellness: Three years of community commitment



Jim Kaat, former Major League Baseball pitcher, poses with a photo of himself at the age of 19 before the start of the Houston Astros/Florida Marlins spring training game in Jupiter, Fla., in 2004. Kaat had a 25-year major-league career and won 283 games.

James A. Finley — The Associated Press

Hall of Famer with Northshire ties looks back on years in big leagues

By MICHAEL MAWSON

UpCountry Magazine

In Cooperstown, N.Y., Jim Kaat is known for baseball. In Manchester, the three-time All-Star, and now MLB Hall of Famer, is better known for his golf game. Kaat told *UpCountry* that the Ekwanok Country Club in Manchester is what initially drew him to buy a home here.

Wife Margie, a golf pro, had a chance to play Ekwanok Golf Club one day as guests, and they bought a summer place in Southern Vermont shortly after being accepted to the club as members.

A pitcher in four decades, Kaat began his Major League Baseball career in 1959 and retired from the game in 1983, a career that spanned 25 years in the big leagues. Kaat helped boost the Twins into the 1965 World Series and won a ring on the Cardinals as a reliever in 1982.

The Hall of Famer recently took some time to talk about everything from his thoughts on his December induction to his encounters with racism within the sport during the 1960s.

Q: Besides watching baseball, what takes you back to your days on the mound?

A: What takes me back to my playing days is when I

announce the game, and I crossed paths with guys that are coaches now, and we get to reminisce. I'd say as far as something like touch, feel, smell: When you walk in a ballpark like Fenway Park, and you smell the Italian sausages cooking outside on your way in. That's a great ballpark.

Q: What are your thoughts on some of the baseball writers who vote for induction? There's one voter in particular who proudly hasn't voted in anybody in the last two years, and the only person he voted in three years ago was Derek Jeter. That upsets some casual fans. As a former player, does that upset you?

A: It bothers me. I talked to a lot of veteran writers about that, like [Baseball Writers' Association of America secretary/treasurer] Jack O'Connell and [MLB reporter] Kenny Rosenthal, guys like that.

[The Baseball Writers' Association of America] really should pare it down to probably less than 100, maybe somewhere between 50 and 100 writers that are really qualified to vote on the Hall of Fame. [397 baseball writers cast a Hall of Fame ballot during the most recent voting in 2020.]

You know, I kind of cringe when I hear a writer say, "Oh, this is my first time voting for the Hall of Fame!" Well, they probably never saw some of the players play. In my own case, I had people on the committee, both executives and players and media, that actually were there to see me play during that era, or played against me or with me.

You need writers that have those qualifications. I think it's up to the Writers Association that they should get together and say, "Look, let's have a list of about 50 guys or 75 guys that are really qualified to vote on these players, that are eligible."

Q: Do you believe players like Barry Bonds and Roger Clemens deserve to make it into the Hall of Fame if they've used performance enhancing drugs?

A: I always thought — and I said the same thing about Pete [Rose] because Pete's a good friend [Rose was permanently banned from the game of baseball after allegations he bet on games while playing for and managing the Cincinnati Reds] — I think there should be a section in the Hall of Fame that shows all of their accomplishments individually.

Like with Clemens, Bonds and Mark McGwire, their statistics

Former Minnesota Twins Jim Kaat, left, and Jim "Mudcat" Grant stand with former teammates before a baseball game between the Minnesota Twins and the Seattle Mariners in Minneapolis in August 2015.

Ann Heisenfelt — The Associated Press



Former Minnesota Twins pitcher Jim Kaat waves to the crowd before a baseball game between the Minnesota Twins and the Seattle Mariners in Minneapolis in August 2015.

Ann Heisenfelt — The Associated Press

should be in the Hall of Fame to show what careers they have and then sort of an explanation of why they were denied official induction.

Q: You played in an era where you likely saw racism within the game. What was it like in the 1960s and '70s?

A: I think as a young kid, I just didn't have the courage or the intelligence to speak out. Going to spring training Orlando, I would ride into Tinker Field where we trained with our bullpen coach, and we stopped at the Sadler Hotel to pick up Lenny Green, Earl Battery and Julio Becquer; Black players had to stay at a different hotel.

As a Midwestern kid, I just kind of took it as, well, that's just the way it is. And as I look back on it, we should have spoken out back then.

I have plenty of examples: A friend of mine was a member of a golf club in Florida, and we had a day off, and Luis Tiant and this gentleman were going out to play golf at his club. He invited us and the member got called into the back office and [was told] Luis can't play here. And so my friend resigned right on the spot.

I think when you put the uniform on, and you're in the clubhouse, it's kind of cliché, but you know, some of my favorite teammates like Tony Oliva, Dick Allen, George Hendrick, Ozzie [Smith], they're some of my best buddies and favorite teammates. So we didn't experience that within the clubhouse. I'm sure the Black players can tell you that they still experienced it out in public.

Q: You're eighth all time on the wins list among left-handed pitchers. Are you proud of being a lefty? Are you ambidextrous?

A: As a kid, my older sisters would take the pencil out of my left hand and put it in my right hand. It was sort of socially unacceptable to be a lefty. I'm proud of it. I think it was an advantage for me in baseball.

I had to learn to play golf right-handed, because they didn't have any [left-handed] grip back then. But now, I play golf both ways, right and left, because I learned to play right, and I'm really more naturally left.

Slowing it down to 'Green Mountain Time' at Stratton resort

Longtime rider soaks in 60 years of ski, snowboard history, A-I accommodations, grog and grub, plus runs, runs and more runs

By BROOKE GEERY

Sponsored content contributor

Snowboarding and skiing are known for their speed — and I love to go fast — which is probably why, when I found snowboarding as a teen, I strapped in and never looked back.

But now, as an adult living in 2022, it seems like daily life is often

moving too quickly. Things keep coming up, no matter how hard I try to slow down.

So, when I was given the opportunity to take a much-needed midweek vacation to Stratton to write this story, I was quick to accept the assignment and clear my schedule.

Only a few days later though, my fully clean plate had picked up several scraps I just couldn't throw away. With a pass to

The Stratton Mountain Resort is celebrating its 60th anniversary this season.

Stratton Mountain Resort photo

ride Stratton and a room at the Black Bear Lodge with my name on it, I figured I could cram “adult responsibilities” into the morning and make it to the resort with enough time to enjoy some fun cruising laps before the lifts closed.

I checked all the boxes a little after 1 p.m., slammed an extra cup of coffee and careened down Route 100 from my home base an hour north.

Unwinding at the mountain resort

I was amped to ride but really needed to relax. The snow gods knew it, and as I made the turn onto the Stratton access road, gentle snowflakes started to waft through the air. I could instantly feel myself start to chill.

It's a common theme on my visits to Stratton, of which there have been many. The resort itself is celebrating its 60th anniversary this season. As a Vermont-bred rider myself, I've been visiting for over 25 of those years. From family trips as a miniature skier, to my teenage years making the trek for the U.S. Open Snowboarding Championships, Stratton's claim as the birthplace of snowboarding holds special meaning to me.

It was the first place I saw a professional snowboarder in real life, and also a place where I pursued my own snowboard career, competing in big air events and staying up late to catch big-name music acts performing in the Village. Even last season, mid-pandemic, Stratton's dedication to snowboarding shone through as it hosted a streamlined version of the Vermont Open, which brought together the community in a safe, creative way for some fast turns under the gondola.

Mountain Time

While skiing and riding are at the heart of a mountain escape, Stratton offers activities like snow tubing, moonlight snowshoe tours, ice skating, fireside yoga, music ... It's more than just a ski area. It's a winter wonderland complete with a full-service Village, where life proceeds on an easier-paced Green Mountain Time (far better than typical Eastern, Central and Pacific Standard peers).

Embracing the Stratton spirit, I breathed the fresh crisp air deeply and put on my gear in the parking lot. On the mountain, the crowd was small and super friendly. The lift ops staffer smiled as I explained I was trying to squeeze in as many runs as possible before they closed.

“You got it, buddy,” they cheered each time I rounded the maze into Snowbowl Express.

New Stratton app keeps track of your stats

Using Stratton's new app, which I downloaded in the parking lot and logged into on my first gondola ride, I was able to see how I did. With a 2:30 p.m. arrival, I managed to clock five lift rides, rode 6,208 vertical feet and hit 20 trails. Satisfied with my stats, it was time to hit the bar, and the app let me know which ones were open on this less-frantic-by-the-minute Tuesday.

I opted for the Green Door Pub — another place full of snowboard history — just a short stroll away from the main base area. I enjoyed a \$3 Narragansett tall-boy and watched with



Stratton offers activities like snow tubing, moonlight snowshoe tours, ice skating, fireside yoga, music ... It's more than just a ski area, it's a winter wonderland complete with a full-service Village, where life proceeds on an easier-paced Green Mountain Time (far better than typical Eastern, Central and Pacific Standard peers).

Stratton Mountain Resort photo

glee as the bartender brought out free (yes, FREE) wings. Great decor and fun locals aside, this is the best reason to visit the basement bar — they serve complimentary crispy wings.

Around 6:30 p.m., I finished my drink, wiped the remaining buffalo sauce from my face, and decided it was time to take off my snowboard boots. The snow was still falling for the walk through the Village, and the twinkle of Christmas lights and smell of pine harkened visions of “It's a Wonderful Life.” I slowed my pace to enjoy it, and eyed the variety of shops I was much too tired to visit.

Built-in nightlife

Across the street, my hotel room beckoned. I figured I'd grab a shower, and then head back to the Village for a proper meal at Mulligan's. But, after I changed, I realized the spa was closer, and the bar and restaurant at Black Bear Lodge would save me a free shuttle ride back.

I saddled up to the cozy bar, where I was treated to a hearty meal, a great selection of tap beers and free entertainment from the bartender. He regaled me with his own tales of snowboard history, explaining to another bar patron how Stratton was the first resort to allow the fledgling sport, and he knew a guy who ALMOST partnered up with Jake Burton Carpenter to make it happen.

I sipped my draught beer and smiled; it was great to be with my people.

Wakey, wakey, eggs and bakey

In the morning, I woke up well-rested and made my way to the free (YES!) breakfast bar. My plans for the day were already weighing on me, but noshing on eggs, sausage and fresh coffee helped get me ready.

I was all packed and prepared to depart, but when I rolled my suitcase out to my car, I found it covered in a layer of light powder. I looked around at the fresh snow and quickly made an unplanned decision to spend the morning riding Stratton once again.

If the previous day had taught me anything, there's always time to take a few runs.

Resolve to see these New Year's-inspired MOVIES

BY DAN TEBO

UpCountry correspondent

According to the internet, the concept of the New Year's resolution has been in vogue since the ancient Babylonians walked the earth. That means that people have been trying

(and failing) to spend the month of January rebooting themselves for over 4,000 years. Whether you're attempting to limit your nightly alcohol consumption to just one bottle of wine or vowing to make it a third of the way through David Foster Wallace's "Infinite Jest," few among us can say we haven't at least contemplated a New Year's quest for self-betterment.

And so, your virtual video store is lousy with cinematic profiles of humankind's herculean quests at overcoming long odds, both internal and external. The following 10 films, featuring characters engaged in seemingly hopeless struggles, should help fortify you as you embark on that journey toward a better you. Or maybe you just want to drink yourself to death. We've got you covered there, too.

"Easy Money" (1983): Rodney Dangerfield is Monty Capuletti, a reefer addict and degenerate gambler who stands to inherit \$10 million from his late stepmother if he can refrain from debaucherous activity for one year. Joe Pesci shines (natch) as Monty's unsupportive drinking buddy, Nicky.

"Better off Dead" (1985): A mildly suicidal teenager becomes convinced he can win back the heart of his ex-girlfriend if he can just conquer this quadruple-diamond ski trail called the K-12.



He also has to deal with a malevolent, shortchanged paperboy and a hamburger that inexplicably comes to life to perform a Van Halen song.

"Secret of My Success" (1987): In the 1980s, we saw dozens of films chronicling a white man's quest to become a wealthy white Manhattanite. Few were better than this Michael J. Fox yarn about a mailroom schlub who skips the corporate ladder climb, simply moves into a vacant office and starts acting like he owns the joint.

"The Cutting Edge" (1992): A catastrophic eye injury forces a hockey

hooligan into an unlikely partnership with an uppity figure skating Olympian. Will this woefully mismatched duo pull it together in time to master a skating move with a tricky Russian name, fall in love and take home the gold? What do you think?

"Leaving Las Vegas" (1995): If Nicolas Cage wants to torch his belongings and move to sin city to drink himself to death, there's nothing the babysitter from "Adventures in Babysitting" can do to stop him! Depressing? Sure. But here's a guy who stayed the course and got exactly what he wanted in the end. And also, an Oscar.

"The Straight Story" (1999): Here's something that happened: David Lynch, he of "Blue Velvet" fame, directed a G-rated Disney film about an elderly farmer who drove 240 miles to visit his dying brother. On his lawnmower! His fellow townsfolk couldn't have GoFunded him a moped or an Uber ride? Geez.

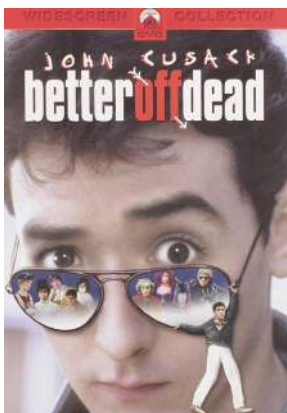


"The Pledge" (2001): Sean Penn's relentlessly bleak drama opens with a shot of a shithouse drunk Jack Nicholson muttering to himself outside of an abandoned filling station and just never lets up. Nicholson plays a police detective who eschews retirement to solve a child murder. When he learns the identity of the real killer, zero people believe him. The killer anonymously burns to death in a car accident. Everyone loses.

"Julie and Julia" (2009): Nora Ephron helmed this paraflick that tells the true story of Julie Powell, a blogger who went viral after attempting to cook 524 of Julia Child's recipes in 365 days. Not featured: the scene where Powell torpedoes her career with her follow-up book, where she attempts to cheat on her husband 524 different ways in 365 days.

"The Revenant" (2012): Leonardo DiCaprio plays an 1820s fur trapper who crawls through the frozen hinterlands to avenge the death of his son. After a small eternity, DiCaprio locates his target and, you know, kills him. Honestly, after watching this dude eat ice and sleep in the carcass of a cow for eight hours, I'd hoped for an ending with a little more pizzazz.

"Brittany Runs a Marathon" (2019): Every person I spoke to in advance of writing this piece told me that I absolutely had to include this 2019 Netflix sleeper hit. I have done so ... even though I have yet to watch said film.



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When you get in the saddle of a fat bike, there's no stopping you from riding — and staying in shape — all year long. What excuses remain? Pro tip: Bring water, tools and a charged phone with you, and lights (if you're an afternoon rider). All will help if your bike breaks down miles from home.

Metro Creative Connection photos

With a fat bike, you won't care what the groundhog says about spring

A few reasons why the mountain bike's chunky cousin is the perfect tool to end the winter blues

BY NOAH HOFFENBERG

UpCountry Magazine

Like the watched pot that never boils, staring at the snow doesn't make it disappear any faster. I've tried. It doesn't work. Nothing will (except for a permanent move to Hawaii).

There is, however, a less expensive alternative: the fat bike.

The door to fat biking opened for me during the pandemic, when a main part broke on my 26-inch mountain bike. As a replacement, I bought a fat bike in October 2020, and never looked back.

With traditional road cycling and skinny-tire mountain biking, you're at the mercy of the elements. For a lot of people, that means amping up couch time, Ring Ding and Pepsi intake and binge-watching true crime TV from November to April. Before you know it, your hands are permanently stained yellow from Cheetos and cheap cigarettes, you're in a quagmire of seasonal affective disorder and you can't look in the mirror without gagging.

Clearly, these are signs you have taken your sloth too far.

A fat bike is your antidote. Here's why:

RIDING ALL YEAR: Skinny-tire bikes, while slim and svelte, become mostly useless in slush, slop, mud and snow. Not so with fat-tire bikes, with an average width of about 5 inches, which offer the ability to "float" and steer better through the fluff, muck and slush. Some riders will put on studded tires, which work wonders on ice. But, some tactical choices of when to ride — whether avoiding the immediate aftermath of ice storms or deluges — can keep you active and moving all winter (and mud season) long.

DON'T BE SO SAD: A 2021 article from Harvard notes how exercise is a natural buffer against depression. Aside from the cardio-vascular benefits of exercise, Harvard said that high-intensity exercise releases endorphins, chemicals that cause us to feel good, such as with the so-called "runner's high." Sustained exercise over a long stretch of time, Harvard notes, spurs the release of neurotrophic proteins, causing nerve cell growth; this, too, can make people have a sense of well-being. For near-hibernating humans who might be suffering from seasonal affective disorder, daily fat bike rides in the fresh air and sun might just make the perfect addition to your winter health and self-care regimen.

NO OFFSEASON: Trying to get in shape after a winter of couch lounging is hard. There's a lot of huffing and puffing, and general discomfort in your legs and lungs. I know, because I've been a wintertime slug for many a solstice. By keeping your cycling going through the winter with a four-season bike, there won't be a transition from offseason sluggishness to springtime riding. In fact, with a fat bike, there's no such thing as an offseason.

SLOWER MODE OF TRANSPORT? NOT SO FAST!: I've heard from many a chap who claim that a fat bike is slower than a skinny-tire mountain bike, and therefore inferior. Pshaw, I say. Pshaw! I track most of my outings with MapMyRide, and what it's shown me is that I can achieve near-personal best land speeds with the fat bike, not too far off from my prior top speeds, which I hit with a traditional 26-inch mountain bike. Without a doubt, because a fat bike has more tire surface area, you're bound to have more friction and resistance to your rolling. I think of it like a stationary bike, where the



Fat bikers peacefully coexist with snowmobilers, cross-country skiers, snowshoers and other outdoor enthusiasts who traverse anywhere there's deep, silent woods blanketed by snow. Pro tip: Always layer up with synthetic or wool clothes, so you can adjust what you're wearing on the fly.

more you crank down the resistance, the harder the workout and the better the physical returns. If it doesn't kill you, it will make you stronger.

GOOD FOR SAND, TOO: Technically speaking, Vermont is part of New England, and New England touches the ocean. If you've got a fat bike, that means good things for you. Fat tire bikes are just as popular on the seashore as they are in the hilltowns. Skinny-tire bikes can become deadly in sand, losing all steering ability. With fat tires, you get more float than sink, making on-sand rolling possible, essentially the same effect that they have on top of snow. For saltwater anglers, metal-detecting treasure hunters or exhibitionist beachside exercisers, a fat bike is a win-win.

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JANUARY 11

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A rare opportunity to own one of Newfane Village's charming homes! Located in Vermont's most photographed towns, this c. 1856 cape has been tastefully and lovingly renovated, blending modern comfort with period features. The interior is warm and inviting and features wide-plank pine floors throughout, a post and beam cathedral living room with a gas fireplace, first-floor laundry, and a large custom kitchen with granite countertops, breakfast island, a six-burner stove, and an adjacent walk-in pantry. 3 bedrooms include a first-floor master suite with an adjoining sitting room & full bath. One of the upstairs bedrooms features built-in bunk beds and an adjacent playroom. Well-maintained with new central air conditioning, heating, & well systems added in 2011. The land features stone walls & mature plantings, along with a 60-foot hydrangea hedge for added privacy. Composite deck off the kitchen sits between the home & the 2-car detached garage with ample storage above. Protected from the elements, the deck is the perfect location for a fire pit & gathering with friends. Step out the front door to access forested hiking trails or use the village sidewalks to get fresh air. Walk down the street for a yoga class at Newfane Village Yoga, grab lunch at the Newfane Store, or have dinner and drinks at the Four Columns Inn & Restaurant or Fat Crow. 20 minutes from Stratton & 25 minutes from Mount Snow.

MLS #4888017



More information:



Christine Lewis,
CRS, CBR, GRI
Brattleboro

Area Realty

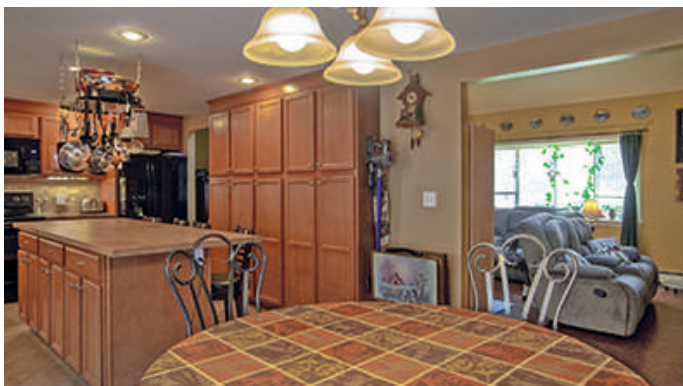
Cell: 802-380-2088

Office: 802-257-1335

Chris@BrattleboroAreaRealty.com

74 Cady Lane, Chesterfield, NH

3 bedrooms • 3 baths • 3,600 sq. ft. • 2.3 acres • \$475,000



IT'S THE TARDIS! Remember when everyone walks into the Tardis they exclaim ..it's bigger on the inside! This home has an unassuming front view, until you get inside and find the traditional cape has changed to an amazing contemporary home with a full shed dormer across the 2nd floor and a fully finished walk out basement below! A total of approximately 3600 square feet of very nice living. Love to cook, bake, entertain? The storage space is incredible and there is enough room for many cooks in the kitchen, with a counter and stools for good conversation while the meal comes together. The kitchen flows both to the nearly 50' deck and living room with a wood burning fireplace! Guests will never get tired of mingling here! The upper floor sports a main bedroom with on suite bath, walk-in closet and a study that overlooks the vaulted ceiling in the living room AND leads to a very private upper balcony/deck. The lower level is a getaway with exercise room, pellet stove for warm gatherings and a walk out to the lower deck. A private basketball court, separate RV parking and sweet ponds are outside features not to be missed. A very special property, you really do have to see the transformation from, very pretty cape to a contemporary star! Come see it and believe it!

MLS #4889116



More information:



Christine Lewis,
CRS, CBR, GRI
Brattleboro
Area Realty

Cell: 802-380-2088 *
Office: 802-257-1335
Chris@BrattleboroAreaRealty.com

7A Foliage Lane, West Dover, VT

4 bedrooms • 4 baths • 3100 sq. ft. • \$749,000 • MLS # 4891362



This beautiful 4 bedroom, 4 bath Kingswood townhome is conveniently located between Mount Snow & the Hermitage Club Resorts. Upon entry you are greeted by an expanded mudroom complete w/bench, coat closet, exterior ski closet

& wood storage. The main floor offers a vaulted concept living space w/hardwood floors, fireplace, a chefs kitchen w/ island, stainless appliances, granite counters, & custom cabinets; upscale furnishings, a spacious dining area, & full

suite. Upstairs are master & guest suites w/vaulted ceilings, as well as a loft space. The lower level has a large play/family room w/pool table & bar area, a bunk room suite, laundry room, & great storage. Ownership includes the

amazing Kingswood amenities including olympic size indoor pool, rec center, gym, game room, direct shuttle to & from your front door to Mount Snow, landscaping, wood, trash, & access to the Valley Trail for summer & winter use.

Experts in Southern Vermont Real Estate Since 1965

Brattleboro Office
119 Western Avenue
Brattleboro, VT 05301
802-254-6400



Dover Office
118 Route 100
West Dover, VT 05356
802-464-8900

www.berkleyveller.com

793 Upper Dover Road, Marlboro, VT

\$2,475,000 • MLS # 4820438 • 9 bedrooms, 6.5 baths, 5500 sq. ft.



Atop 200 acres of conserved land, near skiing & lakes, sits this remarkable estate. Featuring 3 residences, 2 ponds, stables, trails, pasture, a studio/event barn, horse barn, equipment building, in ground pool, stone walls, patios & perennial landscaping. All these take a back seat to absolutely stunning long range easterly views. Each building has been renovated to the highest quality. The main house features original beams, dual master suites, 4 fireplaces, a spacious kitchen & a 3 car garage. The stone lodge has an open concept great room w/stunning architectural elements, upscale kitchen, 2 fireplaces, 2 bedrooms, 2 full and 2 half baths, cupola like office, a gym, garage & deck. The charming summer cottage has 2 bedrooms, a bath, a large keeping room w/fireplace, country kitchen & wraparound porch. The horse barn has a large hayloft & equipment building is perfect for tractors & machinery. Every residence is served by high speed internet & wifi cameras.

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Dover Office
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Bennington, VT 05201

Brenda Jones Real Estate Group

BenningtonHomes.com

Top 5 Family-Friendly Ski Spots in Southern Vermont



Photo provided by Magic Mountain

You don't need to drive all the way to Canada to have multigenerational fun

By CHRIS MAYS

UpCountry Magazine

When it comes to fun for every family member, Southern Vermont has some special spots.

"There's a lot of thought put into programming on and off the slope, and that comes through in the options offered — lesson packages, apres events and family-oriented activities," says Bryan Rivard, director of communications at Ski Vermont/Vermont Ski Areas Association. Resorts recognize that

every family is different. Sometimes Mom wants glades, Dad wants blues and the kids want lessons — or snow tubing, the pool or a personal best on a number of runs."

Rivard says a lot comes down to having something available for everyone and offering a range of experiences in a single place.

"Resorts have taken that idea and run with it, and there are some really creative options for visiting families out there," Rivard says.



UpCountry photos

BRATTLEBORO SKI HILL

24 Living Memorial
Park Drive
Brattleboro
brattski.org
brattleboroskihill@gmail.com

Based at Living Memorial Park in Brattleboro, the small hill and rope tow has been used by many to learn how to ski and snowboard. It is a great place for families to figure

out the sports before hitting the bigger mountains.

BROMLEY

3984 Route 11
Peru
802-824-5522
bromley.com

Based in Peru, the resort touts itself as being family-friendly and having “a unique atmosphere with a welcom-



ing community.” Lessons for different abilities and equipment rentals are available. Bromley also is surrounded by places to ice skate, snowmobile, snowshoe, cross-country ski and shop.

MAGIC MOUNTAIN SKI AREA

495 Magic Mountain Access
Londonderry
802-824-5645
Magicmtn.com
info@magicmtn.com

The Londonderry resort offers a more laid-back pace and intimate feel, and discounted season pass rates for Vermont students and their parents. With one centralized base area lift system and base lodge, children don’t get lost, and the ski community looks out for one another. Personalized instruction and a graduated lift system allow young families to learn and grow in the same spot. Also, the resort has glades for all abilities of tree skiing and riding.



Photo provided

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MOUNT SNOW

Route 100
West Dover
800-245-7669
mountsnow.com
mountsnowinfo@
vailresorts.com

The West Dover resort credits what it calls "the most powerful snowmaking system in the east" for always having stellar conditions on the slopes. Rental equipment is available for guests of all ages and abilities, and the whole family can work on improving skills, thanks to expert-taught ski or snowboard lessons for adults and kids. The Grand Summit Resort Hotel in the main base area has a heated outdoor swimming pool, hot tubs and video arcade that are always big hits with families.

STRATTON MOUNTAIN RESORT

5 Village Lodge Road
Stratton Mountain

Stratton takes pride in its Mountain Sports School and all its seasonal programming, in which kids can begin at the age of 3 and stay involved through high school. Learn to Ski and Learn to Ride packages allow complete newbies to try out the sports. At Kids Night Out special events, children can participate in arts and crafts or an outdoor activity while parents go out to dinner. Additionally, the resort is a favorite of children because of its snow tubing and ice skating rink.



Presented by





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February 19–20, 2022
 Brattleboro, Vermont



Saturday - Pepsi Challenge - U.S. Cup	10:00 AM Gates open	Adults, \$20 Youth, 6–12, \$15 Under 6 Free
	11:30 AM Opening ceremonies	
Sunday Fred Harris Memorial Tournament	12:15 PM Competition begins	Exit 2 off I-91 Follow signs to Cedar Street

To purchase tickets: HarrisHillSkiJump.com/tickets

HarrisHillSkiJump.com









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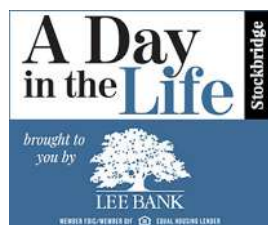









A Day in the Life - Downtown Pittsfield



In the final entry of our Day in the Life series sponsored by Lee Bank, we explore the many local businesses bringing life to downtown Pittsfield, Massachusetts.

101 RESTAURANT & BAR



AYELADA



101 Restaurant & Bar

Part of the McNinch Restaurant Group
2nd floor of the Holiday Inn, 1 West St., Pittsfield
413-553-2251
101Restaurantbar.com
Tucker@McNinchrg.com

101 Restaurant & Bar is a brand new restaurant. Their southern inspired menu is unique to the Berkshires, but there is something for everyone on the menu. Their cocktail list is also exciting and should be seen. The menu is the first thing that stands out, but the staff is also a central focus at 101 Restaurant. The restaurant works with their staff to help them advance, and offers health insurance as well as profit sharing.

Ayelada

505 East St., Pittsfield
413-344-4126
ayelada.com
info@ayelada.com
facebook.com/AyeladaInc
instagram.com/ayelada

Opened in 2013, Ayelada is still the same great small business that centers their whole brand around being fresh, local and real. They continue to offer homemade frozen yogurt and vegan frozen yogurt (made with their own homemade coconut milk). The original variety is still the most popular with its sweet and tart flavor, but they continue to offer over 100 additional flavors, and continue to come up with new regular and seasonal flavors. They also offer specialty toppings that complement their many flavors. They are vegan and allergy friendly and offer gluten- and dairy-free options.

The yogurt is made onsite daily with milk and yogurt from local farms. Supporting local businesses and farms is very important to the company, whether it be Mapleline Farm for milk, or Sidehill Farm for yogurt. Bola granola, Bartlett's donuts, 6 Depot coffee, loka Farm maple syrup and fresh picked raspberries from Lakeview Orchard are a few of their locally sourced toppings and flavors. Their newest addition is Giuseppe's Wild Mountain Honey from Windsor, Mass.

In addition to their dairy and non-dairy yogurt options, they are now offering homemade soft serve ice cream on the weekends (Friday night through Sunday), which is made fresh with Mapleline Farm milk and cream. A great, healthy treat all year round!

Berkshire General Store

75 North St., Suite 110, Pittsfield

413-347-9554

75northstreet@gmail.com

Facebook: BerkshireGeneral

Instagram.com/berkshiregeneral

Berkshire General Store is a store of many things: half deli/convenience store for your breakfast, lunch and snack needs, half gift store offering puzzles, baby gifts, toys for all ages, BlueQ everything, novelty gifts and more. They're looking to bring back pizza Fridays in the new year.

Berkshire Family YMCA - Pittsfield Branch

292 North St., Pittsfield

413-499-7650

bfymca.org

communications@bfymca.org

facebook.com/BerkshireFamilyYMCA

instagram.com/berkshirefamilyymca

Serving individuals and families from cradle to cane, the Y is one of the nation's leading nonprofits strengthening communities through youth development, healthy living and social responsibility. Throughout Berkshire County and Southern Vermont, Berkshire Family YMCA hosts three year-round facilities, including its downtown Pittsfield location for over 135 years, and 15+ off-site child care and program locations. BFYMCA welcomes all and, with demonstrated need, offers financial assistance to ensure everyone has access to the Y. At the Y, you will have opportunities to connect with new people, develop new skills and explore new interests, you'll discover new passions and a greater sense of purpose. Programs offered at the Pittsfield Branch — currently fully open while undergoing a \$12.4M renovation to add a new basketball court, indoor walking track, upgraded fitness center and increase child care slots in new child care wing — include adult and youth swim lessons and teams in the 25-meter pool; lifeguard, CPR and first-aid training and certification; infant to school age care and preschool; pool birthday parties; year-round youth enrichment and sports activities; water aerobics; fitness center with machines for cardio, Nautilus, rowing, bikes and free weights; cycling classes, family engagement events; family reunification services and supervised visits; Kids Night Out; SilverSneakers; group fitness classes; summer youth programs; yoga; community events; golf tournament fundraiser; volunteering and more!

Berkshire Innovation Center

45 Woodlawn Ave., Pittsfield

413-449-1100

berkshireinnovationcenter.com

hello@the-bic.org

facebook.com/berkshireinnovationcenter

instagram.com/berkshireinnovationcenter

The Berkshire Innovation Center is open for business. They would love to host your next meeting in one of their many interactive training and conferencing spaces. In addition, they have shared access to R&D facilities and equipment and advanced technology for local manufacturers. Member companies receive a discount on space rentals, equipment training and usage.

The Berkshire Innovation Center's mission is to accelerate the innovation and growth of existing companies in the region, with the ultimate objective of spurring economic growth, and investment. They do this by convening and connecting people and companies to share ideas, technologies, and best practices, by offering programs that promote learning and spark curiosity to attract, engage, and retain people in technology-led career paths, and by providing research and innovation space for people and companies to explore new technologies.

BERKSHIRE GENERAL STORE



BERKSHIRE FAMILY YMCA - PITTSFIELD BRANCH



BERKSHIRE INNOVATION CENTER



BERKSHIRE MUSEUM



Berkshire Museum

39 South St., Pittsfield

413-443-7171

berkshitemuseum.org

info@berkshitemuseum.org

facebook.com/BerkshireMuseum

instagram.com/berkshitemuseum

Located in the heart of Pittsfield, Berkshire Museum combines art, science, and history in ways that spark creativity, inspire innovation, and celebrate a life-long love of learning. With special exhibits and rotating collections that explore the human experience, an aquarium filled with aquatic and reptile friends, exciting special events each month, and engaging weekly programming for all ages, there is so much to see and do. From Chow Time in the aquarium and WeeMuse Art Crawls to after-school Robotics Club and Teen Marine Biology programs to adult learning opportunities and special community events, there's something for everyone at this not-to-be-missed destination. Explore our beautifully updated second floor with fascinating new exhibitions, two new learning spaces, and convenient amenities.

Explore culture, curiosity, and community at Berkshire Museum. Open daily. Plan your visit today!

Berkshire Nautilus

42 Summer St., Pittsfield

413-499-1217

berkshirenautilus.com

contact@berkshirenautilus.com

facebook.com/berkshire.nautilus

Berkshire Nautilus is committed to keeping you healthy with the most equipped gym around! They offer free babysitting; a fitness Store; 25 weekly classes; friendly and quality staff; frequent delivery of state of the art equipment, and locker rooms with hot tubs, saunas and steam rooms.

Berkshire Nautilus offers a seven days "try us" on us. Their facilities are 100% COVID-19 compliant and have plenty of parking — no excuses not to join!

Boys & Girls Club of the Berkshires

16 Melville St., Pittsfield

413-448-8258

bgcberkshires.org

info@bgcberkshires.org

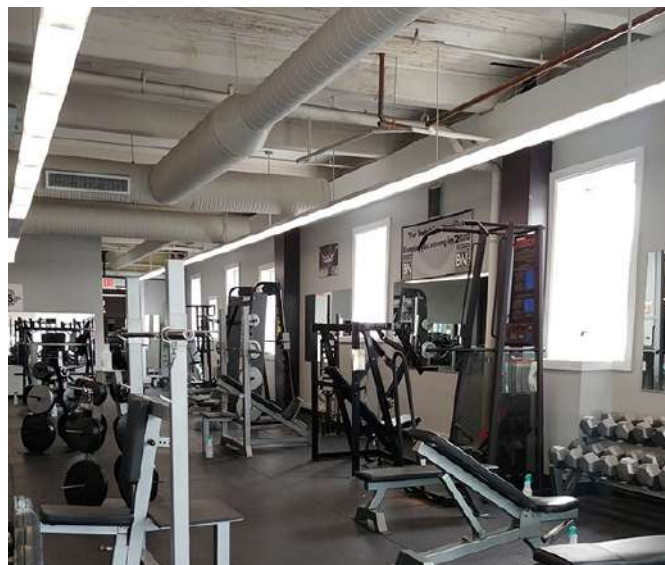
Instagram: [@bgcberkshires](https://www.instagram.com/bgcberkshires)

Facebook: [bgcberkshires413](https://www.facebook.com/bgcberkshires413)

Youth thrive in the supportive and safe environment of the Boys & Girls Club of the Berkshires and benefit from the adult role models of staff and volunteers. They have staff that can form caring relationships with our youth; they visit area schools working with teachers and counselors as needed.

The Club provides life-enhancing programs with character development experiences and focuses on healthy lifestyles and relationships, homework support, team building, athletics, and more. They offer a leadership group called Keystone, where high school students volunteer at the club. They have a Smart Girls program, which promotes healthy attitudes and life styles among girls ages 8-16. The third floor of their fa-

BERKSHIRE NAUTILUS



BOYS & GIRLS CLUB OF THE BERKSHIRES



A DAY IN THE LIFE

cility is the vocational floor, where members can register for cooking classes, or they can learn to sew. Not only are they a walk-in youth facility, but they also have an after school program and a pre-school program where licensed Early Education & Care teachers ensure a positive, supportive educational experience for all children.

In addition, the facility on Melville Street is the largest single-site Boys & Girls Club in the country, with over 120,000 square feet. With their four basketball courts, they offer a house basketball league, a travel basketball league and host many basketball tournaments. With the 25-yard indoor pool, they are the home facility for the high school swim teams in the area, as well as the home facility of the Boys & Girls Club Swim Team, The Gators. The ice rink is home to the Berkshire Bruins Hockey Program, the high school hockey league, and during a typical non-COVID year, is the go to place for public skate on the weekends

Carr Hardware

547 North St., Pittsfield

413-443-5611

carrhardware.com

stayconnected@carrhardware.com

facebook.com/CarrHardware1928

instagram.com/carrhardware1928

Family owned and operated here in the Berkshires for 93 years, Carr Hardware has friendly, helpful local folks who are experts in their field. They stock great practical gifts, and with over 38,000 items in stock, there's plenty to choose from. Let them help with all your home improvement projects.

Circa

436 North St., Pittsfield

413-445-7200

Circaberkshires.com

Circaberkshires@hotmail.com

facebook.com/circaberkshires

instagram.com/circaberkshires

Circa carries the largest selection of Mid Century and Danish Modern furniture and lighting in the Berkshires. The store, which has been in business for ten years, also carries vintage home decor, local and estate art and vintage clothing. They carefully select their inventory so that they can provide their customers with the best in quality and design.

Clark Vintage Lighting

342 North St., Pittsfield

413-344-4491

Clarkvintage.com

Todd@Clarkvintage.com

facebook.com/ClarkVintageLighting

instagram.com/clarkvintagelightning

Clark Vintage Lighting is one of the last companies specializing in the restoration of antique lighting. They are constantly adding new inventory. The only way to see it is to stop in and take a look around.

CARR HARDWARE



CIRCA



CLARK VINTAGE LIGHTING



DWYER-WELLINGTON FAMILY FUNERAL HOMES



CRUST



MUSEUM OUTLETS



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220 East St. and 776 North St., Pittsfield

525 Main St., Dalton

413-442-5094

dwyerfuneral.com

info@dwyerfuneral.com

facebook.com/dwyerfuneralhome

The Dwyer-Wellington Funeral Homes offer a wide range of funeral related services, from prearrangement, cremation and memorial service, to navigating grief and crafting a unique end of life celebration. There are many ways to honor the memory of your loved ones and Dwyer-Wellington Funeral Homes are here to help you find the perfect way to celebrate them. Their staff is here every step of the way to make this process as easy as possible.

Family-owned and serving the community since 1904, Dwyer-Wellington Funeral Homes consistently takes home the Best of the Berkshire award for Best Funeral Home, year after year.

CRUST

505 East St., Pittsfield

413-464-7977

crustpz.com

info@crustpz.com

facebook.com/crustpz

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

CRUST pizza starts with a handcrafted dough made in-house using Italian flours and old-world techniques which results in a flavorful thin, airy crust with a soft crunchy bite. All sauces are made fresh each day including organic red, pesto made with fresh basil and white mushroom. True to their Italian roots, they make their own meatballs, and they offer the highest quality salami, hot and sweet Soppressata, large format pepperoni cups and sausage. Fresh vegetables including locally farmed cremini and shitake mushrooms are roasted each day, and their cheese is made with just a few natural ingredients and are from the finest domestic and international sources.

After the oven, they offer dozens of finishing touches including fresh basil, parmesan and pecorino cheese, truffled pecorino, extra virgin olive oil, hot truffle sauce, Mike's Hot Honey, black truffle oil and salt and house ranch dressing.

Their pizza was voted "Best of the Berkshires" in 2021, just 14 months after they opened on 8/31/20. The Buffalo Chicken and Chicken Bacon Ranch pizzas — which are accompanied with house ranch made with fresh herbs — are a must try!

CRUST is vegan friendly and offers dairy- and gluten-free options.

Museum Outlets

31 South St., Pittsfield, MA 01201

413-499-1818

museumoutlets.com

facebook.com/Museum-Outlets-104050689394

[instagram.com/museumoutlets](https://www.instagram.com/museumoutlets)

A DAY IN THE LIFE

When you are looking for something beyond ordinary, stop by the Museum Outlets retail store in downtown Pittsfield, on Park Square. As the outlet store for Museum Facsimiles, the shop offers an eclectic mix of stuff added to Museum Facsimiles products for a unique shopping experience.

The Museum Outlets staff strive to make a shopping experience that excites all the senses and has people coming back to see what is new!

Tito's Mexican Grill

34 Depot St., Pittsfield

413-464-9468

titosmexicangrillpittsfield.com

find us on Facebook

With a large venue and a full bar, Tito's has the best margaritas and Mexican food around! Stop by for daily specials and complimentary chips and salsa. Monday night is Taco Night, with delicious tacos for just \$1.25 each.

Quillard Bros. Garage Inc.

75 Tyler St., Pittsfield

413-442-0981

quillardbrosgarage@verizon.net

facebook.com/quillardbrosgarageinc

Family owned and operated — now in its third generation — since 1927, Quillard Bros. is your one stop shop for all of your automotive needs. Services offered include Massachusetts state inspections, brakes, tires, engine diagnostics, batteries, oil changes and much more.

Eagles Band Inc.

P.O. Box 1946, Pittsfield

Rehearsal/indoor performance space at the First United Methodist Church, 55 Fenn St., Pittsfield

413 442-2782

eaglescommunityband.org

eagles.fraher8@gmail.com

facebook.com/Eagles-Band-Pittsfield-MA-118888731526037

The Eagles Band is a community band and the longest continuing performance ensemble in Berkshire County, and will be celebrating its 86th anniversary in 2022. The band is devoted to the continued promotion of the community band concept, where anyone from any background can come together to make music and have fun. They also have the added benefit of sharing this fun and music with neighbors, friends and family. The band, currently numbering 65 active members ranging from 12 to 95+ years of age, is a fully volunteer organization with professional musicians, music educators, performance majors and amateur musicians who just want to play for the fun of it and to grow musically. The band offers music scholarships and mentors student musicians and nourishes a close relationship with local schools. The Eagles Band concerts are free to the public. The band is unique in that it also has several smaller ensembles that allow its members the opportunity to perform music of many different styles.

TITO'S MEXICAN GRILL



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EAGLES BAND, INC.



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info@greylock.org

facebook.com/GreylockFederalCU

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Greylock's dedication to providing personalized services and helping everyone in their community to thrive has helped the company be successful over the years. They started as a small credit union to help General Electric employees save their money back in 1935, in the heart of the Great Depression. Their people helping people philosophy has helped them weather a world war, multiple recessions and even the recent global pandemic. Today they serve roughly 94,600 Members, but remain dedicated to providing individual, personalized service for all.

Greylock's vision is to enable their community to thrive. This means Members and non-Members alike. In fact, they offer free and confidential financial wellness coaching, classes, and partner with various non-profits to help everyone and anyone to thrive. Lastly, they are grateful for the difference their employees make every day in the lives of their Members. Opportunity truly grows here.

Indulgence Salon

75 North St., Suite 160, Pittsfield

413-442-2233

indulgencehairsalon.net

tracy@indulgencehairsalon.net

facebook.com/IndulgenceSalonforMenandWomen

Indulgence Salon for Men and Women opened in February 2006 in the beautifully-renovated Central Block building at 75 North Street in Pittsfield. Owner Tracy Wilson boasts over 30 years of experience in the industry. Indulgence Salon is a Redken, Pureology, and Jane Iredale Salon that provides a full range of services for men and women, including hair styling, color and highlighting, hand and nail treatments, makeup, wedding services (Indulgence also travels for weddings), massage by Belle and more.

The staff includes experienced hair stylists and receptionists who are committed to helping their clients look and feel their best. Their talent is constantly updated with training and education so that clients benefit from their years of experience, but also have access to the latest looks and trends in hairstyling. At Indulgence Salon, the staff love what they do and take pride in their work. Their clients immediately notice the welcoming atmosphere and instantly feel at ease with the staff.

KJ Nosh Catering Company

339 Tyler St., Pittsfield
413-464-9582

kjnosh.com

chef@kjnosh.com

Facebook: @kjnosh

Instagram: @kjnosh

KJ Nosh Catering Company is a full service catering facility. They can handle everything from start to finish. They provide planning, organizing, rentals, food, beverage, service and staff, for backyard barbecues, clam bakes, community social events, weddings and everything in between. They service all of Berkshire County and beyond, including Vermont, New York, and Connecticut. Their fleet of trucks offer easy delivery and set up for all your catering needs.

They are expanding their capabilities to execute off site events flawlessly. Aside from having their own banquet facility, they have invested in new trucks, trailers, delivery vans and equipment to make them fully mobile to produce any event anywhere. They also offer takeout and delivery for individual or family meals to go.

Lee Bank

75 Park St., Lee

413-243-0117

leebank.com

ltrombly@leebank.com

facebook.com/LeeBankMA

instagram.com/lee_bank_ma

Proudly serving all banking needs

Lee Bank has been proudly serving the Berkshires since 1852, providing all banking needs.

Currently, the historic banking institution encourages residents and visitors to learn more about the proposed significant expansion of IRS reporting requirements, which could infringe upon privacy. To learn more about privacy issues, financial planning and general banking needs, stop by the bank and speak to a knowledgeable customer service representative.

Martino Glass Company, Inc.

122 Tyler St., Pittsfield

413-499-0146

martinoglass.com

ashley@martinoglass.com

facebook.com/MartinoGlass

instagram.com/martinoglass

Martino Glass Company employees have, on average, over 20 years of experience in the glazing and construction field, allowing them to bring all of their experience to each project, small or large.

Recently, they have introduced multiple new product offerings for both residential and commercial customers, and can work closely with architects and contractors as well as home owners from start to finish to design and provide the perfect end product, on budget and on time. This past year they invested in a new edger, which allows them to do much more work in house with no need to rely on vendors from out of state.

KJ NOSH CATERING COMPANY



LEE BANK



Gina Vallone, Pittsfield Branch Manager

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THE SPOT



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New Year's resolutions? Many seek help from experts

This year i will...

Metro Creative Graphics

These fonts of spiritual, physical and psychological wisdom share their thoughts on how to make healthy changes in your life

By JIM THERRIEN

UpCountry Magazine

BENNINGTON — Most people ponder lifestyle changes around New Year's Day, and those inspired to push beyond daydreaming often seek expert advice and support.

UpCountry sought out and asked three experts, who qualify as motivators of positive change, how they might try to help.

"A lot of people don't like New Year's resolutions," said Kurt White, the senior director of outpatient programs and community initiatives at the Brattleboro Retreat.

That's because so many firm resolutions fade away in February, White said, often to be forgotten until the next new year rolls around.

"I actually like New Year's as a way to organize and think about change, and energize others to think about where we are and where we're going," he said.



Kurt White is senior director of outpatient programs and community initiatives at the Brattleboro Retreat.

Photo provided

ORGANIZED REFLECTION

That approach is similar to what those in the mental health field employ in general, said White, a clinical social worker.

His work with patients is typically more serious than some year-end resolutions, he said, "but I think everybody can relate to the idea that there are things about ourselves and

patterns — sometimes that we are not fully aware of — that are ingrained and hard to change.”

White said it’s helpful to first “take a nonjudgmental look at where we are and where we want to go.”

And try to focus on one or two things to change, he said, not four or five, which is when “people set themselves up” for failure.

“Work with a friend or partner,” White added. “That can help. Use the power of others to make the change.”

For those interested in a structured evaluation of themselves and their resolution goals, White suggested going to YearCompass.com and using the online format to set down reflections and goals in a written or digital “booklet.”

Thinking about resolutions should be “less about goals and more about getting in touch with your values,” White said.

“It’s always worthwhile to try to change things,” he said, even despite a string of failures.

He said professionals who assist people in smoking cessation programs soon learned that “if people keep trying to quit, they do eventually quit. ... It’s like building up the muscle to quit.”

Sandy Stevens is the owner of Time For Yourself in Bennington.

Photo provided



MORE THAN WEIGHT LOSS

Sandy Stevens, owner of Time For Yourself in Bennington, said she takes a broad approach to physical fitness when working with clients.

“When I talk to clients, I talk about the value of your health and not just losing weight,” she said.

Stevens brings a deep resume to her work with clients: She’s trained in myofascial release massage therapy, is a certified personal trainer, has a doctorate in clinical nutrition and a degree in exercise science and sports management.

Stevens said she works with individuals and with “small groups of no more than nine or 10,” and tries to get to know her clients and their goals, capabilities and limitations.

“I think it’s important to meet people where they are,” she said.

In that regard, Stevens organizes classes for specific groups, rather than offering large classes open to all that follow one format and pace.

‘NO QUICK FIX’

Often, Stevens said, “the biggest challenge is trying to explain that this is not a quick fix. They need to stay with it continuously, and the longer they do it, the more they crave it.”

It’s also imperative that people “make time to do this,” she said, despite a busy schedule.

Stevens said the functional physical training she offers can help people with many personal fitness resolutions.

“Now, I am prepping them for ski season, or being on ice and maintaining their balance,” she said.

Similar training helps prepare people — especially the elderly — for picking up or moving heavy objects, such as wood pellets for the stove, or moving boxes, while avoiding debilitating injuries.

The Rev. Kathleen S. Clark is pastor of Federated Church of East Arlington.

Photo provided



USUALLY SERIOUS

The Rev. Kathleen S. Clark, pastor of Federated Church of East Arlington since 2007, said that when people come to her for advice or support, they’re usually at a crisis point in their lives.

“They are usually having a hard time when they come to me,” Clark said. “It could be the end of a marriage or a job change, or a job change where they would be moving: the bigger life changes.”

These also are typically changes that could affect others in the family or the community, she said.

Clark said she doesn’t try to be “a self-help guru,” but believes “my role is to listen. Sometimes they want to talk out an idea.”

Sharing a problem or dilemma and “talking out loud,” rather than just internally, allows someone to better weigh the potential impacts on others, as well as the short- and long-term consequences, Clark said.

She is also someone people can talk to in confidence about some “pretty private” issues, rather than discuss those with a family member or friend possibly affected by the issue.

Her role “can be pretty challenging,” she said, “especially with family dynamics.”

“I’m also a person of faith,” Clark said, and she often tries to help the person determine, “Where is God or the sacred in your life right now?”

And Clark suggests sources of information — such as for financial advice — that the parishioner might require.

“I hope to be a non-anxious presence, and not tell people what to do,” but help them come to a determination, she said.

“I think change in adults is hard,” Clark said. “We get ingrained in our ways of doing things.”

Finding love in 2022? During a pandemic?

Photo provided by Dawn Worcester

Yes, you can!

From dating fails to fiancées,
anything is possible with
some apps, willpower and
willingness to meet halfway

By GENA MANGIARATTI

UpCountry Magazine

Online dating apps. Masked meet-ups. Walks on the beach in the bitter cold.

This is dating, since the COVID-19 pandemic forced us to maintain physical distance from anyone outside what we have come to think of as our quarantine “bubble.” For those of us who were single when the pandemic started or saw a relationship end in the world of COVID, this bubble consisted of just ourselves, and if we are very lucky, an animal or two or three or four. (Some of us finally adopted our first pet during the pandemic, but that is a separate story.)

I put out a call to people in the New England area to share their pandemic tales with me. Here are some of the gracious responses that detail the challenges — and boons — to dating in our current era.

Not many options for a while

Kelsy Allan, 32, started seeing her significant other just

weeks before the lockdown, having met him via the dating app Hinge. Though they were already part of each other's quarantine bubble, their meet-up options — with her in Guilford and him in Eastern Massachusetts — remained limited.

“My ideal date would be going to a bookstore, or going bowling, but these were not options for a while during COVID,” she said. “Eating in a restaurant was also not an option for a while.”

Instead, they hiked in very cold weather and picnicked in less-than-ideal conditions.

“We were very familiar with all the parks in the halfway point between,” Allan said.

Some of their most memorable outdoor get-togethers included taking his sister snowboarding for the first time, hiking Mount Monadnock (“I got in much better shape from hiking Monadnock many times,” Allan said) and, in its own



Mandy McCulloch, back, and her fiancée, Bethany Williams, front, met through the dating app Hinge shortly after the pandemic lockdown began. They had their first in-person date, a hike in an equidistant state park, about a month after they started talking. They went on several more hikes, and began officially dating some weeks later.

Photo provided by Mandy McCulloch



Kelsy Allan and Nick Misiunas started seeing each other just weeks before the COVID-19 lockdown began in 2020. With her in Guilford and him in Eastern Massachusetts, their meet-up options became limited. “My ideal date would be going to a bookstore, or going bowling,” Allan said. Instead, they hiked in very cold weather and picnicked in less-than-ideal conditions.

Photo provided by Kelsy Allan

Masked at first, then they got closer

Her friend Dawn Worcester, 31, of Cape Cod, said her default first date became a walk on the beach with her dog.

“It would be, like, so cold and windy. You’re just dying to go and sit and have a coffee inside,” she said.

If there was a second date, she and her partner would go to a restaurant, wearing masks when not at the table.

“I think we masked up the first couple of dates,” she recalled. “Once we started to connect in a deeper way and hanging out at each other’s houses, we didn’t.”

She mostly found people through online apps such as Tinder and Bumble, which she said presented challenges.

“I consider myself a really intuitive person, and I found myself not being as intuitive with these online connections,” she said, noting that many people use the online platforms exclusively for validation and hooking up.

There’s an app for that

Alyssa Barton, 31, of the Worcester, Mass., area, has found herself using dating apps less frequently under the constraints of the pandemic.

“I have some family trauma that has shaped my dating life; I tend to have trust issues with men and can be incredibly self-conscious,” she said. “I despise online dating since it appears to be incredibly superficial. In person, I am much more attracted to personality and little quirks, while I feel like online is all physical.”

At one point, she connected with a man who lives about an hour and a half away from her. After chatting for a couple of hours, they began to arrange a date — at which point he asked about getting a hotel room afterward.

“I tried to play it off, and neither agreed or denied the request. The next morning, the day of our date, he completely deleted and blocked me,” she said.

way, hammocking by a lake in the deep summer.

“We tried to have, like, a nice romantic date with hammocks by the lake in summer, and forgot it was summertime in New England and got eaten alive by mosquitoes, which was memorable, but maybe not in a good way,” she said with a laugh.

She suspects the individual was either unhappy with her vegetarianism, was simply looking to hook up, or both.

“I feel like people are much more up-front with what they want with the pandemic going on,” she said. “No one wants to waste their time, if they can’t get what they want.”

Worcester, who is friends with Barton and Allan, met her boyfriend in March 2021. When the two went together to get vaccinated against COVID-19, they lightheartedly called it a date — but the day of their first shots ended up being the day of their first kiss.

“We always joke about that,” she said.

From date to fiancée

Mandy McCulloch, of Dummerston, said for her and her now-fiancée, whom she met through Hinge shortly after the lockdown began, the initial constraints set by the pandemic suited their own personal boundaries.

“We’re both people that don’t jump into relationships. We don’t go out. We’re not drinkers,” she said. “We were both really serious about looking for somebody and wanting that to be a potentially long-term deal. I think, because of the pandemic, it really did force us to be able to communicate well and use our words.”

She said with a laugh that the first thing that struck her about Bethany, her fiancée, was that she could articulate herself well through writing, taking care to use proper punctuation and grammar. With Bethany in Boston and their options for meeting in-person limited, they found themselves talking everyday.

“It certainly made us realize — we were talking about this not too long ago — about friendships, and people that are really there in your life, because you keep in contact with the really important people. You check in on them and they check in on you,” McCulloch, 40, said. “It made a really big difference in who is just facade, and who is just, really, really there.”

They had their first in-person date, a hike in an equidistant state park, about a month after they started talking. They went on several more hikes, and began officially dating some weeks later.

“I really knew that she was it, and some people are like, ‘Oh, it’s really fast,’ and other people are like, ‘You know when you meet that person’ ... it’s so true. You just know it’s a really deep connection,” she said.



Dawn Worcester met her boyfriend, Eben Kenny, in March 2021. While she was still navigating the world of online dating in a pandemic, she said her default first date became a walk on the beach with her dog — no matter the weather.

Photo provided by Dawn Worcester

Wedding Guide 2022



Britni Christiansen photo

For one Windham County couple, their fourth wedding date proved the charm

Pandemic wreaked scheduling havoc on Green Mountain marriage ceremony

BY SUSAN SMALLHEER

UpCountry Magazine

SAXTONS RIVER — Ruth Rowell and Brendan Hackett set the date: June 6, 2020.

Then COVID hit.

And they set another date, Oct. 24, 2020.

And they even got the coronavirus, together, before vaccinations became available.

And they set another date, June 19, 2021.

And set another date, Oct. 23, 2021.

In the time of COVID, you have to be persistent.

The couple, who first met while students at Bellows Falls Union High School in Westminster, ended up

When Ruth and Brendan Hackett set their wedding date — June 6, 2020 — they had no way of knowing that COVID-19 would up-end their plans, not once, but three times.

Photo by Ellen Ross from The Light + Color

waiting 18 months before they could have the wedding they wanted at the Chapel of the Snows at Stratton Mountain, with a reception at the Stratton Club.

In all, the couple sent out four different “Save the Date” cards, first for June 2020, and then October 2020, and then June 2021, and finally Oct. 23, 2021, which turned out to be their wedding day.

Eloping was never really an option, said Ruth, who now goes by Ruth Hackett after her Oct. 23 wedding, with 130 friends and family in attendance. Even a small wedding, with a big party afterward, wasn’t what they wanted. So they waited, and rescheduled, and rescheduled. And rescheduled.

“We were convinced it was going to happen,” she said. “We wanted a wedding, for all our friends and family.”

Ruth grew up outside of Saxtons River, and Brendan in neighboring Westminster. They’ve known each other since they were 16. They went to their senior prom together, and both ended up at the University of Vermont in Burlington, where they were a couple until they weren’t.

But they reconnected when both were living and working in Boston after graduation, and got engaged in June 2019. Now both 28, the couple recently moved back to Burlington, as Brendan has a new job at GlobalFoundries in Essex Junction, as a principal automatic engineer.

“WE DEFINITELY NEVER GOT CLOSE TO A WEDDING UNTIL THIS YEAR. WE HAD A LOT TO DO. IT WAS HARD TO PLAN ...”

Ruth Hackett

Ruth brought her job with her to Vermont from Somerville: She works remotely for Brandeis University, working on admissions and student accounts.

It was her formidable organizational skills that kept the wedding — originally planned for early summer, and then to the fall, and then back to summer, and finally back to fall — on track, with all the decisions that have to be made to hold a wedding, and all the constant changes.

“We definitely never got close to a wedding until this year. We had a lot to do. It was hard to plan,” she said. “We were trying to err on the side of caution.”

Ruth said the couple chose Stratton Mountain because it had everything they wanted: a church ceremony with the reception nearby, room for friends and family to stay overnight, and a dance floor.

Guests could walk the short distance from the Chapel of the Snows to the Stratton Club, or they could take the shuttle bus system. Friends and family could book rooms at the resort, and the couple’s DJ could keep everyone on the dance floor.

At one point, an option of 25 people at an indoor ceremony was a possibility, she said. But there couldn’t be a buffet, and there wouldn’t be a dance floor. And there would have to be waiters taking orders, she said.

“We could have had a wedding with 20 percent of the people we wanted, but in order to have the vision of what we wanted, we waited,” she said.

In the end, the couple invited 165 people, with 130 people attending. “A handful had to cancel because of exposure,” she said. And some older people stayed home out of concern about exposure, she said.

Ruth said the only casualty of the oft-pushed-back wedding was their original photographer, who had to bow out because of an earlier commitment.

And according to Brendan, the only extra cost were all those “Save The Date” cards they had to mail out.

The couple didn’t lose any deposits, and all their vendors were understanding, Ruth said.



Ruth and Brendan Hackett’s “save the date” card for wedding guests.

Susan Smallheer — UpCountry Magazine

But questions came up: Was her originally strapless wedding gown too summery for October? Was the “cinnamon rose” chosen for the bridesmaids’ gowns suitable for the late fall? And what about the flowers? Did flowers chosen for June still look right for October?

After the third cancellation, “We both got discouraged,” Brendan said.

One concession, she said: Wedding decorations were ordered without a date.

Chapel of the Snows was built by Stratton Mountain a few years after the resort opened in 1961. The nondenominational chapel hosts everything from weddings to funerals, as well as different faith services.

Stratton Mountain event planner Valerie Ryan, who worked with the Hacketts, said the resort started moving fast in April 2020 to encourage couples to move their weddings to 2021. The process involved a lot of Zoom calls and sharing state regulation updates.

“A few weddings decided to cancel, and most chose to have a very small backyard wedding with immediate family, and all of them shared pictures with us,” Ryan said. “That really meant something to us at the resort; it meant we did our jobs well during difficult times. We did the right thing, and people wanted to share their joy with us.”

“Stratton was awesome,” Brendan said.

Richard Anderberg of Newfane, of the West River Mission of Town-



What Ruth and Brendan Hackett wanted was a wedding in June 2020. Instead, they got a wedding this past October, in 2021.

Photo by Ellen Ross from The Light + Color

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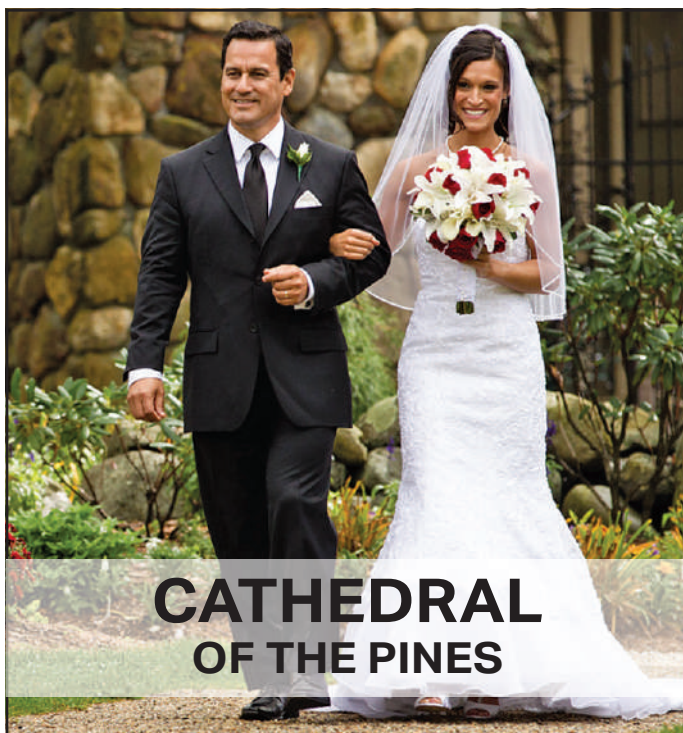


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Serenity at its Best

shend, performed the ceremony for the couple. Anderberg is a deacon for the Catholic church, not an ordained priest.

Married to his wife for 50 years, Anderberg said he has been performing weddings — but not wedding masses — for about 15 years.

Anderberg said he often performs destination weddings for out-of-state couples coming to Stratton or other locations in the West River Valley.

COVID-19 meant there were no weddings for a year, Anderberg said. Finally, in summer 2021, couples could start scheduling the weddings they wanted.

While the Hacketts did end up with the wedding of their desires, COVID-19 did make it harder — if not impossible — for some of their far-flung friends to make it to Vermont for the celebration.

One of the couple's closest friends was stuck behind a travel ban in Germany, which ended up being lifted right after the wedding. "He tried his darnedest," Brendan said.

"We had the wedding we actually wanted," Ruth said. "I was very pleased with everything. Nothing went wrong."

"We've been lucky," Brendan said. "It's been a tough two years."

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‘We learned to change and adapt to the situation’

Pair of wedding-reliant Southern Vermont businesses deftly dodge the COVID-19 pandemic



Beth Wilwol puts some spring flower arrangements together at The Gift Garden on Main Street in Bennington in 2021.

UpCountry file photo



Britni Christiansen, owner of Top Tier Baking in Guilford, and her assistant baker, daughter Kora, 3, prep baked delights during the pandemic. Left: One of Top Tier's masterful wedding cakes, made in Guilford.

Photos provided

By BOB AUDETTE

UpCountry Magazine

Brides and grooms and their loved ones aren't the only folks who needed to shift nuptial plans because of COVID-19.

Part of the wedding economy in Southern Vermont, florists and bakers had to adapt in different ways to outlast the effects of the coronavirus. They found different ways to work, located new suppliers and were able to keep their products on wedding tables in homes and small venues around the region.

"We were concerned about how things were going to go," said Elizabeth Wilwol, co-owner of The Gift Garden in downtown Bennington, which offers signature floral pieces, plants, fruit, gourmet baskets and other special gifts for all occasions.

Being able to provide contactless pick-up and curbside service right at the start helped maintain the stability The Gift Garden needed to weather the early, uncertain months of COVID-19. Restaurants were closing, people were postponing weddings, and most funerals were outside service only.

And then there were supply chain issues; some flower farms temporarily closed, uncertain of demand and how to best protect their workers.

"We had to source from other places," said Wilwol, who has operated The Gift Garden with her husband, Dwain, since

2015. During the height of the pandemic, she wasn't always able to travel to see the product, and that made her a little nervous. But things turned out OK.

"I was pretty impressed with some of the farmers and growers who reached out to people to sell their products," Wilwol said. "It was quality stuff."

BRITNI CHRISTIANSEN SAID BEFORE THE PANDEMIC, WEDDINGS AND EVENTS WERE HER "BREAD AND BUTTER."

Even though weddings are back on for many people, they have shrunk in size, Wilwol said. Still, during the height of the season, she was making floral displays for two to three weddings a week.

"We learned to change and adapt to the situation," she said. "Nothing stays the same."

Screeched to a halt

Britni Christiansen, owner of Top Tier Baking in Guilford, remembers March 21, 2020, well. That's the day the whole

world seemed to screech to a halt.

"I had three weddings booked that day," she said. "One canceled, one moved the date to be determined and the third went from 200 to 10 people."

Christiansen said before the pandemic, weddings and events were her "bread and butter."

She also baked desserts for the Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery in Brattleboro, and her cupcakes could be found at the Vermont Country Deli Market, the Guilford Country Store and Stratton Mountain.

All those places shut down for a while, as the service industry figured out ways to operate safely.

"Volume in general went downhill," Christiansen said.

When things started to open back up, she said, her time was split between baking and raising children home from school.

"It was a tricky wedding season to maneuver," she said.

Her products are back in the restaurant and back on the shelves at the ski hill.

"The cupcakes sell like crazy," she said.

And while weddings and events haven't returned to pre-pandemic levels, she said, the word around Southern Vermont is that 2022 will have a booming wedding season.

"I'm preparing myself for a busy summer," Christiansen said.

10 Films to watch(or skip) before you get married

BY DAN TEBO

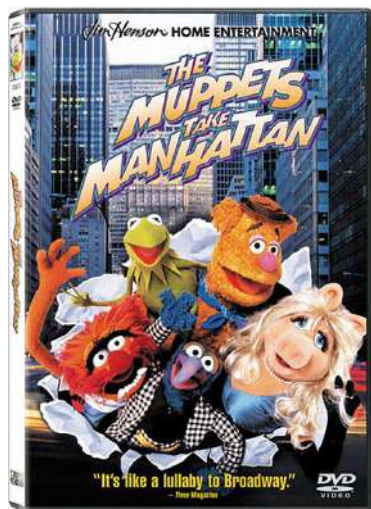
UpCountry correspondent

Ahh, the wedding film: low-hanging fruit for hacky comedy screenwriters everywhere! Type the word “wedding” into your Netflix search bar and weep at the unholy barrage of mirthless drivel. It shouldn’t be tough to mine comedy gold from weddings, because weddings are inherently hilarious. Bringing 100

mismatched strangers together at a far-flung locale and lubricating them with gallons of free booze should all but guarantee endless yuks.

Every decade, Hollywood manages to get it right and a new wedding classic is christened and subsequently watched on repeat during, I guess, wedding season? Those perennial favorites are duly represented here, of course. But we’re

also going to talk about a few films that take an unflinching look at what happens when folks electric slide their way out of the chapel and into real life. Those grizzly accounts of the years after the buzz wears off and the knives come out. These films will either make you swoon or make you buy a litter of kittens and avoid all human contact until the reaper comes for you.



Amazon.com images

“Muppets Take Manhattan” (1984): After suffering a horrific head injury, an amnesia-addled Kermit the Frog spends a lost weekend in NYC before being resuscitated by a Miss Piggy-delivered karate chop. This longtime couple is finally beckoned by wedding bells ... and if the sight of Muppets, Fraggles and Sesame Street characters gathered to witness these pig-on-frog nuptials doesn’t move you to tears, then you were born without tear ducts.

“Father of the Bride” (1991): Steve Martin plays a sneaker tycoon who has a confusing 100-minute meltdown over the cost of throwing his daughter a lavish wedding at his mini mansion. Martin Short chews scenery until his jaw detaches as Frank, an ostentatious wedding planner with an unspecified, vaguely Eastern European accent.

“Four Weddings and a Funeral” (1994): For viewers who prefer wedding films that feature actual weddings, this blockbuster British comedy has four! This is the flick where a young, pre-scandal Hugh Grant perfected the endearingly bumbling persona that he has employed in every film that he’s made since. Andie MacDowell’s hair steals the show. Again.

“My Best Friend’s Wedding” (1997): Julia Roberts is a bloodless food critic who travels to Chicago to sabotage the wedding of her life-long BFF (Dermot Mulroney) to the heiress of the Chicago



White Sox dynasty (Cameron Diaz). We giggle and swoon because it’s Julia Roberts ... but this is a queasy stalker film disguised as a frothy wedding romp.

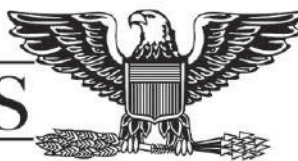
“Eyes Wide Shut” (1999): Stanley Kubrick spent years filming this accidental Christmas classic about a marriage imperiled by the suggestion of infidelity. The excess time spent plumbing the depths of sexual relations between married couples was so taxing for the film’s married-in-real-life stars Tom

Cruise and Nicole Kidman, that their own relationship disintegrated soon after the film’s release. Kubrick promptly dropped dead.

“Rachel Getting Married” (2007): In Jonathan Demme’s late-career masterpiece, an unstable 20-something returns home from rehab hellbent on trainwrecking her sister’s wedding. Everything about this film, from the writing to the performances to the wall-to-wall music, is of the highest possible caliber. I can’t think of a better depiction of a wedding on film. I have also never met another person who does not actively despise this film.

“Bridesmaids” (2011): If people are still watching movies 30 years from now, what they’ll be watching is “Bridesmaids.” Buoyed by an Oscar-nominated, star-making turn from Melissa McCarthy, SNL alum Kristen Wiig’s screenwriting debut is a stone-cold comedy classic. Full stop.

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DVD

“Melancholia” (2011): At a countryside estate, bride-to-be Kirsten Dunst contracts a severe case of melancholy and abandons her husband of several hours to fornicate with a stranger in a sand trap. And that’s just the first hour! The next 90 minutes finds the entire cast (and audience) impatiently waiting to be vaporized by

an impending planet collision. From notorious chuckle meister Lars von Trier.

“Palm Springs” (2019): Andy Samberg and Cristin Milioti are pitch-perfect in this hilarious and oft-touching flick about two wayward strangers caught in a time loop at a desert wedding. The fact that the screenwriters avoided litigation for shoplifting the concept of “Groundhog Day” wholesale speaks to this film’s immeasurable charms.

“Marriage Story” (2019): To those who did not find his 2006 divorce dramedy “The Squid and the Whale” despairing enough, indie auteur Noah Baumbach said, “Hold my matcha latte.” A freshly separated showbiz couple engage in a bicoastal custody battle so ferocious it makes “Kramer vs. Kramer” look like “Mrs. Doubtfire.”



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The band rages on the stage and the crowd grooves at The Stone Church in Brattleboro recently. UpCountry writer Bill LeConey made a stop at The Church on a December night out on the town to catch Harvest & Rust, a Neil Young tribute band from Western Massachusetts.

The Stone Church photos

Getting in tune, on the town, with a night in Brattleboro

The River Garden Marketplace and its sister Whetstone Brewery, The Stone Church, The Collective and Latchis Hotel: Venues that make for an unforgettable evening of flavor, revelry, recharging and rest

By BILL LeCONEY

UpCountry Magazine

When I was first approached to write a story about Brattleboro's resurgent nightlife, I thought, "Why me?" Is it because I'm the night editor? Or maybe that I have a reputation for being a sleepless party animal, going back to my days as a sportswriter in Atlantic City, where the bars never close and the bright lights of the casinos beckon.

Nah. They were looking for someone to provide the perspective of a relative newcomer to a town that, because of its history and its geography, has long been a sort of cultural,

hippie hub and gateway to Vermont.

I jumped at the chance to take a "deep dive" into the nightlife of the town. With my wife, Linda, by my side, we went out to explore all that Brattleboro has to offer when the sun goes down and the lights come up. It was bound to be a quirky, eclectic and, ultimately, musical journey.

First stop: Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery

We heard about the Whetstone even before re-locating from New Jersey to Brattleboro in 2018, and it has become one of our favorite local establishments.



A cold and frosty pint at The Church



Patrons enjoy an evening at the Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery in Brattleboro. At the Whetstone Station, you can enjoy a beer in two states at once.

Bill LeConey — UpCountry Magazine

Where else can you and a partner enjoy great food and drink, with great views of the Connecticut River and the traffic moving across the Anna Hunt Marsh Bridge? In fact, a line on the floor marks the border between Vermont and New Hampshire, so you can actually sit at a table and enjoy a true cross-state experience while gazing lovingly (or any other way) at each other.

We arrived midafternoon and took a seat at a table near the bar. Linda ordered a beer, while I sipped a spicy Bloody Mary spiked with bacon, green olives and a Slim Jim.

The Whetstone is a warm and inviting place. Upstairs, the outdoor waterfront “bier garten,” with its expansive views of the river, was still open on this early December day, with several people braving the weather, with the help of clear, see-through vinyl walls and additional flame towers for warmth.

We couldn’t stay long: It was off to the next stop on our itinerary.

River Garden Marketplace

The Whetstone’s new venture, right in the heart of downtown, is all about the “craft” — craft beer, mostly those made in Vermont and the rest of New England; craft food, including six to eight “small plate items” and a rotating menu of selections designed by different chefs; and a marketplace of craft items and artwork from Hand Built Market.

The space, which was formerly the home of Strolling of the

The River Garden Marketplace is a romantic spot, whether it’s day or night, inside or out, along the banks of the Connecticut River.

Bill LeConey — UpCountry Magazine



Sponsored Content

Heifers, has an expansive skylight roof, patio seating with views of Mount Wantastiquet and the Connecticut River, and a glass-fronted view of Main Street.

There’s also music, of course, including an open mic night, a pianist on Thursday nights, and other local artists on Fridays and Saturdays.

Marketplace general manager April Clay gave us a tour of the newly renovated downstairs event space, which will host anniversary parties, baby showers, rehearsal dinners and more.

During the month of December, the rotating Marketplace menu was a seafood-lover’s delight, so I ordered the lobster macaroni and cheese (very good). My wife, an avowed nonseafood lover, ordered the surf and turf without the surf, and was happy with her double portion of baseball steak. Speaking of baseball, it looks like the Whetstone has another hit on their hands with this place.



At the Latchis Theatre in Brattleboro, ambiance is everything, as you can see in this preproduction of a live show. The rooms at the Latchis are cozy, adorned with historic art from some of the various heydays of the entertainment industry.

UpCountry photo

Latchis Hotel and Theatre

We were excited to spend a night at the Latchis, the four-story art deco landmark still going strong, eight decades after its opening. We had heard that each room at the Latchis has its own little record player, so — being confirmed vinyl enthusiasts — we took the opportunity to visit our favorite local record store, Turn it Up! I grabbed a copy of an old J. Geils Band record that I lost years ago, while my wife picked up an album by one of her favorite bands from the 1960s, It’s a Beautiful Day.

In this case, it was a beautiful night, and the Latchis added to the appeal. Our room had a charming cinematic theme, with pictures of Clark Gable, Judy Garland and various movie posters on the walls. It also had all of the comfortable amenities you would expect from a modern hotel.

The 30-room boutique hotel and four-screen theater has survived a lot over the years, including flooding from Hurricane Irene and the COVID-19 pandemic. Latchis general manager Jon Potter acknowledged the challenge but set an optimistic tone in a message to supporters on the Latchis website, and urged all to appreciate local retailers, restaurants, cultural organizations and service providers.

We took him up on that — walking up Main Street and popping in (or just window-shopping) at some of our favorite stores and galleries, including Everyone’s Books, Twice Upon a Time, Boomerang and Gallery in the Woods, to name a few. There’s plenty to do in Brattleboro during daylight hours — but that’s a story for another



At The Stone Church, music, art and beer aficionados can find a warm and friendly home away from home.

The Stone Church photo

day. For now, it was onward into the night and a concert at our favorite “House of Music Worship,” The Stone Church.

The Stone Church

We had tickets to see Harvest & Rust, a Neil Young tribute band from Western Massachusetts. The Stone Church — with its stained-glass windows, stately pipe organ and biblical passages on the walls — was the perfect place to get our “retro groove” on. Our night there began with drinks from resident “mixologist” Alex, and soon the band took the stage. The band rocked, the sound and lighting were excellent, and the crowd soaked it all up. The Stone Church, a 150-year-old former Unitarian Church, has become one of the premier musical destinations in New England.

Harvest & Rust lead singer and guitarist Garrett Lechowski told the enthusiastic crowd that he always wanted to play the Church, and seemed genuinely thrilled with the room’s acoustics and ambience. “We really want to play here again,” he said. “Do me a favor: Next time we play here, tell a friend or two about it. The next time after that, tell two more friends.”

That’s music to the ears of Stone Church owner and general manager Robin Johson, who has navigated the pandemic with help from the National Independent Venue Association and its “Save Our Stages” campaign, which appealed to Congress to fund venues that were forced to “go dark” during much of the last two years. The Church is back open, and requires patrons to show proof of vaccination or a negative COVID-19 test and wear masks while indoors at all times.

“On the local level, we’ve worked on events with Retreat Farm, Next Stage in Putney, Gallery Walk,” Johnson said. “Going forward, those kinds of relationships, working together instead of competing with each other, will help foster Brattleboro as more of a musical destination, once people are happy to go out again.”

Erin Scaggs, who promotes The Stone Church with community outreach and social media, said the venue aims to put on shows that are accessible, safe and engaging.

“It’s all about collaborating and connecting the venues and the musicians and the resources,” she said. “We’re all cogs in the same wheel, trying to elevate Brattleboro and trying to bring people to town.”

Because it’s the first stop in Vermont on I-91, but also because it’s a small, tight-knit community, Brattleboro venues and businesses have to support and engage local people while also attracting tourists and visitors, Scaggs said.

◆◆◆ AFTER DARK IN BRATTLEBORO

“There’s a cool duality thing going where you have the old and the new, the old Whetstone and the new Marketplace; The Stone Church is kind of a mix of old and new, as is the Latchis; The Collective is an existing concept that is now new again. There’s a ton of potential here.”

And with that, we were on to the last stop in our night-life journey.

The Collective Lounge & Bar

Brattleboro was once known for its half-dozen or so late-night hangouts, fondly recalled as “dive bars.” Places like Emils Pub, Sportsmen’s Lounge, Mort’s Tavern, Mike’s, the Metropolis Wine Bar and, of course, Arkham had a funky, quirky vibe where you could grab a cold beer or warming cocktail and enjoy a late-night snack, even if you were brave (or sauced) enough to sample the jar of pickled eggs from the top of the bar.



Marty Griffin, co-owner of The Collective, in Brattleboro, pours a drink called the Spice of Life. Order one yourself on your next visit to The Collective.

UpCountry photo

Arkham closed during the pandemic, leaving a void of late-night destinations downtown. But that’s the vibe the new Collective Bar & Lounge is going for. It stays open late, has decent priced drinks and tasty food, and it’s run by two people (Marty Griffin and Kate Barry) that have some social currency in the community.

The Collective, at 55 Elliot St., provides a gathering space that embraces local art, local music and local community issues. In addition to open-mic nights on Mondays, The Collective features karaoke and trivia. It hosts gay pride events, baby showers, pre-wedding parties and dance parties. It has games such as chess, Scrabble and Exploding Kittens.

On the night we arrived, after The Stone Church show, the joint was filled to the brim with late-night revelers, enjoying the guitar stylings of Vanwho, an artist from Montreal. We had a couple of beers, enjoyed some delicious nachos with pulled pork and watched a somewhat wild and crazy scene unfold before us.

At 1:30 in the morning, the performer was lying flat on her back on The Collective stage, piercing the night with hot guitar licks as a flock of sweaty, happy night owls wailed their approval and hoisted their glasses in good cheer.

Another night in Brattleboro drawing to a close (for us, but maybe not the revelers), we ambled out the door, exhausted and eager to retire to the Latchis for some well-deserved rest.

New Year, New You

Are you looking for a holistic option for relief this new year? With an expansive range of products and an experienced staff of cannabis experts, Berkshire Roots can be a valuable partner in reaching your 2022 wellness goals.



BY BERKSHIRE ROOTS

The specialists at Berkshire Roots are keenly aware they work in an industry that's riddled with misconceptions — often tied to stereotypical movie scenes of smoke-filled rooms of college students. But what many people don't know is that there are many ways to reap the medicinal benefits of Cannabis — without smoking.

And, more importantly, they don't know that Berkshire Roots' professionals can help the canna-curious navigate ways to determine the best ingestion option for them, depending on what they are trying to accomplish.

To answer those types of questions, and also provide a safe space to ask them, Berkshire Roots, a craft cannabis and dispensary operator headquartered in Pittsfield, launched a free, private virtual consultation service with trained, trusted professionals who can answer your specific questions.

They can also provide information on the different nuances and benefits of the different methods of ingestion because there is no "one size fits all" when it comes to what works

best for individuals, the specialists say. Consultations can be done virtually, by phone or the curious can set up a private meeting at Berkshire Roots' Pittsfield location or the newest location in East Boston.

The team at BR realized that they needed to offer options, for folks who just want to visit Berkshire, they can walk in and speak with trained associates. Also available is a live chat function on the website, during normal business hours an associate is a simple chat bubble away. Ready to answer questions about products and available options.

"If you come into Berkshire Roots and you're worried about asking questions, we want you to feel super confident that you're going to get your answer," training manager Benjamin May said. "And if you call our team, you're going to get your answer with no expectation of making any kind of purchase. That's part of our model. We want to help inform the public because of a dearth of real information."

Charting your course

Finding the right path for you takes a lot of self-knowledge, a little bit of testing and some guidance from Berkshire Roots professionals.

"A lot of the population is looking for how this can benefit them without feeling weird," May said. "CBD can be really helpful but there's also a lot of pitfalls when you're talking about that as well. It has the reputation of being the healthful cannabinoid which can be true in a lot of ways. "It's known for potentially reducing inflammation. It's just one of the primary uses for it so if your pain is inflammation-based CBD is probably a good bet," May said. "But I have a lot of people who will come in and say I don't want THC, I only want CBD. But that may not provide relief for every issue, like sleeping for instance. There's no one size fits all answer."

That's why Berkshire Roots produces tons of different products, in several categories for different ways to ingest THC and/or CBD. There are products that are higher in CBD, products that don't have any psychotropic effect or feeling of euphoria.

"At Berkshire Roots, we're known for product innovation, quality products and our customer service," said Holly Alberti, Berkshire Roots' Senior Director of Marketing. "Years of prohibition and lack of information have led to many stereotypes and misinformation surrounding cannabis. We want to be a resource, the go to cannabis destination and help break those stigmas."

"Brownies or joints are familiar and used in mainstream depictions but there are so many different ways to consume."

Much healthier and effective ways too," she said. "Each person is unique, so a journal or notebook can be helpful when finding the best method of consumption."

While everyone knows about smoking, edibles are the second most popular choice after flower, Alberti said. Edibles made and sold at Berkshire Roots include Six Depot Cold Brew Coffee infused chocolate bars, hot sauce, award-winning chews derived from real fruits and vegetables, Roots Fruits, infused seltzer, syrups and other drinkables, and more. Some of those options include vegan and gluten-free varieties.

Weed for wellness

Cannabis interacts with your endocannabinoid system, which promotes the idea of homeostasis or balance.

"The endocannabinoid system isn't doing anything directly to your body that your body doesn't already do. It's a series of locks and keys that say 'You know what, this chemical's flowing too much and this chemical's not flowing enough so let's get this flowing more efficiently.'"

"That's the ultimate goal of the endocannabinoid system, because all of our bodies are so widely varied, it's really complex," May said. It's not as easy as saying take two aspirin and your headaches will probably go away.

Check out these products for a better 2022

There are many ways cannabis may be incorporated into your new, healthier lifestyle in 2022. Here are six hand-picked products from the Berkshire Roots team addressing common wellness concerns.

Roots Fruits Vegan and Gluten-Free Infused Chews

A High Times Cup winner (Non-Gummy, Edibles category) is Berkshire Roots' in-house edible, Roots Fruits. Gluten-free, vegan, and crafted from a few natural ingredients, these tasty fruit squares are delicious, melt in your mouth and are ideal for pretty much any edible enthusiast.

The recipe itself is of French origin, the "Pate de Fruit." Take good care of these delicately concocted, jar-sealed cubes, which are made with real fruit puree and supreme THC extract. Cubes dose at 5mg THC, with 20 pieces to make 100mg in one jar. Remember, edibles are a bit different than smoking or vaporizing cannabis.

If this is a newer product for you in 2022, it is always recommended to start low, and go slow. Most edibles are at about a 5 mg dose; If it is your first time, start low at 2.5 grams and wait at least two hours. The edible will process through your liver and metabolize, and each person could have a slightly different reaction or take longer.

Berkshire Roots Watermelon CBD:THC 2:1 Chews

Another great option for edibles, especially for those folks who are not looking for the psychoactive or "high" feeling, is a higher CBD ratio edible. That means that the edible contains more milligrams of CBD than THC.

Berkshire Roots Watermelon Chews are one such edible, with twice as much CBD as THC. Because CBD is a far less intrusive substance than — and a commonly suggested partner for — THC, edibles that mix in extra CBD provide an option for those looking for a more potentially holistic and healing experience.

It's important to ensure you give yourself the space to properly try any type of edible. Take it at the end of the day, when you know you will be home — that way you will get a better understanding of how it may affect you.

Berkshire Roots CBD Rich 2:1 Soothing Stick

If your new year comes with a new fitness routine, you may be facing aches and pains post workout. Try a topical application of cannabis to help ease your muscle tension.

Berkshire Roots manufactures a high-THC (but even higher CBD) body balm rubbing stick, the 2:1 CBD:THC Soothing Stick. Customers love that it has a nice fragrance, with hints of sage and lemon from the added essential oils. When applied, some may feel a slight tingly sensation upon application to their skin, and it is best recommended for those who use cannabis to treat



body/joint pains as it is applied directly to the skin. Some of the collaborative ingredients also used in the stick include organic beeswax, evening primrose oil, and white willow bark powder. With plans of working out and being more active in 2022, the soothing stick may be a great option to help with muscle and joint pain.

Orange Chameleon Flower - Sativa High Times Cup - Sparkies

The most common practice of cannabis consumption is smoking. The plant's flower, or bud, is used in its raw state, stuffed into a pipe, bong or rolled into a joint. Although not as popular, flower vaporization is perhaps the most effective way to activate the different cannabinoids, like THC, found in each strain. Common vaporizers like the Volcano or Pax devices allow you to slowly heat the raw buds to different temperatures right before the point of combustion. This can be healthier than the alternative, more common form of smoking.

Berkshire Roots' Orange Chameleon is a fan favorite cannabis strain that has received an award in the High Times Cup's Sativa category and is a great sativa to increase energy and focus this new year. Patients find that it may help anxiety, as well as provide a general boost to energy and mood.

It's available in many forms, including pre rolls – a convenient, ready to smoke and go option. Berkshire Roots does all the work for you. Their whole plant is hand trimmed to a finer consistency, then delicately stuffed into a cone. You just have to light it and inhale. Available in .5 grams, .75 gram and full 1 gram sizes, you can even find Orange Chameleon and many other exclusive strains in multi-pack pre rolls as well. Pre-rolls are a great choice for a solo session, especially when trying not to share and stay healthy! Grab a multi-pack and every adult can have their own!

This strain certainly smells and tastes like (you guessed it) oranges. The citrusy terps overflow in Berkshire Root's cultivar, and it's no surprise it receives such resounding feedback. Sativa fans will simply love their first taste of Orange Chameleon.



Berkshire Roots Full Spectrum Dablicators | Easy-to-Dispense Medium

The term or verb “dabbing” is not for everyone, but for those looking for a more potent form of cannabis, concentrates may be an option for review. Concentrates come in many forms and an easy to dose option is The Dablicator, a unique design born in California. This easy to use device allows you to simply dose out just enough concentrate, in a measured form. Many people find dosing their concentrates to be tedious and hard to measure. The Dablicator's easy-to-dose built in measured mechanism makes this easier. Plus, some people like to “snake” a line of wax along a pre-roll, drip on top of a bowl or dab rig, or dose their extracts in other less common ways.

Dablicators at Berkshire Roots are consistently loaded with their most esteemed cannabis strains, such as Orange Chameleon and OGKB 2.0 BX with Grape Ape Terpenes. Pick up a Dablicator if you're looking to experiment with or share

your concentrates, or if you are looking for an easier dabbing experience outright. Check out their socials for product tutorials and new products like The Dablicator.

No. 6 Depot Dark Chocolate Cold Brew Bar from Berkshire Roots

Is one of your resolutions to stop eating chocolate and quit your coffee habit? Well then, the Cold Brew Chocolate Bar might not be the best option for you.

The No. 6 Depot bar is a coffee-infused, THC-packed dark chocolate bar made from honest ingredients. The name itself comes from a West Stockbridge coffee roastery known as the No. 6 Depot Roastery and Café, which partnered with Berkshire Roots on the project. The cold brew is a mix of aged, Monsooned Malabar and high grown Brazil Oberon coffee beans, which has a smooth flavor with notes of chocolate.



The bar itself is made from Peruvian Couverture dark chocolate and is loaded with cold brew coffee and cannabis. There are two dosing options available at Berkshire Roots: 5 mg and 2.5 mg per square. Both bars are the same size, leaving potency as the only variable between their recipes.

The Cold Brew Chocolate Bar is the first in a line of several craft chocolate bars from Berkshire Roots. BR has just recently released their next two craft chocolate bars: the Stroopwafel Crunch Bar, which contains artisan dark chocolate with classic Dutch stroopwafels, pretzels and toffee bits; and the Dark Chocolate Macadamia Nut Bar containing Artisan dark chocolate with dried cranberries, crushed macadamia nuts and orange zest.

Berkshire Roots Tinctures

Tincture may be another great way to discreetly introduce some cannabis into your routine. Berkshire Roots uses different strains and ratios of CBD and THC for their infused MTC (Medium-chain triglyceride) tinctures. The Uplift tincture contains Jack Herer terpenes and the Calm tincture includes Grand Daddy Purple terpenes. Tinctures are also available in a higher CBD ratio — both 20:1 and 2:1 CBD:THC — for those looking to have less of a psychotropic feel. The most direct way a tincture can be used is dropped under the tongue, which will allow the cannabis to be absorbed into the bloodstream quicker than eating an edible and waiting for digestion. The tincture can also be added into your tea, smoothie or mocktail, or added into your favorite recipes. Berkshire Roots has a few recipes on their site that you can find for inspiration

Expand or start your canna journey in the new year. Work with a trained BR associate to start down your path. Schedule a virtual consultation to ask a few questions and allow us to provide some insight and some product knowledge.

PLEASE CONSUME RESPONSIBLY. This product may cause impairment and may be habit forming. For use only by adults 21 years of age or older. Keep out of the reach of children. This product has not been analyzed or approved by the Food and Drug Administration (FDA). There is limited information on the side effects of using this product, and there may be associated health risks. Marijuana use during pregnancy and breast-feeding may pose potential harms. It is against the law to drive or operate machinery when under the influence of this product. KEEP THIS PRODUCT AWAY FROM CHILDREN. There may be health risks associated with consumption of this product. Marijuana can impair concentration, coordination, and judgment. The impairment effects of Edibles may be delayed by two hours or more. In case of accidental ingestion, contact poison control hotline 800-222-1222 or 911. This product may be illegal outside of MA.

New Year, New You

Plant-based wellness options await you in 2022
at Canna Provisions in the Berkshires.



By DAN MCCARTHY

Canna Provisions

Depending on whom you talk to, 2022 is either going to be one of those “this is my year” years, or a cautious minefield to enter if read as “2020, (Part) 2.”

That cold shiver slithering down your spine isn't just you. The thought of a sequel to that year also gives us an unhappy, sinking feeling. The kind that almost makes you want to spring up off the couch and chase a greater sense of wellness and general health. Let the New Year be a rejoinder to all things yesteryear and be the one where the adult canna-curious take advantage of the many ways cannabis can



be a part of one's plant-based wellness options to incorporate into 2022 you.

Here are some of the options available at Canna Provisions in the Berkshires 300 yards off the Mass Pike in Lee, Massachusetts:

ROCK N PREROLL

Little Steven prerolls (2pk) + Organic Kava Tea. All for on the go.

Steven Van Zandt, legendary musician and Bruce Springsteen and the E. Street Band founding member, Sopranos actor, and NYTimes best-selling author had a wellness-awakening after the emergence of COVID and launched Little Steven's Underground Apothecary. There, among an array of his organic calming and mood-enhancing ceremonial Kava teas, are Little Steven's prerolls using Smash Hits cannabis grown right here in the Berkshires. The high-CBD flower IS also low-THC, which means it's great for those looking for less of a high and more of an overall body effect (say before or after physical exercise), and for those looking for a smoke free-option, say tuned for dosed honey sticks to sweeten those teas!

PLANT-BASED VAPING

HUUE Plant-Based Vapes (exclusively at Canna Provisions stores)

When new consumption forms and new avenues for new or curious consumers to experience cannabis emerge in the local market, it's wise to give it its due and proper. HUUE Plant-Based Vapes are aimed at discretion, low-odor, zero smoke, and convenient cannabinoid delivery via a brand new vaporization delivery technology exclusively found at Canna Provisions. They come in effect-forward categories (think: "get stuff done"), flavor sealed packaging for freshness, and allow for new means of simple quick controlled dosing.

"There really hasn't been any innovation in the space to make the experience simple or convenient enough for all types of users," said HUUE co-founder David Salinas. HUUE's all-flower "puck" utilizes the plant's full flavor, terpene/flavor profile, and the full-spectrum of cannabis compound from the source material for a more sophisticated way of consuming cannabis in its natural form.

BUNDLE UP (FOR SLEEP!) AND BETTER YOUR JOURNEY

Nothing says the New Year like grabbing curated kits to



make your journey into a new you be that much more convenient. Think: local coffee, Berkshires-grown exclusive Mass-mosa cannabis - the Northeast Leaf "Strain of the Month" for November 2021 - and local mugs all featured as a single collected bundle. Or say, some sleep-friendly eucalyptus lavender CBD bath bombs + handcrafted cbd soap Budssuds for aching hands, bundled with 1906 Midnight plant-based edibles as a swallowable pill, activates in 20 minutes and is a secret weapon in for the Well Rested Renaissance of 2022. Come swing in and see what the newest ones are, or mix-and-match for your own curation for all things New Year related.



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Theory Wellness: Three years of community commitment



By ARLINDA SMITH BROADY

Sponsored content contributor

GREAT BARRINGTON, Mass. — In 2016, Massachusetts became the ninth state to legalize recreational cannabis use. But unlike many other industries, it took another two years before the state licensed sales. From the outside looking in, the cannabis industry may appear to be authorization for businesses to print money, but it's not that simple. Although retail cannabis sales in the state exceeded \$1.25 billion in 2021, which was nearly double the \$696 million of 2020, the highly regulated, taxed, and monitored dispensaries have proven participation in this field isn't just about the money.

Theory Wellness is one such operation that began three years ago with a medical and recreational dispensary in Great Barrington. With no established blueprint to follow, the founders knew there would be changes along the way, but had no idea that the small start-up would grow its impact on the industry as well as the community.

"Our focus has always been to define the future of what legal cannabis can be, and how it starts to manifest in the communities we operate in," Thomas Winstanley, vice president of Marketing for Theory Wellness said. "We've been exceedingly fortunate so far and remain cautiously optimistic about our future."

As the industry continues to grow, so does the company, but its commitment to giving back remains constant.

"The vision continues to evolve with the industry, with the main difference being that at the inception, Theory was a medical-only company and we had no idea adult use (recreational) cannabis would be legal here in the Commonwealth," Winstanley said. "Ultimately, we're focused on improving our operations, our offerings, and how we can provide a better cannabis experience for our customers and patients."

With locations and operations spread throughout



Massachusetts, Theory has proven to be a good neighbor. It operates a philanthropic arm of Theory Wellness with a mission to support local communities, foster a sustainable industry, advocate for social justice, and advance critically important research into cannabis.

"Theory has always maintained close ties to any municipality where we operate. Our goal is to always lead by example on how cannabis can be a benefit, not just for individuals but for residents, too. Our sales generate millions of dollars in tax revenue that directly benefits the communities as those funds can be allocated to a range of uses," Winstanley said. "Beyond the tax dollars we contribute, we work closely with local non-profits that align with our core values. That can be a range of things from affordable housing, arts focused groups, and environmental conservatism. Actively participating in supporting the community is a net benefit for all and something we remain passionate about."

Theory has worked to give back to local communities through a range of sponsorships, volunteering, educational events, and financially, donating hundreds of thousands of dollars each year to host municipalities.

"We work with a wide range of local community advocates, non-profits, and conscious organizations that align with our values. You might see us at a concert, a farmer's market, or a food bank," Winstanley said. Theory has sponsored the likes of the Berkshire International Film Festival, partnered with the Railroad Street Youth Project and the Berkshire Community Radio Alliance.

Besides supporting charities, Theory is also committed to growing the local workforce.

"Above all, we're proud to be a key employer with over 80-plus

jobs in the Berkshires between our retail operations and our outdoor farm. Our team is a reflection of the community we live in, and something we remain very committed to investing in," Winstanley said.

Two examples are leaders at the Great Barrington store: Wyster Durant, Dispensary Manager, and Terrance Stewart, Operations Manager. Both are born and raised in the Berkshires and have been involved with Theory since the beginning. The two said they never envisioned themselves being part of this new frontier, but have grown personally and professionally from the experience.

"I actually started out working at a grocery store," Stewart said. "I've been a fan of cannabis for years and thought it would be interesting to see what this new industry was all about."

Administrators took Stewart under their wing and he found that hard work and dedication can bring about positive results when you're employed by people who want to grow great staff.

"I've learned so much and took the customer service skills that I've developed earlier to a new level," Stewart said. "And I'd never have believed that a person of color could go so far. Theory really does believe in diversity and inclusion and it shows."

Both Stewart and Durant are Black, but there's no affirmative action policy that contributed to their rise at the company. Durant has had decades of experience in fields that at first glance may not appear to be in line with her duties at the dispensary.

"I started out as a cashier at Brooks Pharmacy," she said. Although the local establishment is no longer around, Durant eventually became a pharmacy tech helping dispense medications and learned more about developing product knowledge, customer service, and personal development. She went on to work at a local bank and was eventually the head teller at a branch that was open seven days a week.

"We were constantly busy, especially on Sundays," she said. And even though dispensing money and other financial products are far from selling edibles and cannabis flower, there are a lot of similarities. "I was looking for a challenge," Durant said. "I would have been happy retiring in the banking industry. But the cannabis industry intrigued me."

The core values that Theory openly upholds were a huge draw as well. "I'm committed to eliminating the stigma associated with cannabis," she said. "As a natural product it has healing and therapeutic qualities that people often overlook."

Theory makes sure its goals align with the community and its employees. "We are actively looking to help define the future of cannabis and increase access to those who need it," Winstanley said. "With that as our guiding principle, we are evaluating thoughtful expansion into new markets that are beginning to emerge. It's still early in that process but we hope to grow the Theory brand as it makes sense to. Scaling operations is a very difficult pursuit for any organization, and we want to do so without sacrificing or cutting corners."

Along the way, Theory plans to stay true to the community. "The Berkshires have always played a key role in the organization. Nick Friedman, one of the founders grew up in the area and it's always been part of the plan to operate here. Beyond retail and cultivation, the operations have also evolved with our

entire marketing team based in the area along with members of field operations for the rest of the state," Winstanley said. "The Berkshires are a key location for our continued growth and success, not just in Massachusetts, but beyond!"

Theory Wellness by the Numbers

Total jobs created/number of employees: 86

Great Barrington store: 70

Sheffield Farm: 16

Total amount donated to Berkshires organizations:

10-plus non-profits supported

Over \$25,000 donated

Over \$8 million in tax dollars to Mass. communities

Source: Theory Wellness

Theory Values

From the top down, at Theory we believe the repeal of cannabis prohibition must be a force for good. It must provide opportunities for individuals and their communities harmed by the racially motivated war on drugs to create generational wealth. It must allow any adult access to safe, effective, and affordable therapeutic options — this plant cannot be controlled by patents and pharmaceutical companies. It must allow farmers and small business owners to meaningfully participate in and shape the evolving industry. It must result in net-positive environmental impacts and build individual awareness and respect for our incredible natural world. At Theory, we are committed to doing our part to lead the industry forward for all the right reasons, and we will do our best to compete and win against those who are not aligned with our values.

Contact Theory Wellness

Great Barrington Recreational & Medical Cannabis Dispensary

394 Stockbridge Road,
Great Barrington, MA
413-650-5527

Chicopee Recreational & Medical Cannabis Dispensary
672 Fuller Road, Chicopee MA
413-595-2011

Brigewater Medical Cannabis Dispensary
1050 Elm Street,
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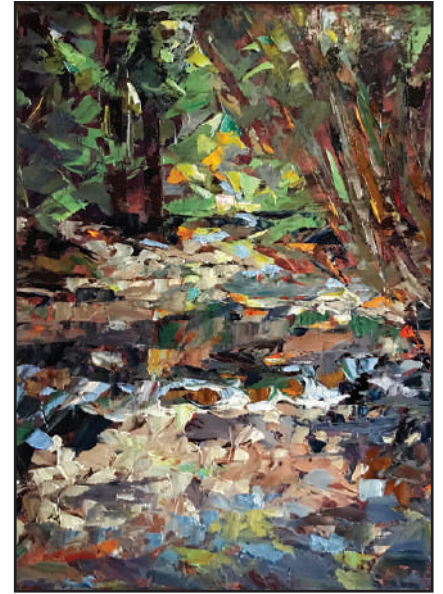
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**Rollin' into
2022**

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