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MAY/JUNE 2022

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VERMONT COUNTRY MAGAZINE

Vernon's Hillary Renaud
She leaves her mark on regional
race tracks

Townshend's Peter Galbraith
His moral compass helps guide
nations toward peace, justice

Joining forces
Groups preserve Great Falls
petroglyphs

Take a trip down Main Street
In Bennington and Putney, to find
colonial, industrial roots

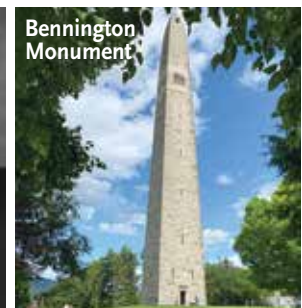
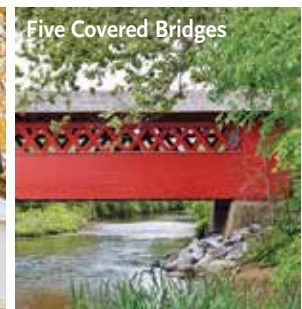
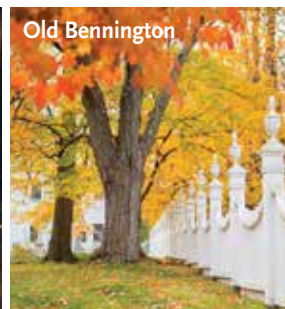
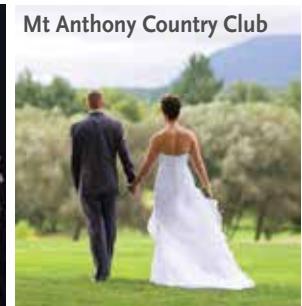
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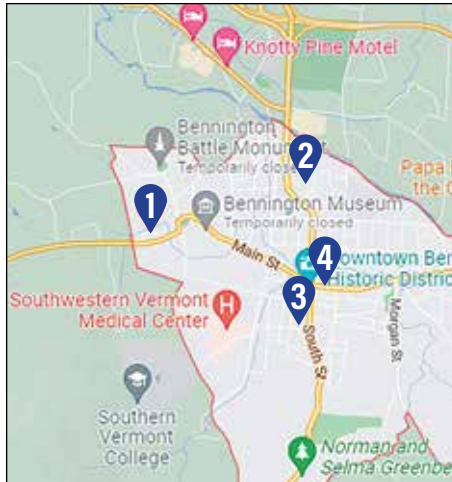
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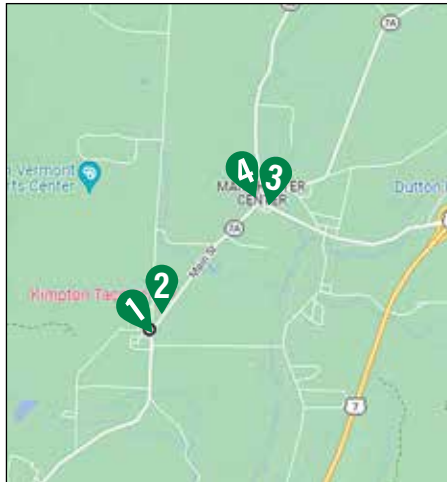
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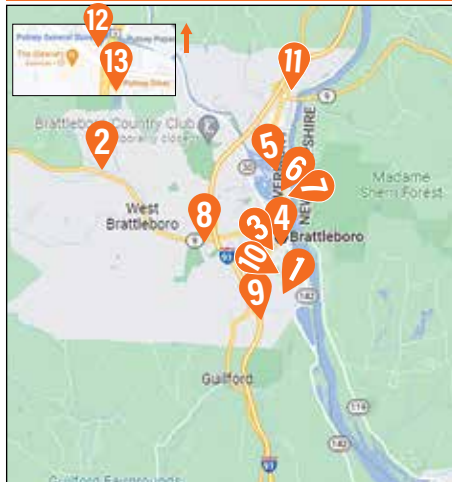
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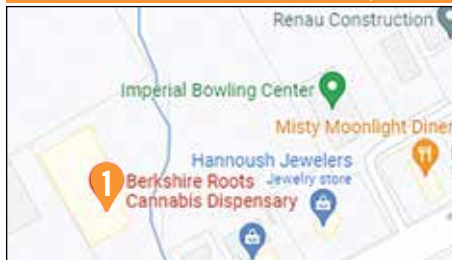
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CONTRIBUTORS



Shane Covey — wanted to be the next Larry Bird or Hulk Hogan while growing up in Brattleboro and now writes about people with similar dreams as the Brattleboro Reformer's sports editor.

Gena Mangiaratti — whose first name is pronounced "Jenna" — is arts and entertainment editor for Vermont News & Media. When not newspapering, she can be found running, drawing and writing fiction. She lives in Brattleboro with her cat, Theodora.



Cicely M. Eastman — is a Brattleboro resident and retired arts and entertainment editor from the Brattleboro Reformer. Today she is content to write and offer graphic design services as a freelancer. When not doing that she gardens, entertains her three papillon rescues and one quirky cat, and whatever else that suits her fancy.

Bob Audette — has been writing for the Brattleboro Reformer for more than 15 years. He is a graduate of the journalism program at Keene State College in Keene, N.H. In addition to being a coffee bean aficionado, you can find Bob and his family hiking the area mountaintops.



Lex Merrell — is a resident of Hoosick Falls, but they spend most of their days in Bennington. They're the community editor and resident crime junkie at Vermont News & Media.

Susan Smallheer — has been reporting for the Brattleboro Reformer since 2018. Before that, she was a reporter, statehouse reporter, bureau chief and editor for the Rutland Daily Herald in Vermont for many years. She lives on a small sheep farm in Rockingham.



Jim Therrien — reports for the three Vermont News Media newspapers in Southern Vermont. He previously worked as a reporter and editor at The Berkshire Eagle, the Bennington Banner, The Springfield Republican and the former North Adams Transcript.

Greg Sukiennik — Reports on the Northshire of Bennington County for the Bennington Banner and Manchester Journal. Formerly statehouse editor and managing editor of all three Vermont News & Media papers, he's written for ESPN.com, The Associated Press and The Berkshire Eagle. He also writes for fun (if not profit), hunts for classic vinyl records and makes a mean gluten-free meatball grinder.



President and Publisher

Jordan Brechenser

jbrechenser@reformer.com

Executive Editor

Noah Hoffenberg

nhoffenberg@reformer.com

Assistant Editor

Gena Mangiaratti

gmangiaratti@reformer.com

Designer

Cicely M. Eastman

cicelyeastman@yahoo.com

Windham County

Sales Manager

Lylah Wright

lwright@reformer.com

Senior Sales Executive

Richard Lolatte

rlolatte@reformer.com

Sales Executive

Richard Battista

rbattista@reformer.com

Bennington County

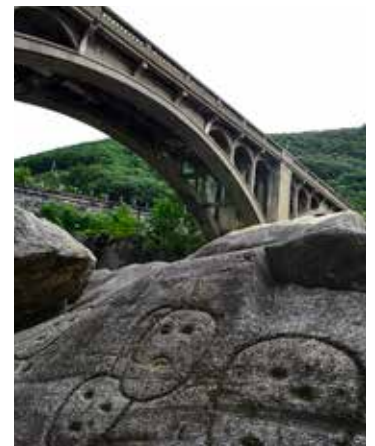
Sales Manager

Susan Plaisance

[@benningtonbanner.com](mailto:splaisance)

splaisance@benningtonbanner.com

Vermont Country magazine
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On the cover: Petroglyphs in
Bellows Falls.

Kristopher Radder

What's biting you is what's biting me

No sooner does the snow melt than emerges a horde of bugs and plants, trying to kill us.

May and June in Southern Vermont mean black flies and mosquitoes are back, and so are poison ivy vines and the dreaded false hellebore.

In this edition of Vermont Country, we get up close and personal with some of our best plants and insects. Best at what? Well, causing itchy, burning rashes and bacterial illnesses, of course! Writer and editor **Gena Mangiaratti** spotlights the black-legged tick, and journalist Jim Therrien makes friends with a few poison plants. When we say burning rash, by the way, we're talking about second-degree burns here. Hot stuff.

In a less rashy article, sports writer **Shane Covey** sits down with Vernon race car driver Hillary "Hilldog" Renaud, who loves all things speed and works in construction with her family when not a blur on local tracks.

Got compost but don't know what to do with it? Shelby Brimmer, owner of Circle of Life Compost, was born to help you with that. Our **Bob Audette** chats with Shelby about her upcycled life among the richness of scraps.

With war raging in the Ukraine, we thought the magazine should talk with our Southern Vermont diplomat, Peter Galbraith, with a look at key moments in time where he helped chart the course of nations. Manchester's **Greg Sukiennik** reports.

Southern Vermont and its neighboring states have no shortage of niche food and beverage producers. We shine a light on three of them — drink company Samara, Fortuna's Sausage and Salsa Sisters — and also provide info on how to track down about a dozen other edible specialty specialists.

Southern Vermont's main streets give off at least two distinct vibes: colonial and industrial. Follow correspon-

dent **Cicely Eastman**, as she spent a couple of afternoons in Bennington and Putney, sharing tidbits of the history of each.

This May/June edition marks the 119th anniversary of the Mary Rogers murder trial in Bennington. First, she dropped and killed her baby; later, she dropped and killed her husband. Vermont Country's **Lex Merrell** revisits the case that made headlines across the nation.

We gave a short break to film critic **Dan Tebo**, but he'll be back for the July/August edition with some films that are too hot, even for summer (but not so hot to require a rating above R).

Please enjoy this installment of Vermont Country, where the ticks and stinging plants will not judge you based on the cut of your jib. They suck blood and leave lesions equally among us all.

*Noah Hoffenberg,
Vermont Country magazine executive editor*

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This Vernon resident knows one speed: fast



Hillary "Hilldog" Renaud celebrates a victory.

Brattleboro Union High grad Hillary Renaud leaves her mark on regional race tracks

By Shane Covey
Vermont Country

Brattleboro Union High School's outdoor track didn't do Hillary Renaud much good. She needed one with banked turns, an outside wall and a pit road.

The Vernon resident has been driving race cars since she was 13, starting out in the Young Guns class at Monadnock Speedway in Winchester, N.H. The 2017 Lightning Stocks series champion estimates that she has won 15 to 20 races during her career behind the wheel.

Now 26, she will compete in the Street Stock division this year. The season begins with the Spring Dash on April 30 and concludes with a night of racing on Sept. 17.

Renaud is one of five women who are regulars at the Winchester oval. Jennifer Jo Cobb, Hailie Deegan and

PERSON OF INTEREST ♦♦♦

Natalie Decker are the only three women competing in one of NA-SCAR's three most popular divisions.

The 2014 Brattleboro Union High graduate climbed out of the driver's side window of her No. 88 Chevy Monte Carlo recently to talk about such things as what it feels like when putting the pedal to the metal and what it's like as a woman in a sport dominated by men.

Q: What do you do for work?

A: I work for Renaud Brothers Construction as a commercial truck driver, crane operator and laborer.

Q: What do you like doing in your free time?

A: I like to ride horses, work on the race car, and hang out with friends and family.

Q: Which drivers do you root for?

A: I'm not a huge NASCAR fan, but I've always liked Kevin Harvick and Ryan Newman.

Q: How did you get your start in the sport?

A: I'd have to say I got started in racing before I could even walk. My mom used to take me to the races when I was very little to watch my dad, brother, uncles and cousins race. Then, when I was about 8, I started ice racing on the setback by our work. Once I turned 13, Monadnock Speedway started a youth division, and I competed in that, and I haven't stopped racing since.

Q: Tell me about the car you will be driving this season.

A: My current race car is a Monte Carlo. BFR Chassis built the chassis and did the inside tin and the body. The wrap on it is a green, orange and black tribal design. My number is 88.

Q: How fast do you go when racing?

A: Our top speed at Monadnock in a street stock is probably between 60 to 70 miles per hour — we don't have speedometers in the cars. That's fast for a quarter-mile track, but at



Hillary Renaud at work.



Hillary Renaud competes at Monadnock Speedway in Winchester, N.H.

bigger tracks you definitely go faster, which I think is more fun.

Q: Do you like going fast in general?

A: Yes. I love roller coasters, and I always liked water skiing, before I had the surgery on my knee.

Q: What do you like best about the sport?

A: I love racing in general. I always have, although I think the best part is the adrenaline you get when you're out there on the track racing for the win.

Q: What's your best racing memory?

A: It has to be between winning the championship in the Lightning Stocks in 2017 and winning my first street stock race in 2019.

Q: What's your worst racing memory?

A: It was in 2016 ... I had built a brand new car from scratch with one of my friends, and during the first heat race of the year it was destroyed. I was racing against my uncle and something in the rear of the car broke, we touched front tires, and I went head-on into the turn four wall. We spent almost the whole summer rebuilding the car.

Q: What do you remember about your first race ever?

A: I remember being nervous, because I didn't want to crash my car, and it was way different than being out on the ice racing with a car.

Q: Which tracks have you competed at?

A: My home track is Monadnock Speedway, but I've also raced at Claremont Motorsports Park, Lee USA Speedway, Star Speedway and The New London Waterford Speedbowl.

Q: What goes through your mind while racing?

A: I'm usually thinking about hitting my lines and trying to get up front, and where I can make passes to get to the front. If I'm in the lead, then I'm thinking about hitting my



Hillary Renaud smiles in Victory Lane.

lines and keeping the car low so no one can pass me.

Q: Have you ever been treated differently because you are a female driver?

A: I definitely have felt like I am treated differently because I'm a female driver. Ever since I was 13 and just getting into racing, there have always been a couple people that don't think women should be in the sport. I've never let it bother me too much. If anything, it pushes me to do even better and prove people wrong. If someone tells me I can't or shouldn't do something, it makes me want to

do it even more.

In my line of work, I also feel as though I am treated differently for being a female. I'll show up to a job site in my crane to do a job and sometimes people ask where the operator is or where the driver is, then they continue to ask if there is anyone else that can do the job. Once everything is all done, they usually change their tone and tell me how well of a job I did and end up requesting me again. I'm glad more women are getting into the sport of racing and into trades that are mostly made up of men.



Hillary Renaud racing.

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A photograph of Peter Galbraith standing in the gap of the Berlin Wall. He is wearing a dark blue jacket and dark pants, with his arms outstretched. The wall is made of rough, grey concrete with visible rebar. In the background, a multi-story building and a grassy area are visible under a cloudy sky.

At the right hand of power

Photos provided Peter Galbraith

Peter Galbraith of Townshend stands in between the former East and West Germany at the Berlin Wall.

Townshend's Peter Galbraith has used his moral compass to help guide nations toward peace, justice

By Greg Sukiennik

Vermont Country

TOWNSHEND — Peter Galbraith has spent much of his life in some of the world's most dangerous hotspots.

In 1988, as a U.S. Senate Committee on Foreign Relations staff member, he discovered Saddam Hussein's regime was using chemical weapons to commit genocide against the Kurds. Three years later, he ventured into Kurdistan as their ill-fated rebellion began — and escaped across the Tigris River to relative safety when the Iraqi

army crushed the uprising.

As a diplomat and negotiator, Galbraith worked to build democratic institutions in nations torn apart by war — as U.S. ambassador to Croatia, as assistant secretary general of the United Nations in Afghanistan, and as a U.N. adviser writing East Timor's constitution and negotiating oil and gas rights that had been claimed by Australia.

Most recently, he helped 16 girls and young women — members of a Kurdish religious minority who were kidnapped into sexual slavery by ISIS — reunite with 24 children born to them as a result of that experience.

Injustice doesn't sit well with him

Injustice has never sat well with Galbraith, now 71. He credits the influence of his parents — economist and Harvard professor John Kenneth Galbraith and author Catherine Galbraith — for instilling that value.

“My father obviously was an economist who talked and wrote about inequality and corporate greed and the nature of poverty. My mother was a student in Nazi Germany who had seen the Aryan race laws.”

Peter Galbraith

“It's certainly something my parents felt,” he said. “My father obviously was an economist who talked and wrote about inequality and corporate greed and the nature of poverty. My mother was a student in Nazi Germany who had seen the Aryan race laws.”

“Some of it's just innate. I never liked bullies. I never liked seeing people being hurt.”

Over and over again, Galbraith has seen the results of war firsthand and been called upon to help put the pieces back together, as a diplomat and negotiator. In each case, he said, what nations learn the hard way about war is that it almost never goes according to plan.

The U.S. experience in Afghanistan is a case in point, he said. When the Soviet Union invaded that country in 1979, America backed the Afghan mujahideen. But that eventually led to the rise of al-Qaida and terror attacks on two American cities, costing thousands of lives. It also led to 20 years of U.S. military involvement in Afghanistan, which claimed many more lives and ended with the Taliban in control.

'Unintended consequences'

Another conflict with potential unintended consequences is Russia's invasion of Ukraine, which began Feb. 24.



Galbraith is seen here in Vukovar with U.S. Ambassador to the United Nations Madeleine Albright and Assistant Secretary of State John Shattuck in 1996.



Galbraith meets with former President Jimmy Carter.



Galbraith rides on a tractor with Serbian refugees in August 1995. He was protecting them from a Croatian mob.



Brattleboro Reformer file photo

Peter Galbraith rides in the Wardsboro July Fourth parade with son Andrew in 1979.

“Who knows what the unintended consequences are going to be,” Galbraith said. “It may well lead to Vladimir Putin’s ouster. If things aren’t carefully handled, it could lead to nuclear war.”

One consequence that seems likely is the breakdown of efforts to prevent nuclear proliferation, including the global agreement with Iran, he said.

What’s less certain is how the trauma of the Ukraine war — which already has seen reported war crimes, including executions and family deportations — will affect all involved.

“I’m particularly thinking of young people ... 20 to 30 years from now. For sure, there will be consequences,” he said. “People in wartime situations are very much shaped by those experiences, sometimes in ways that prove catastrophic later.”

“I’m particularly thinking of young people ... 20 to 30 years from now. For sure, there will be consequences.”

Peter Galbraith

Galbraith now describes himself as a “freelance diplomat.” While he lacks any one nation’s backing, “it enables me to talk to parties, particularly in conflict situations. I don’t have to represent any country’s point of view — I help them figure out what they should do.”

Freelance diplomacy at work

In 2021, he helped reunite 24 children of Yazidi girls who were kidnapped by ISIS and forced into sex slavery with their mothers.

ISIS had declared its intention to wipe out the Yazidi people — a Kurdish minority with its own monotheistic religion — and they carried out the threat. For five years, the girls they kidnapped were their prisoners.

When ISIS fell in 2019, the Yazidi religious elders did not want the children back, saying they could not be part of their society. That meant when Galbraith helped broker a possible return of the children to their mothers, the women were forced to make a choice: their Yazidi community, or their children.

It helped that Galbraith had been working with the Kurds for 40 years. It also helped that he had worked with President Joe Biden in the U.S. Senate.

“The new president is someone I have known for 43 years,” he said. “He knew I knew the Kurds very well and cared deeply about humanitarian issues.”

“My feeling was most intense ... that nobody was helping these girls,” who were ages 10 to 18 when they were kidnapped, Galbraith said. “The oldest of [their]

children was almost 5. The youngest was 2. She had been taken from her mother two hours after [she] was born.”

Back in Vermont

When he’s not on missions overseas or delivering lectures on history and current events, Galbraith calls Townshend home. He spent summers there as a child, splitting time between Vermont and Cambridge, Mass., where his father taught at Harvard.

The family found its way to Townshend thanks in part to visits his father and mother paid to friends in Brookline, just across the West River from Newfane and Townshend.

The Galbraiths put down roots here in 1947.

“While my mother was looking after the kids, my father went out and found the house — the first house he ever owned,” Galbraith said.

For \$5,500, Galbraith’s father purchased a farmhouse in Townshend. The house, built in 1776, has “52 windows, nine doors, and how many rooms, plus 200 acres,” he said. He later built another house for himself on the property, and then moved to another house nearby.

Asked if he preferred greater Boston or the Vermont woods as a kid, Galbraith answered without hesitation. “I always loved Vermont,” he said. “When I was old enough to be a resident, I became a resident of Townshend and have been ever since.”

Galbraith also was active in Vermont politics, as a campaign worker for Philip Hoff’s run for the U.S. Senate, as state Democratic party chairman, as a state senator representing Windham County and as a candidate for governor.

“There’s definitely something very special about Vermont’s sense of community,” he said. “It’s a place that respects human rights and the environment — things I care deeply about.”

Son of well-known parents

It would be easy to say John Kenneth Galbraith (1908–2006) cast a long shadow. It was quite literally true — “he was six foot eight and a half,” Peter Galbraith said.

A Harvard professor born in Canada, John Kenneth Galbraith wrote numerous influential books on economics, most notably “The Affluent Society” (1957), and worked for or advised Democratic presidential administrations from Franklin Delano Roosevelt through Lyndon B. Johnson. He served as ambassador to India under John F. Kennedy and was honored with the Presidential Medal of Freedom and the Order of Canada.

“The easy thing to say is it wasn’t always easy to grow up in the shadow of someone so well known,” Galbraith said of his father. “But the correct answer is that all of it gave me enormous advantages from which I benefited.”

“In the end, I never felt overshadowed — partly because I chose a different path.”



In 2021, Peter Galbraith helped reunite 24 children of Yazidi girls, kidnapped by ISIS and forced into sex slavery, with their mothers.



Peter Galbraith sits on an abandoned Soviet tank on Feb. 14, 1989, the day the Soviets withdrew from Afghanistan.



Pakistan Prime Minister Benazir Bhutto, left, was one of many heads of state with whom Galbraith met.



Here, a young Peter Galbraith escorting future Indian Prime Minister Indira Gandhi in 1962. His mother is with Prime Minister Jawaharlal Nehru; future Prime Minister Rajiv Gandhi is behind.

His mother, a Smith College graduate, met her husband while she was a graduate student at Radcliffe College. She had studied abroad in Munich in 1933, where one of her housemates, British socialite Unity Mitford, was dating Adolf Hitler.

Her personal observations of Hitler's rise to power have stuck with Galbraith, especially given current events.

"Just before she died, she was reading her diaries to me," he said. "They were very perceptive about what was going on in Nazi Germany, in particular the race laws and Aryan laws and her description of it and horror at it."

Behind the Iron Curtain

Another formative experience was Galbraith's adventures in Eastern Europe in the summer of 1968, when, still in high school, he found himself in one of three Volkswagen vans with Boston-area college students on a camping trip behind the Iron Curtain. They ventured through the former East Germany, Poland, Czechoslovakia, the Soviet Union, Georgia and the Donbas region of Ukraine.

But when Galbraith and a friend attempted to travel to Hungary from Romania, their train was stopped at the Hungarian border amid shocking news: The Soviets and four Warsaw Pact nations, including Hungary, had sent their armies into Czechoslovakia to put down the "Prague Spring." The train headed back to Bucharest, with some Czechs on board in tears.

In response, Galbraith and his friend delivered a letter of protest to the Soviet embassy in Bucharest.

"It was my first diplomatic act," Galbraith recalled. It didn't go far: The guard took the note and replied "in the garbage" in Russian.

Regime change takes time

Thinking about those events and what they mean for the present day, Galbraith reflected on how autocrats historically manage to stay in power.

"When you look at regimes and ideologies, the first thing that goes is the belief," he said. "An authoritarian can rule and stay in power for a long time once people stop believing. After 1968, nobody believed in communism. But it took 21 more years for the system to collapse. The same is very much true in Iran — hardly anyone there believes in the theological system. But people participate because it's a path forward."

While Americans tend to think they "won" the Cold War, that's a U.S.-centric view that ignores what was going on inside the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics, he added.

"The reason the Soviet Union collapsed was hugely about Soviet leaders who realized the system was unsustainable and ultimately had the courage to change it. They never tried to keep up — they knew full well, with nuclear weapons, we'd never attack them."



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Kristopher Radder — Vermont Country

Above: Onlookers examine the petroglyphs in Bellows Falls, believed to have been carved thousands of years ago.

Left: Rich Holschuh, director of the Atowi Project in Brattleboro, rejects a common perception that the petroglyphs were created by indigenous people as part of an artistic expression. They are deeply spiritual, he said, and The Great Falls mark an important spiritual home for the Abenaki community. Even 1800s colonial history includes reference to Native American elders returning to Bellows Falls to die and to be buried there with their ancestors.

Joining forces to preserve Great Falls petroglyphs

Town, Abenaki tribe receive National Park Service grant to benefit culturally sensitive site

By Susan Smallheer
Vermont Country

BELLOWS FALLS — The mysterious Native American petroglyphs carved into the rocky banks of the Connecticut River at Bellows Falls — while an enduring source of fascination — have long been misunderstood.

The petroglyphs, numbering about 24 faces, are believed to be about 3,000 years old. They are included in the National Register of Historic Places, but that posting is based on 1980s history and language, and unfortunately, prejudiced.

But a new movement, to correct the old record and biases, hopes to put the petroglyphs into the context of

the sacred Abenaki ground and give them the recognition, and respect, they deserve.

Grant for under represented communities

The town of Rockingham and the Elnu Abenaki tribe joined forces to apply for a National Park Service grant for underrepresented com-

munities, which would correct and expand the 1980s official record, with a more accurate and sensitive description of the petroglyphs and their role in the region.

In mid-April, the town received notice that it had received the grant of \$36,832, one of 22 projects in 16 states across the country funded by the National Park Service, to better represent Black, Indigenous and communities of color. And the grant is the first such Park Service grant received by a Vermont community.

Rich Holschuh, director of the Atowi Project in Brattleboro, visited the Bellows Falls petroglyphs this winter, standing on the now-closed Vilas Bridge, which spanned the winter-subdued Connecticut River. He looked south, just over the railing to the petroglyphs below. Snow and ice covered one of the banks of petroglyphs. Another bank of petroglyphs is permanently covered with heavy stone rip-rap.

'They are not art'

"They are not art," said Holschuh, rejecting a common perception that the petroglyphs were created by indigenous people as part of an artistic expression.

They are deeply spiritual, he said, and The Great Falls mark an important spiritual home for the Abenaki community. Bellows Falls, or Kchi Pontegok, or The Great Falls in the Abenaki language, has been a key spiritual site for the Abenaki tribe for eons.

Even 1800s colonial history includes reference to Native American elders returning to Bellows Falls to die and to be buried there with their ancestors.

The petroglyphs were desecrated when the Daughters of the American Revolution hired someone back in the 1930s to re-chisel the petroglyphs, so they wouldn't fade from the public's easy view. It was done to maintain the petroglyphs as a tourist attraction. In the 1960s, the petroglyphs were painted yellow, so the



Kristopher Radder — Vermont Country

The Bellows Falls petroglyphs were first reported in the late 1780s, according to Lyman Simpson Hayes' "History of the Town of Rockingham, Vermont," when a Dartmouth College professor visited the site, and cautioned that the petroglyphs might be a warning of evil spirits. Misunderstanding has continued.

curious could more easily find them.

More than faces carved in stone

Holschuh said the Bellows Falls petroglyphs are much, much more than faces carved in rock.

Holschuh, a former member of the Vermont Commission of Native American Affairs, is from Wanstegok, or Brattleboro. A descendant of both Mi'kmaq and European settlers, he's one of the leading voices in Southern Vermont for indigenous people, and as a cultural researcher.

The Bellows Falls petroglyphs are better known than the recently re-discovered petroglyphs in Brattleboro, at the mouth of the West River, where it joins the Connecticut. They are the only known Indigenous petroglyphs in the state of Vermont.

The Brattleboro petroglyphs ended up about 15 feet below the river surface when the Vernon hydroelectric dam was built about 120 years ago. Local diver and historian Annette

Spaulding of Rockingham uncovered them about six years ago, and they depict what is believed to be spiritual animals, such as birds, eels and dogs. The Bellows Falls petroglyphs, meanwhile, depict banks of elemental faces.

Ancient culture called this place home

The Abenaki, whose lands stretched from what is now New York state to downeast Maine and beyond, lived in this region of New England for 12,000 years and uncounted generations before European settlers came to this continent.

The two Vermont Abenaki petroglyph sites are sacred sites, Holschuh said, and are on the banks of rivers, with a mountain nearby, and where potholes were carved out of the rock by the rushing waters. He said there were reports of copycat carvings on the New Hampshire side of the river, but they are not considered authentic because of their location.

Others might have disappeared because of heavy industrial use of the riverfront, Holschuh said.

The Great Falls site also was sacred, he said, because it is the narrowest section of the Connecticut River; in fact, it was the site of the first permanent bridge across the 450-mile length of the Connecticut.

The Bellows Falls petroglyphs were first reported in the late 1780s, according to Lyman Simpson Hayes' "History of the Town of Rockingham, Vermont," when a Dartmouth College professor visited the site, and cautioned that the petroglyphs might be a warning of evil spirits. Misunderstanding has continued.

Applied for grant in February

Walter Wallace, the town of Rockingham's historic preservation officer, completed the grant application in February. He gained the official support of the town, as well as the property owner, Great River Hydro, to apply for the almost \$40,000 grant.

Wallace said, because the town of Rockingham is a "certified local government," in historic preservation parlance, it is eligible to apply for the National Park Service grant, while the Abenaki tribe is not.

Wallace has set up the grant so that it is co-managed by Holschuh and Gail Golec of Walpole, N.H., a local archaeologist, who has done extensive research into the Abenaki in the Bellows Falls area.

Wallace said the petroglyphs were included in a 1980s historic site nomination for a district that covered most of The Island area, a section of downtown Bellows Falls that was split off into an island with the creation of the Bellows Falls canal in the late 1700s.

The grant will allow the Abenaki and Rockingham communities to address cultural representation, inequalities and simply update the listing for that area of downtown Bellows Falls, Wallace said.



Kristopher Radder — Vermont Country

Above: Another bank of petroglyphs, similar to these, is permanently covered with heavy stone rip-rap.

*Michael Fuller
St. Louis Community College*

Below: These faces are believed to be "elementals," carved into the Bellows Falls rock by the Abenaki, which were then altered by the Daughters of the American Revolution in the early 1900s.





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custom features throughout. Included: Formal Entry via covered walkway from the garage, huge kitchen/dining w/Shaker cabinets, quartz countertops, a Russing fireplace w/baking oven & honed bluestone bench/wood storage & huge glass doors that allow the outside in! Open to the

kitchen is the Living Room w/ walls of glass framing the distant views; a den, & 3 amply sized bedrooms, all w/en suite baths. The lower level offers a family Room, full Bath, impressive utility room, wine room & storage. There is a whole house generator & a cute cottage.

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Michelle Holzapfel will be in her studio in Marlboro with her husband David — studio name is Applewoods Studio.

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30th anniversary of Vermont Spring Open Studio

Late spring is the perfect time to visit art studios and galleries in picturesque Vermont. Small towns and villages are home to glass blowers, potters, metal workers, jewelers, stone masons, weavers, painters, woodworkers, photographers, book artists, printmakers, felt makers, dyers, basket-makers and rug hookers. You're free to discover, ask questions, and buy original artwork.

Plan Your Adventure. You Have Many Choices!

Part of the adventure is planning your own tour through the gorgeous Vermont landscape to find studios in small towns and rural communities. Each county on the tour has small galleries serving as information centers to help you plan your visit.

Explore Southern Vermont Studios

From the south on I-91, stop in Readsboro to visit Readsboro Glassworks. Mary Angus and K. William LeQuier work together in the studio they built in a 150-year-old mill building in the village center, each creating their own distinctive work. LeQuier's complex glass sculptures are fluid and powerful, capturing the power of waves and water with the

undulating movement of glass.

Just up Route 9 on the mountain in Marlboro, another couple share a studio: David and Michelle Holzapfel. They hand-work Vermont's spalted and burlled hardwoods into one-of-a-kind furniture and vessels. Their work is collected by museums, businesses and homeowners throughout North America. Check the map (vermontcrafts.com/visit-open-studio) for more than 34 similarly inspiring studios.

Continue into Brattleboro where you'll find Vermont Artisan Designs on Main Street that serves as a welcome center for the Brattleboro area. Spend some time in the gallery before heading out to the more than a handful of studios including painters, Greg Moschetti and Leslie Heathcote; jewelry designer Chris Lann Designs; potters Walter Slowinski and Beth Armour, along with a number of others.

Many studios on the tour offer demonstrations. Plan to visit Robert DuGrenier's glass-blowing studio on route 30 in Townshend. DuGrenier is a well-known sculptor, artist, and designer working primarily in glass, metal and marble. Lately he's "started" pieces and then let nature take over, as in his apple tree installations,

blown-glass-shell "mobile homes" for hermit crabs, and beehive sculptures. While in Townshend check out painters Kim Eng Yeo and Jim Jackson.

Head north on Route 30 or get on I91 to Bellows Falls (exit 5). Begin at 33 Bridge St., an official info center, where a number of artists working with glass, paint, jewelry, stone and floor cloths, will be exhibiting, including Tsuga studios, glass; Clare Adams Art, prints and painted glass; and Scott Morgan, paintings on canvas and guitars.

Enjoy the art, along with tasty treats, lunch and music. Head down Main Street to visit a handful of additional studios—including River Gallery Arts, Robert McBride and Phyllis Rosser, and River Artisans Cooperative Gallery. Hop in the car and head to Saxtons River (about 15 minutes) to visit Main Street Arts, another info center for information about points north. Enjoy this picturesque little village with its strong arts history while you are there.

For suggested tours around the state and to request or save a pdf of the Vermont Studio Tour booklet, a 24-page guide rich in photographs, maps and directions, go to vermontcrafts.com/visit-open-studio.

Reimagine the past

Take a trip down Main Street, USA,
in Bennington and Putney
and find colonial, industrial roots

By Cicely M. Eastman
Vermont Country correspondent

Colonnades of knobby maples straddling stone walls overgrown with ferns. Abandoned barns falling into disrepair along country roadsides.

These are glimpses of Vermont's agricultural past, and if you look closely above modern downtown storefronts, you'll also see evidence of long-gone industries.

In Southern Vermont, main streets

that traced the footpaths of the Abenaki indigenous people evolved from wilderness in the mid-1700s to established town hubs by the 1770s, and have been in a constant state of flux ever since.



Isabel Wissner — Vermont Country

Fiddlehead occupies a building that acted as a bank from 1929 to 1997, with its original vault and tall tellers' counter. While the outside keeps a white marble, classical look, the inside of the gallery is bright, colorful and inviting — visitors can even enter the chalkboard-painted "graffiti vault" and draw pictures on the walls with colored chalk.



Isabel Wissner — Vermont Country

Main Street, Bennington, looking east. Notice the clock on the bottom right corner on Putnam Corner. It is still there.



Joseph Hall

Two towns, Bennington and Putney, are no exception.

BENNINGTON

Folklore differs on how Capt. Samuel Robinson of King George's Continental Army discovered Bennington in 1755. One version relates that he and his company got lost on their trek from Montreal to the Hoosac Fort during the French and Indian War; another claims that Robinson and his company argued about the best path back, so it was settled by the flip of a coin, a shilling back then; and a third recounts Robinson taking up Col. William Williams' suggestion to check out the forested hills.

One thing is certain: Robinson was so enchanted by Bennington's lush landscape that he was determined to settle the land, and in 1761 he brought about 20 people from Massachusetts and Connecticut to take root in what is now called Old Bennington.

Joseph Hall, a 90-year-old Bennington native and an authority on local history who can trace his ancestry



Courtesy Bennington Museum and Joe Hall

Above: Main Street, Bennington on Sept. 28, 1929. The Bennington Opera House and The Putnam Hotel may be seen.

Below: The Putnam Hotel photo taken by Burt. The inscription appears to say May 4, 1920.





Courtesy Bennington Museum and Joe Hall

Above: The Bennington Opera House in its heyday.

Below: Main Street circa 1950.

back multiple generations, was kind enough to meet with Vermont Country magazine and allow us to pick his brain.

Hall knew some of Bennington's history from memory, but mostly from extensive research. With his unabashed love of Bennington, he gave us the grand tour, starting at Old Bennington, just off Main Street on Route 9, oozing with Colonial charm.

The Old First Church, built in 1805, is home to one of the oldest cemeteries in Vermont. Robert Frost, Revolutionary War soldiers and three former governors are buried there. Bennington's claim to fame — the Bennington Battle Monument, which commemorates what's considered the turning point in the Revolutionary War — is just up Monument Road. On the way to the monument, look for a historical marker that notes the location of The Catamount Tavern, the headquarters for Ethan Allen's Green Mountain Boys who served in the Revolutionary War. Visit ben-

ningtonvt.org/old-bennington-walking-tour to download a walking tour map and descriptions of 27 historical sites and homes.

Bennington's center shifted from "the hill" to Main Street along the Walloomsac River as industrial activity grew there, needing water to power businesses. On the way downtown,

Hall pointed out some landmarks. There is the Bennington Museum, a portion of which was the old St. Francis De Sales Church bought and renovated by the Bennington Historical Association in 1923. The museum is known for its collection of Grandma Moses paintings. Closer to downtown, the "new" Gothic style





Cicely M. Eastman

The former Putney Tavern, now Gleanery Restaurant, in 2022.

Sacred Heart St. Francis De Sales Church opened in 1892. Originally, the church's bell tower was 96 feet high, but it was taken down in 1920 as the steeple began to sway in the wind.

Arriving at the junction of Main, North and South streets, Hall noted the brick building to the south, once the elegant Putnam Hotel. Built by Henry Putnam in 1873, it wraps around the corner to South Street and once sported two stories with fancy balconies. Known as the Putnam Block, it now houses multiple businesses and rental units. Look up to see the Hotel Putnam plaque.

Across the street is a building that has always been a bank. The earliest record noted that it was the Bennington National Savings Bank in 1876. Now, it is the People's United Bank. Note the clock on the corner. A well-liked character named Mickey Kane once operated a taxi service by that clock during the Great Depression, using a phone posted on a utility pole there for customers to call. He was known to flaunt expensive jewelry and carry large wads of cash. He was found murdered on the road to Troy, N.Y., in 1930. It was a cold case for six years. The only clue was a man with a Panama hat, Kane's passenger that day. To learn more about this Netflix-worthy who-done-it and view other historical video lectures on Bennington, go to benningtonhistory.org/archived-presentations/2018-2/joe-halls-bygone-bennington.

org/archived-presentations/2018-2/joe-halls-bygone-bennington.

Across the street from the bank are single-level storefronts in the Harte Block. It was once the site of the magnificent Bennington Opera House that opened in 1892 and seated close to 2,000, also built by Henry Putnam. A movie theater was added, the General Stark Theater, in 1915. Sadly, the opera house burned in 1959.

Putney was chartered in 1753 and, like Bennington, was first settled "up the hill" in the area of the Putney Central School on the Westminster West Road and West Hill.

Fires plagued Bennington's downtown well into the 20th century. In 1938, a fire, believed to have started in the Stark Restaurant on the north side of Main Street, took out the restaurant, Haynes and Kane Furniture and Whelan's Drug Store in the area where Madison's Brewing now resides. The Bennington Banner burned twice, once in 1893 along with the building owned by Joe Hall's great-great-grandfather, Simeon



Putney Historical Society

At the junction of Kimball Hill and Main Street was the Putney Tavern, now Gleanery Restaurant.

Sibley, on North Street, and again in 1961 on Main Street along with a number of other businesses. This time, the Cone Building next door was spared, having already burned once in 1924 when the facade was the only remaining salvageable part. The Cone Building was later home to the F.W. Woolworth Store.

PUTNEY

According to a book published by the Putney Historical Society, Putney is the World's Best Known Small Town, most notably for being the home of The Putney School, the nation's first co-ed boarding school, and Landmark College, higher education for students with learning differences.

Frank Wilson bought West River Basket Company in 1941, to be renamed Basketville in 1961. Fires in 1949 at the basket factory, and another in 1959 at the basket shop, didn't deter Wilson, who opened a retail shop on the east side of Bellows Falls Road in 1956. That shop closed in 2018, and now houses Putney Mountain Winery.

Putney, like Bennington, also has had its fair share of fires. The saga of the Putney General Store, relayed by historic preservation consultant Lyssa Papazian, warrants retelling. The General Store sits on the corner of Kimball Hill and Bellows Falls Road, or Route 5, along the shore of Sacketts Brook. It had been thought



Cicely M. Eastman

Putney General Store as it looks in 2022.



Putney Historical Society

Kimball Hill, Putney, date unknown. The general store is on the right.

the store was built in 1843 because of the date carved into the second story. However, the Putney Historical Society found the deed dated 1796, with a second-floor addition placed in 1843, hence the confusion.

It remained unmarred until 2008 when an electrical fire burned off the roof. Too costly for the owners to rebuild, the Putney Historical Society bought it and, through grants, rehabilitated the building. Fire struck again, this time at the hands of an arsonist in the fall of 2009, burning it to the ground. The community rallied, and it reopened in 2011. The arsonist was never caught.

Putney was chartered in 1753 and, like Bennington, was first settled “up the hill” in the area of the Putney Central School on the Westminster West Road and West Hill. As industry grew and grist mills and paper mills were built along Sacketts Brook to access the brook’s waterfall, the residential section grew on Kimball Hill, Main Street and Old Route

5. A number of those Putney residences also still survive, making up Putney Village Historic District. The Greek revival style home at 120 Main St., built circa 1835, and the Queen Ann-style Victorian, built circa 1905, at 79 Main St., are among those homes.

On Kimball Hill is a performance venue, Next Stage Arts, which was originally the Putney Federated Church, built in 1841. Next door was a livery stable built in 1915 that is now Sandglass Theater. Travel downhill to the junction of Putney’s Main Street and, across from the general store, The Gleanery Restaurant, which was once the Putney Tavern. The Italianate structure to the front and left of the Gleanery was built in 1871 to serve as the Town Hall and still does to this day. Our Lady of Mercy Roman Catholic Church, built in 1842, formerly the Putney Methodist Church on Main Street, and the Putney Community Center built in 1884 as the Putney

Baptist Church

on Christian Square, are other surviving church buildings.

A vital component of Putney’s history is the Putney Paper Mill. The first paper mill was built in 1818 or 1819. In 1828, the Sacketts Brook flooded, destroying that mill. The paper mill in the heart of Putney across from the general store opened in 1869. It was one of the earliest paper mills in the state to introduce wood pulp paper. The upper paper mill was called the Eagle mill, and one lower on the adjoining Mill Street was called the Owl. The lower Owl burned in 1903.

Take a scenic walk down Mill Street (it is recommended to park the car on Main Street) for a view of what is left of the Owl Paper Mill, then onto Hi Lo Biddy Road over the Sacketts Brook Stone Arch Bridge, built in 1906.

For more information on trails to explore in Putney, Google search PutneyTrailGuide_Final2020.pdf.

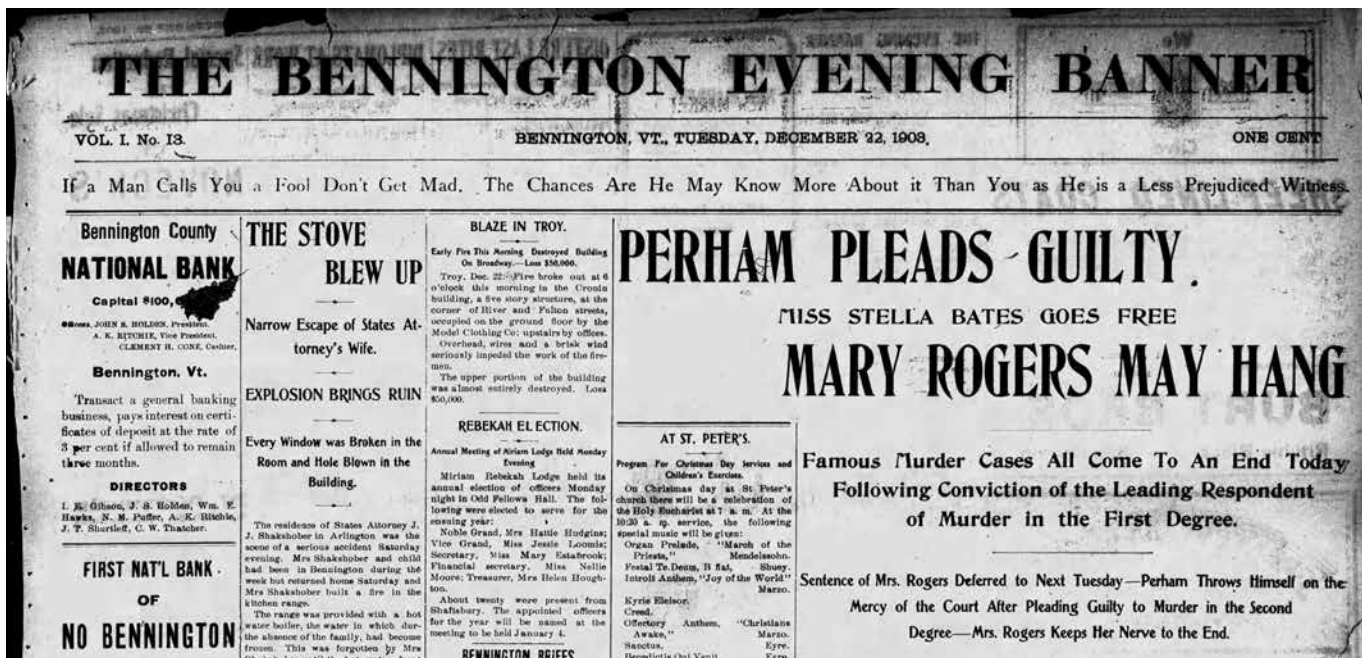


Kristopher Radder — Vermont Country

One of Putney’s old homes on Main Street.

More than a century ago, the Rogers murder made national headlines

Young bride faked husband's death by suicide, court ruled



News clippings from The Bennington Evening Banner of Dec. 22, 1903.

By Lex Merrell

Vermont Country

BENNINGTON — A native to Hoosick Falls, N.Y., Mrs. Mary Mabel Rogers was only 16 when she married 29-year-old Marcus Rogers.

Tragedy hit early in their marriage with the loss of their first child. When their baby was only a few weeks old, Mary dropped her on her head. The infant's death came soon after.

It was the beginning of a great divide that marred the couples' entire marriage.

Marcus' Bennington blues

In hopes of running away from their sorrow, the couple moved to Bennington. Mary found a job and fell in love with the town, and other things. Marcus, on the other hand, was unhappy being away from his family. So, he moved back to New York state, while Mary lived as an independent

woman. She stayed at her job and lived with a friend, Leon Perham.

Their long-distance relationship, difficult to maintain in the early 1900s, put a strain on their marriage. Soon after Marcus' departure, Mary found herself infatuated with a man named Morris Knapp. Mary lied to Morris about her marital status and wooed him into an affair.

After only a few years of marriage, Mary's affair ensured she would never



Provided photo

This photo from August 1902, colorized by Tim Wager, shows the scene of the slaying of Marcus Rogers, with the bridge on Main Street between Morgan and Beech streets in the background, in Bennington. On the rocks can be seen Marcus Rogers' hat, which news stories said his wife had placed with a false suicide letter.

be happy with Marcus and sealed his fate.

In a hysterical state, Mary spoke to the police on Aug. 13, 1902, about three years into their marriage. She said Marcus was threatening to drown himself, but the police didn't take her word seriously. That is until Marcus' hat and suicide note were found.

His body was found in the Walloomsac River with a lone bruise on his head. The police finally listened to Mary and determined that suicide was the cause of death. He was to be buried, until a member of the Bennington Board of Selectmen demanded an autopsy.

The selectman decided the handwriting on the suicide note was too feminine for Marcus to write himself. That was enough probable cause in 1902 to stop the burial and continue the investigation.

One man's story

The board member's instincts were correct. The autopsy determined Marcus died from an anesthetic, not drowning. Mary and Leon were the first to be questioned.

Not strong-willed, Leon admitted to being a part of the murder after only five minutes of questioning. He told his side of the story, and he made sure to emphasize one important detail: the murder was all Mary's idea.

Leon said Mary's plan was to kill Marcus, so Mary could be free to marry her lover. Her husband's \$500 life insurance policy, worth about \$16,500 today, was also an incentive. All it took for Leon to assist in the murder was a \$200 bribe.

Mary supposedly lured Marcus to Bennington to discuss them living together again. Marcus, excited to get his wife back, never questioned her motives.

That night, the couple and Leon went for a walk. Once in a secluded area, Mary and Leon tricked Marcus into letting them tie him up. Mary then removed the chloroform hiding in her corset, applied it to a handkerchief and forced Marcus to inhale. After Marcus' death, Mary and Leon placed the body in the water and left his hat on the tree limb.

On June 12, 1903, Mary Rogers was

arraigned for the killing of Marcus Rogers, and Leon Perham was charged as an accomplice. Mary and Leon both pleaded not guilty.

Leon, after admitting to his part in the murder, had a quick trial. The tired and pale man was sentenced to a life of hard labor.

Mary also had a quick trial. Everyone believed Leon's story, and Mary was found guilty.

A questionable sentencing

More than 1,000 people squeezed into the small courtroom to hear the verdict. With no sign of fear, or remorse, on her face, Mary was found guilty. Still, there were stories of her sobbing violently in her cell on the nights following the verdict.

That December, Mary was sentenced. Prior to the outcome, Mary simply said, "I'm not guilty." Her declaration of innocence was ignored, and she was sentenced to death by hanging.

Mary's case became a national story. Interviewed at the time, Mrs. Ly-sander John Appleson, of Kansas — having conservative priorities — re-

quested that Rogers be hanged while wearing long bloomers that reach her ankles. "We can not permit any vulgar display of limbs," she said.

Others were concerned with the morality of capital punishment. The St. Albans Messenger wrote she shouldn't be hanged, "Not because she doesn't deserve it, but because hanging is out of date."

"We can not permit any vulgar display of limbs."

*Mrs. Lysander John Appleton,
of Kansas*

Others simply detested the thought of hanging a woman. The local sheriff was grateful when Mary's execution was commuted. Not because he thought she was innocent or because he was against capital punishment. No, he thought the act of executing a woman would be "repugnant."

Former Gov. Charles J. Bell, for no obvious reason, seemed to want Mary alive. He commuted her execution three times until her case was sent to the state Supreme Court.

Who would try to kill Mary?

While Mary awaited her fate in prison, someone attempted to take her death sentence into their own hands. There were three attempts on Mary's life when she was jailed. In all three cases, someone tried to kill her through a poisoned envelope.

In one case, the superintendent of the prison was offered \$2,000 to give one of the envelopes to Mary.

All of the attempts to save — and poison — Mary were unsuccessful.

The Supreme Court came to the same end as her first trial. She was found guilty and sentenced to death by hanging. This time, no one could save her.

EVENING BANNER

DAY, DECEMBER 8, 1905

PRICE ONE CENT

andles His Clothes and the Appearance of the Comb After She Uses It

EXECUTION OF MARY ROGERS

Bennington Murderess Pays Penalty of Her Crime on the Scaffold

LEGAL HISTORY OF CASE

Story of the Hard Fought Effort to Save Mrs. Rogers' Life.

The legal moves in the celebrated Rogers case have been so complex that the public may be interested in a statement as to the various steps in the doomed woman's case.

She was indicted at the June term, 1903, Bennington county court, for the murder of her husband and was tried at the December term, 1903, of that court and convicted of murder in the first degree. No exceptions were taken by her counsel to the supreme court of Vermont. No further steps were taken in her behalf until the legislature met in October, 1904, when a bill was introduced by Representative Archibald of Manchester, who had been her counsel in county court, to commute her sentence to life imprisonment. There was much debate over this measure and finally in the last week of the session it was defeated by a majority of about 40.

She was under sentence of death to be executed February 3, 1905. Two days before that on Feb. 1, Gov. Bell gave a hearing at Montpelier to parties interested in her behalf, who asked that a reprieve be granted by the governor for sufficient length of time to enable her counsel to present a petition to the supreme court of Vermont for a new trial on the ground of newly discovered evidence, which, it was claimed tended to show she was insane when the crime was committed.

Several affidavits were presented to Gov. Bell and upon considering the matter he, on the next day, February 2, granted a reprieve for four months, or until June 2, 1905, a sufficient time to enable a petition to be presented and heard by the supreme court of Vermont.

Affidavits were taken by her counsel during the winter and spring and a petition was filed with Chief Judge Rowell and Judge Munson on April 29. On May 5 the judges named at Montpelier and the petition ordered filed in court and ordered to be heard at the May term of the supreme court. It was heard on May 19, being fully argued in her behalf and in behalf of the state. On May 30 the supreme court handed down its decision denying the petition. Her counsel immediately applied to Chief Judge Rowell for a writ of error to take the case to the supreme court of the United States. Judge Rowell refused to sign the writ of error on the ground that no Federal question was involved.

Her counsel then asked the governor to further reprieve her for sufficient length of time to enable them to present a writ of error to a justice of the supreme court of the United States, which was the only way left for her to

THE DEATH WARRANT

The Fatal Document Read to the Condemned Woman This Morning

The death warrant was as follows: STATE OF VERMONT.
To the Sheriff of the County of Windsor—Greeting: Whereas, at a term of the county court begun and held at Bennington, within and for the county of Bennington aforesaid, on the second day of December in the year of our Lord nineteen hundred and three, Mary Mabel Rogers, late of Bennington aforesaid, in the county of Bennington aforesaid, was duly convicted of the crime of murder, as

Trap Sprung at 1.13 O'Clock.

DEAD AT 1.27 P.M.

Woman Strangled as Her Neck Was Not Broken.

NO HARROWING DETAILS

Murderess Walked to Her Doom Without Assistance or the Tremor of a Muscle.

Special Dispatch to the Evening Banner.
Windsor, Dec. 8.—Mary Rogers, the Bennington murderess, is dead.

The condemned woman whose fate has interested the whole country, was executed this afternoon.

The trap was sprung at 1:13 by Deputy Sheriff McAnisley and at 1:27 the woman was pronounced dead.

Mrs. Rogers died from strangulation as her neck was not broken by the fall.

Mrs. Rogers dressed herself this morning without assistance and when the hour arrived walked to her doom without assistance and without the tremor of a muscle.

The woman's wonderful nerve that has characterized her actions since the day of her arrest for the murder of her husband stood by her to the last.

Rev. Fr. Delaney administered the rites of extreme unction. The condemned woman made no statement or confession.

The execution passed off without a mishap of any kind. There were no harrowing features or sensational incidents of any kind.

GOV BELL REFUSES

Saw No Reason to Interfere With the Execution.

Gov. Bell arrived at White River Junction at 3 o'clock this a. m. and at 8 o'clock gave a hearing to Mary Rogers' attorneys, E. B. Felt and C. A. McCarthy. They told him that they had re-enforced the evidence of last spring tending to show insanity and pleaded for a longer lease of life for the condemned woman. There was



MRS. MARY ROGERS

appears of record. And, whereas, during said term of said court in open court, to wit, January 21, in the year of our Lord 1904, the said Mary Mabel Rogers was then and there, by said court, sentenced to be taken, on the third day of February, in the year of our Lord 1905 from her then place of confinement to the place of execution between the hours of 1 and 2 o'clock in the afternoon of that day, and hung by the neck until dead, as appears of record.

"And whereas the said Mary Mabel Rogers was then and at the same time sentenced by said court to solitary confinement in the state prison at Windsor, in the county of Windsor, until such punishment of death shall be inflicted on the said Mary Mabel Rogers as appears of record and whereas at a term of the said county court, begun and held at Bennington, within and for the said county of Bennington, on the second day of December, 1904, during said term of county court and at the arraignment of one

News clippings from The Bennington Evening Banner of Dec. 8, 1905.

On Dec. 8, 1905, then-22-year-old Mary Rogers walked to the gallows with her head held high. Once again, she showed no fear.

The platform of the gallows dropped from under her feet at 1:13 p.m. Unfortunately for Mary and onlookers, her neck did not break on impact. After 14 minutes of agony and

strangulation, Mary was pronounced dead at 1:27 p.m.

Rogers was buried the next day, with her mother, three sisters and a dozen onlookers attending.

It took more than a century for her to receive a headstone, at Saint Mary's Cemetery in Hoosick Falls, according to an online grave compendium.

*Kristopher Radder
Vermont Country*

Shelby Brimmer collects compost from customers in Vernon and puts it in the back of her van.



Got them nowhere-to-dump- your-compost blues?

Don't worry about it. Circle of Life chucks the bucket for you and can even bring back some soil

By Bob Audette
Vermont Country

BROOKLINE — It all started with pigs that needed to be fed.

“When mandatory composting went into law in Vermont in July 2020, I, like many others, began my journey of discovering what compost is, its uses, and the role it plays in our future as a community that supports a greener, healthier earth,” she said.

In the summer of 2020, Shelby Brimmer and her boyfriend had pigs on their Brookline property, and they were feeding them food scraps.

After they harvested the pigs, they still had food scraps.

“So, I had to figure out really quick what to do with the scraps,” said

Brimmer, founder of Circle of Life Compost, which collects residential compost and delivers it to the composting facility at Windham Solid Waste on Ferry Road in Brattleboro. “We didn’t have anywhere to put our compost, and I’m not a gardener and not interested in home composting. I figured I could try to meet a need and see if anyone else is having the same issues I was.”

Brimmer learned all about the business on her own, getting much of the information she needed to start her own composting business from the state website page about the mandatory composting law.

“I bought a van, and I bought 10 buckets,” she said. “It’s not really a new business model. It’s no different

than trash or recycling, essentially. But it is new, and everyone’s like, ‘What is this? What am I supposed to do?’”

Fifty-five customers later, she’s got daily routes around the county, picking up five-gallon buckets of food scraps and leaving empty ones behind.

You might spot Brimmer in Brookline, Newfane or Dummerston. She can also be seen in Vernon, a couple of spots in Brattleboro and on a route in Bellows Falls.

So far, it’s just her. But sometimes her boyfriend or a sister might help out.

“They all will just jump in,” she said. “And honestly, my sister sometimes just comes to have fun.”

In Vermont, these plants bite back

Poison parsnip
and poison ivy,
false hellebore
galore ...
beware as you
take to Green
Mountain trails

By Jim Therrien

Vermont Country

BENNINGTON — Tick season and Lyme disease get a lot of deserved attention in Vermont in the warmer months, but several wild plants offer their own nasty keepsakes to amblers in the Green Mountain State.

A surprising number of common plants can prove toxic to humans to some degree, and it pays to know what is sprouting in your yard, along roadways, beside hiking trails or in recreation areas, Vermont State Toxicologist Sarah Vose said.

In general, toxic or “poisonous” plants can be certifiably poisonous if ingested, or they can cause a skin rash or second-degree burns replete with ugly raised blisters.

False hellebore

Early in the season, foragers looking for ramps in wooded areas don’t want to mistake false hellebore for the





US Forest Service photo

False hellebore is poisonous if ingested, and sometimes is mistakenly picked by foragers looking for edible ramps.



Hardyplants via Wikimedia Commons

When you think about poison ivy, remember the old rhyme: "Leaves of three, let it be."



Liz West via Wikimedia Commons

The white flowers of the Lily of the Valley cause a serious reaction if ingested, and a concern with the plant is that children might pick the pretty flowers or reddish orange berries and put them in their mouths.

edible green-leafed plant. Ramps, Vose said, have an odor like onions or garlic, something the false hellebore lacks.

"Ramps are super-pungent," she said.

In one recent summer season, there were 25 reports of people being treated at hospitals after ingesting false hellebore in Vermont.

"And that's only those who were treated at hospitals," Vose said. "There could have been many more."

The white flowers of the Lily of the Valley also cause a serious reaction if ingested, she said, and a concern with the plant is that children might pick the pretty flowers or reddish orange berries and put them in their mouths.

Parsnip, ivy

More common around Vermont, and within the experience of many people, are the familiar wild parsnip and poison ivy.

Vost said the tall, yellow-flowered wild parsnip is commonly found in fields or along roadsides, and it causes a reaction when the plant's sap comes into contact with the skin. The reaction is triggered by sunlight — called photodermatitis, sun poisoning or photoallergy — and avoiding sun on affected areas after exposure can reduce the effects.

Furocoumarin is the chemical in wild parsnip that causes this plant to react with sunlight and damage skin.

Don't burn it

"And who hasn't had poison ivy?" Vose noted.

She cautioned that burning yard waste that includes poison ivy plants produces toxic smoke that is an irritant to the eyes or to the respiratory system.

According to the Mayo Clinic website, poison ivy usually requires only home treatment, which can include over-the-counter cortisone cream or ointment and application of calamine lotion.

If the rash is widespread or causes a lot of blisters, a doctor may prescribe an oral corticosteroid, such as prednisone, to reduce swelling, according to the University of Vermont website.

For exposure to wild parsnip, the Vermont Department of Health recommends washing the skin thoroughly with soap and water as soon as possible, protecting exposed skin from sunlight for at least 48 hours, and calling a health care provider if the person experiences a skin reaction.

Professional precautions

For tree workers and landscapers, there's no way to ignore poisonous plants, but Mike D'Agata, one of the owners of Greater Heights Tree and Land Management in Pownal, said the best advice he would give property owners is to just avoid it — and to cover your

skin if you might be anywhere near poison ivy, poison parsnip or similar plants.

“Poison ivy is the big one, because it can climb up trees,” he said. “It can be ground cover; it can be a vine. We can get trees that are just covered in poison ivy. Lot of times you don’t notice it until you get into it.”

A crew member once had to take two days off after poison ivy spread over his body, D’Agata said. “He was completely covered. Probably the worst reaction I’ve ever seen.”

On the other hand, D’Agata said some workers, like himself, could “roll around in it” and only get only a mild rash from poison ivy, although

he has noticed he’s become more susceptible to the plant’s effects over the years.

For property owners, D’Agata urges caution when trying to rid areas of poisonous plants, since contact with the sap — picked up on clothing, mowing or cutting equipment — can result in a reaction later on.

His crew members are careful to immediately wash skin that might have been exposed, he said, and in their trucks, they carry packaged wipes that remove ivy or parsnip sap.

Hiker hazards

Hikers often encounter toxic plants and should know how to deal with them.

“If you walk through anything poisonous, the sap/oils could be on your shoes and gaiters. I always wash my hands after removing gaiters, and I inspect them for seeds.”

Silvia Cassano

Silvia Cassano, the co-chair of Bennington’s Appalachian Trail Committee, said she recommends learning to identify wild parsnip and other poisonous plants and advises wearing “pants and/or gaiters covering their ankles. Long-sleeve shirts can help (plants can be tall).”

She adds, “If you walk through anything poisonous, the sap/oils could be on your shoes and gaiters. I always wash my hands after removing gaiters, and I inspect them for seeds.”

If skin blisters appear, Cassano said, “Do not rupture for as long as possible and seek medical attention.” She encountered hikers in Bennington County who “had a terrible rash on their shins and had to go to urgent care.”

In the Bennington area, she said, there is wild parsnip in the grassy area where the Appalachian and Long trails cross Vermont Route 9 in Woodford, as well as on both sides of the tunnel under Route 279 on the Bald Mountain Trail to the White Rocks.

Pets, too, can pick up the plant’s sap. “Give your pet a bath if you think they came in contact with plant sap or oil, so the plant oil does not spread to you through touch or surfaces,” Cassano said.

WILD PARSNIP ALERT!

SKIN IRRITANT CAUSES CHEMICAL BURNS!




This invasive plant, Wild Parsnip (*Pastinaca sativa* L.) is found by sunny roadsides, field edges, pastures, etc. & can grow 4-5' tall.

It has been confirmed roadside in this location.

| AVOID | SYMPTOMS | TREATMENT |
|--|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - AVOID contact with broken leaves and stems. Skin that comes in contact with sap becomes hyper-sensitive to UV light. - Keep dogs away, as oils can transfer onto you. Dogs may be affected if they eat it & are in the sun. | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Can include: Sunburn type rash, discolored skin, and blistering • -Reactions to sap & sunlight begin 24-48 hours after contact. <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wash exposed skin & clothing with gentle soap & water ASAP. • Cover the exposed area to limit sun exposure for at least 48 hours. • Cool compress • If blisters appear, do not to rupture for as long as possible • To avoid infection, keep area clean & apply antiseptic cream • Anti-itch topical remedy for discomfort <div style="text-align: center;">  </div> |

SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION IF: Severe blisters, swelling, itching, burning, fever, rash covers large portion of skin, infected blisters, or comes in contact with eyes.

TO LEARN MORE VISIT:
VTINVASIVES.ORG/INVASIVE/WILD-PARSNIP
HEALTHVERMONT.GOV/ENVIRONMENT/CHEMICALS

Drink and Dine

Niche food producers from
across the region





Photos provided

"As a family business, we strive to keep things the same way our family members have before us to assure only high-quality, natural and traditional products," said Patti Fortuna-Stannard from her office in Sandgate. She's pictured here with husband Paul Stannard.

Old World flavors that ship worldwide

From backwoodsy Sandgate, Fortuna's Sausage & Italian Market capitalizes on flavor, family legacy

By Bob Audette
Vermont Country

SANDGATE — For 130 years, the Fortuna family has been making Italian dry-cured salami the Old World way.

Their signature salami, Soupy, a Calabrese sopressata, is made using

a recipe their forebears brought here with them from Calabria, Italy, over a century ago. They continue to use the same recipe and process to create this unique salami, using a fine grind of pepper and very lean pork. Their line is available at Fortuna's Sausage & Italian Market online and in select stores.

"As a family business, we strive to keep things the same way our family members have before us to assure only high-quality, natural and traditional products," said Patti Fortuna-Stannard from her office in Sandgate.

"We take great pride in making our salami the same way my grandparents

Producers and purveyors of niche foods and beverages in Southern Vermont
Vermont is known for its specialty foods and beverages. Here's a sampling from across the region

**Al Ducci's
Italian Pantry**
133 Elm St.,
Manchester Center
802-362-4449
alduccis.com

This gourmet eatery and deli offers cheeses from Vermont and around the world, as well as specialty sandwiches and paninis, like chicken or eggplant parmesan.

**Battenkill
Wholesome Foods**
Manchester Center
802-375-2698
battenkillwholesomefoods.com
leslie@battenkillwholesomefoods.com

Makers of brittle, crumbles and cereal. These products are all gluten-free, low in sugar and high in protein, and are all made with maple syrup.

Big Picture Farm
1600 Peaked Mountain Road,
Townshend
802-221-0547
bigpicturefarm.com
bigpicturefarm@gmail.com

A small hillside goat dairy, farmstead confectionery and creamery with award-winning goat milk caramels, goat cheese and chocolate.

did: in small batches, using only the finest hand-trimmed pork, spices ground moments before blending, tied with pure cotton twine, stuffed into natural casings and hung to dry,

“We take great pride in making our salami the same way my grandparents did: in small batches, using only the finest hand-trimmed pork, spices ground moments before blending, tied with pure cotton twine, stuffed into natural casings and hung to dry, not cooked.”

Patti Fortuna-Stannard

not cooked,” she said.

Fortuna’s got its start in a family market in Bridgeport, Conn., that Patti’s grandparents opened when they arrived in the U.S. When the market was sold, her father, who met her mother in the market, went to work making sausage in a different market in Westport, Conn.

Coincidentally, Patti met her husband, Paul Stannard, while he was working

for her parents, making sausage.

In 1982, they pulled up stakes and opened an Italian deli in Westerly, R.I., where they remained for two decades.

“At one point, we were written up in the Los Angeles Times for our Soupy salami, which food writer Kathie Jenkins named America’s best sausage,” said Patti.

They even got occasional shoutouts from Late Night host Jay Leno, who mentioned Soupy so many times on the air that one night, guest Tom Berenger brought him some.

The salami became so popular that Paul opened a sausage factory about an hour away from the deli.

“I ran the restaurant, and Paul ran the sausage company, until we got to the point where we were able to sell the deli in 1991,” said Patti.

About 10 years after selling the deli, they pulled up roots again, this time to Southern Vermont, where they opened Fortuna’s Sausage and Italian Market in Manchester.

“Then my husband’s hobby of vintage motorcycles took off, and I said to him one day, ‘You have so many parts and motorcycles, you really need to start your own business.’”

In 1986, Paul opened Strictly Hodaka, a parts supplier for the somewhat obscure Hodaka motorcycle, a joint Japanese-American company that made 150,000 bikes between 1964 and



An assortment of Fortuna’s Italian Market cheeses.

1978. In 2003, he opened Preston Petty Products, a supplier of vintage motocross plastic and fenders.

Patti took over the family sausage making business, and in 2018, Paul sold Strictly Hodaka to focus on Preston Petty.

“Paul was able to focus on his busi-

Producers and purveyors of niche foods

Fortuna’s Sausage & Italian Market

723 Stannard Road,
Sandgate
802-375-0200
fortunasausage.com
contact@FortunaSausage.com

Fortuna offers a wide variety of fresh hand-crafted sausages, cured meats, pasta sauces and appetizers like hot stuffed cherry peppers.

Harmonyville Country Store

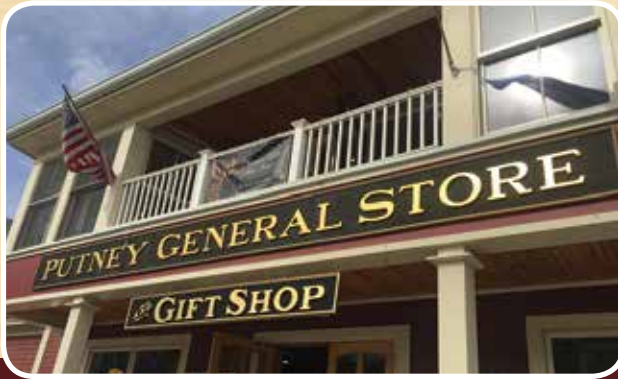
1412 Route 30,
Townshend
802-365-9417
theharmonyvillestore.com

The Harmonyville Store is a family-owned general store with a full-service deli with homemade cookies, bars and breads.

Henry’s Vermont Market

831 Main St.,
Bennington
802-442-6856
henrysvermontmarket.com
henrysmarket@comcast.net

Henry’s has its own in-house smoked meat selection, which includes bacon, snack sticks, pepperoni, beef jerky, kielbasa and pork chops.



**The oldest general store in
Vermont rebuilt for the
21st century.**

**OUTSTANDING FOOD & DRINK
CAREFULLY CURATED BEER & WINE
FULL SERVICE BAKERY**

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ness, and I was able to focus more on the mail order and pursue more growth,” said Patti.

And the business has grown so much that late last year, they sold the market to their son, Chris Stannard, who renamed it The Italian Market of Manchester.

The Italian Market features lots of cheeses, drinking glasses, cheese knives, accessories and, of course, Fortuna’s sausages.

But not everyone can travel to Manchester for the Soupy salami. In fact, most of Fortuna’s business is online, said Patti.

“Everybody’s ordering online,” she said. “It’s been crazy.”

The online marketplace is chock-full of Italian specialty products, including olives, salami with pistachios, imported cheeses, several different varieties of pasta, Fortuna’s own pasta sauce, and gift packages filled with cheese and salami.

Patti has about six people working for her in the warehouse in Sandgate and even though she just turned 60, she has no plans to slow down.

“I’m on a three-to-five year plan,” she said. “I’m still building this business up, and who knows where it will go. Whether Chris wants it or one of my three grandsons. Who knows?”



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info@maplebrookvt.com

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4367 Main St.,
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Mother Myrick’s is home to the Lemon Lulu Cake, a pound cake that is light, moist and lemony, but not too sweet and covered with a delicate fresh lemon glaze. Also a local favorite is Mother Myrick’s buttercrunch toffee, dipped in chocolate with ground cashews and almonds.



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From backyard barbecues to the spicy talk of the town

Kathleen Gurney continues to follow her own path with Salsa Sisters

By Bob Audette

Vermont Country

BRATTLEBORO — Kathleen Gurney, originally from Memphis, a hamlet in upstate New York, started making salsa for family and friends and for cookouts and barbecues.

And like many home cooks, she heard, “Oh, this is great! You should bottle it and sell it.”

“People told me that for years and

finally one day I said, ‘You know what, I’m gonna get serious about this.’”

She started Salsa Sisters with three flavors.

“A ho hum, a medium and a honkin’ hot,” said Gurney.

Now, she makes 25 different varieties.

“I’m a crazy lady,” she said. “I work Monday through Friday and then on the weekend make salsa.”

Gurney has been in the Brattleboro area for two decades, landing here after college with a degree in computer science and business administration.

She has applied her training and education across a spectrum of organizations: as an accountant with the Brattleboro Area Community Land Trust, now known as the Windham and Windsor Housing Trust; followed by two years on a job in Greenfield, Mass.; 11 years at Marlboro College;

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Sidehill Farm


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802-254-2018
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info@sidehillfarmjam.com

Sidehill Farm has been making jams, jellies, butters and maple syrup products since the 1970s.

Smokin’ Bowls

831 Rockingham Road,
Bellows Falls
802-463-9800
facebook.com/SmokinBowlsSoup
sarahannjames13@gmail.com

This small food truck right off of Interstate 91 has stomach-pleasing comfort food like Cheech and Chong Chili, pulled pork nachos, and fresh soups like chorizo and duck chowder.



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and now, with Kurn Hattin Homes. Of course, salsa is Gurney's passion. Her first recipe was made with whatever peppers she could get a hold of.

"And I'd make it as hot as I felt like making it that day," she said. "I was making it, no recipe at all."

Once she decided she was going to make it a business, Gurney began to write down and create the recipes that make up her product line.

These days, she has a local farmer who supplies her peppers.

"Bars Farm in Deerfield, Mass., has the most beautiful peppers I've gotten from anybody," she said.

Her original batches of salsa contained local tomatoes, too. But to do that commercially, that means spending two days cooking down tomatoes per batch.

"So, the tomatoes come out of a can, but the peppers and onions and garlic are all local and fresh," she said.

She even mixes up her own spice batches to keep everything consistent, too.

Her first fruit salsa was a pineapple salsa. Now, she has an apple cinnamon salsa (she picks the leftover



Photos by Kristopher Radder — Vermont Country

Salsa Sisters began in the backyard but is trending toward landing on store shelves. For now, follow its social media accounts for its next drop spot or appearance.

apples after the kids finish in the orchards at Kurn Hattin), peach salsa and cranberry salsa.

She charges \$8 a pint, \$15 for two and \$20 for three.

"Except for the bacon," she said. "The bacon salsa is \$10, because there's lots of bacon in there."

Gurney does special events and craft fairs, will deliver directly and also ships her salsa. It can also be found seven days a week at the Vermont Gift Emporium in the Vermont Marketplace at Exit 1 and Canal Street in Brattleboro.

She posts regularly on Facebook to

let folks know where to find her in person.

Her latest creation is Vermont Maple Stout salsa, made with Shadows Maple Stout from Vermont Beer Makers.

It's hard for her to keep up with demand, and it's also hard finding a commercial kitchen that can meet her needs.

She's got her eye on a facility, but she's not ready to talk about it yet.

"A lot of people would like to put my salsa in their stores, but I don't have the volume," said Gurney. "I can't make enough, quick enough."

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Tavernier Chocolates

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True North Granola offers a variety of healthy, all-natural and organic granola that meets a range of dietary needs. All 11

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Vermont Country Deli

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The Vermont Country Deli is famous for its mac 'n' cheese made with genuine Vermont cheddar, but it also offers a delectable selection of desserts, sandwiches and dinner foods, like pork pot stickers, potato-crusted scrod and barbecued pulled pork.

If you're looking for MapleMama, find it as Samara

New name, but same power-packed beverage
with dozens of antioxidants, vitamins, minerals

By Bob Audette

Vermont Country

WENDELL, Mass. — Six years ago, Sara Schley and Joe Laur officially launched MapleMama, a line of non-alcoholic craft maple spritzers.

But the idea had been on the table, the kitchen table actually, for many years before.



“Joe and Sara were experimenting with their SodaStream,” said Kiley Brouillet, who said her title was “employee number one,” having been with the couple since Joe started delivering MapleMama out of the back of his Honda Pilot. “But people in the Deerfield Valley know me as Maple Mama.”

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Brouillet said Joe and Sara have a little sugar shack on their Wendell property that produces 30 to 40 gallons of syrup a season. They started to use some of the maple syrup to sweeten fizzy drinks for their kids.

“They would have guests over, and guests would rave about it,” said Brouillet.

The kids started selling it out of a little stand at Wendell Old Home Day.

“All of a sudden, they had a line five to six people deep, more than anybody else on the common, and the people came back for more,” Joe told Wine and Craft Beverage News.

MapleMama Craft Maple Spritzers are only 40 calories, and Brouillet touts the 54 antioxidants and seven vitamins and minerals contained in each drink.

“We’re not just trying to make a buck here,” she said. “For Mama, we’re trying to help people put better things in

their bodies.”

The company started with two flavors: cold brew coffee and vanilla. It has expanded the line to include flavors like blueberry pomegranate, ginger lemon and strawberry kiwi.

The 11.5-ounce spritzers can be found all over the tri-state region, including the Vermont Country Deli in Brattleboro, Vt., Foster’s Supermarket in Greenfield and Stonewall Farm in Keene, N.H.

The drinks are also available at Hannaford Bros., Whole Foods Markets and Shaw’s Markets.

Recently, the company has rebranded, so you need to look for the Samara label, though it’s still made by MapleMama.

“The reason for the name change was because we use the maple as a sweetener, not a flavor, and what we found over time was that people were making presumptions that would prevent them from even trying it,” Brouillet said. “Samara is the helicopter-like seed pod that comes from a maple tree.”

Brouillet said MapleMama recently reached a distribution deal with Polar Beverages, the 138-year-old, family-owned producer of sparkling beverages in Worcester.

As the company has grown, it’s outsourced its organic maple syrup, now supplied by sugarers in Vermont and Quebec.

But other than that and the name, not much has changed since Sara and Joe were pumping out concoctions for their kids.

“The origin of our beverage is ‘craft’ by nature, because it was fine-tuned to the desires of a family,” Brouillet said.

She said you can expect to see Samara at local craft fairs and other events this year, including at the 2022 Street Food Festival, brought to you by the Reformer and sponsored by Whetstone Station and Kampfires.

“The origin of our beverage is ‘craft’ by nature, because it was fine-tuned to the desires of a family.”

Kiley Brouillet

The company is hoping to start visiting local co-ops and other outlets soon to host samplings, too.

Brouillet said she is excited to be getting back out into the community to meet with people and share some of the flavors.

“I’m a born salesperson,” said Brouillet. “My parents quit their jobs and opened an antique store and cafe when I was 12 years old. Entrepreneurship is in my blood.”

Producers and purveyors of niche foods

Village Chocolate Shoppe

471 Main St., Bennington
802-375-6037

thevillagechocolateshoppe.com
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The Village Chocolate Shoppe offers mouth-watering chocolates, fudge, truffles and buttercrunch made fresh in its candy kitchen. The candies are available at The Village Peddler and Chocolatorium,

an old wagon shed, which also features an array of Vermont specialty foods such as maple syrup and maple candy, cheddar cheese and crackers, homemade preserves and jelly, honey, and sugar-free candy.

Whetstone Station Restaurant and Brewery

36 Bridge St, Brattleboro
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Tick, tick, boom!

As New England warms, the bloodsuckers come out to play and head farther north



By Gena Mangiaratti

Vermont Country

It's an unsettling moment when you go to brush a speck of dirt off your skin, only to find it won't brush off, and upon closer inspection, that said speck of dirt has legs.

Though a lifelong New Englander, I didn't have this experience until adulthood, having likely picked up the little bloodsucker while trail running in Turners Falls, Mass. I found the tiny vermin latched onto the side of my head, and, up until the moment a friend of my roommate yanked it off with the smallest pair of tweezers I'd

ever seen, I was quite certain it was sucking out my brains.

Now that I knew ticks were not just the stuff of folklore, I began checking myself after every trail run. I would go on to brush off countless deer ticks, also called black-legged ticks. A few years later, I had the pleasure of seeing what one looks like fully engorged — like a miniature balloon filled with pus — when I found one on a significant other's cat. He did the honors of yanking it off the poor thing.

Tick takeover?

I assumed my more frequent

encounters with ticks were because of my own migration into more rural areas, but others' experiences and state findings show an increase in the disease-carrying critters in the Northeast.

Patti Casey, environmental surveillance program director with the Vermont Department of Agriculture, said tick counts have shown a “zig-zag” pattern over the past several years — up one year, down the next, and back up again — but the general trend is up. And each year, she said she and her colleagues find more ticks a little farther north and east.



The Associated Press

Even Justin Bieber had Lyme disease. "It's been a rough couple years but (I'm) getting the right treatment that will help treat this so far incurable disease and I will be back and better than ever," said Bieber in 2020.

"I grew up in the Champlain Valley, and I don't remember, as a kid, any ticks, and I was outdoors all the time," she recalled.

Experts say the increase in ticks could be attributed to climate change. With more frequent periods of warmth during the winters, ticks have more opportunities to emerge and find hosts when their predecessors might have died off.

"There's just a lot more opportunities for them to be successful as a population than there used to be," Casey said. "It's one more thing about climate change that is, you know, not particularly helpful."

So far, Casey said tick counts for this year are around the same as the year before, but advises continued vigilance.

Kelly Price, Brattleboro-area state game warden, noted that the still-chilly days of early spring are not too early to take caution. Ticks come out as soon as temperatures go above 40 or 50, he said, and he called their current disease load "really high."

"I can't emphasize enough to the public to not only be aware of ticks and the quantity of ticks we do have, but to protect yourself with permethrin," an insecticide applied to clothing and gear, he said. He also reminds pet owners to treat

their animals with tick and flea preventatives.

"Tick safety and tick awareness is so important, and I don't see enough of it," he said.

The black-legged tick is to be blamed

About 99 percent of tick-borne illnesses reported to the state are caused by the black-legged tick. A total of 15 species of tick have been identified in Vermont, six of which are known to bite and transmit Lyme and other diseases to humans, according to the Vermont Department of Health.

About 54 percent of black-legged ticks are carrying the bacteria that causes Lyme disease — but Casey notes that there is a stark difference between pathogen prevalence and transmission rate.

"That does not mean that you get a tick on you, you've got a 50 percent chance of getting the disease," she said. "Transmission rate is actually fairly low."

Lyme disease is a bacterial infection that is usually curable if treated early with antibiotics. Symptoms include fever, headache, fatigue and a bull's-eye-shaped rash. If left untreated, the disease can spread to joints, the heart and nervous system, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

After Lyme, anaplasmosis, also a bacterial infection, is the second most common tick-borne illness in Vermont, according to the Vermont Department of Health. Symptoms include fever, malaise, muscle aches, chills and headaches, according to the state.

How to stay safe

Casey said a black-legged tick must be attached for at least 24 hours before it can transmit Lyme disease. For this reason, she recommends daily tick checks on people and pets. She said ticks look for "hidden areas" on the body, such as between the toes or behind ears, which makes them harder to detect.

Other safety measures include

tucking pants into socks and using an insect repellent. For those who are uncomfortable with using the chemical DEET on their skin, Casey recommends using an alternative that is EPA-approved.

When Casey comes in from looking for ticks for work, she immediately puts her clothes in the dryer on high to kill any that might have latched onto the fabric.

For Vermonters with yards, Casey recommends reducing log piles, brush piles and leaf litter, and staying on top of mowing.

"They typically aren't in mowed grass. That's not a big spot for them," she said.

She also notes that ticks do not like to cross gravel or rocks.

Price said higher tick counts seem to be on south- or southeast-facing slopes, and also in areas with dense deer and rodent populations. Once on a person or animal, he said ticks tend to travel upward on the body.

Price notes that for Lyme disease, the classic rash does not always occur, and advises contacting a medical professional if there are raised red marks or flu-like symptoms after any tick encounter.

For more information on tick species and preventing bites and illness, Casey recommends checking the Vermont Department of Health website.

"I feel like a lot of people are getting sort of afraid of going outdoors, and I feel really bad about that because I grew up here and am outdoors all the time," she said. "I think it's really important to say that we can absolutely still enjoy being outdoors."



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