

**WEATHER**

High **75**  
 Low **55**



**MAGAZINE**



**Poetry rises**

Portsmouth, N.H., city manager and poet laureate Tammi Truax has contributed a new poem every week to the city newsletter since early April. **C1**

**GARDEN**



**Garden Queen**

Weekender Gardening Columnist Henry Homeyer has an abiding love for tomatoes and he doesn't care who knows about it. He grows enough in summer to last year to year. **C3**

**VT. ARTS**



**Artists up close**

Meet Vermont artists in a series of online interviews in "America Now! Some Artists' Reactions," a feature at bit.ly/HallFeatures from Hall Art Foundation in Reading. **D1**

**LOTTERY**

**■ AUG. 7, 2020 DRAWS**  
 Midday: 4-1-4 and 0-8-5-2  
 Evening: 0-9-2 and 1-7-7-9  
 New York State:  
 8-2-2 LS12 and 0-2-4-8 LS14

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# Scott: Fall sports are a go

By **ERIC BLAISDELL**  
 STAFF WRITER

**MONTPELIER** — Gov. Phil Scott said while it will look different than normal, there will be fall sports at schools.

Also, state officials have arrived in Mississippi to check on Vermont inmates who caught COVID-19 at a private prison there.

At his Friday news conference, the governor said with schools set

to reopen next month, many have wondered what the pandemic will mean for sports.

"I know how important this is for many young Vermonters and their families. But like so many things during this crisis, fall sports won't be exactly what we're accustomed to," Scott said.

He said state officials have been working with schools and athletic directors so that all fall sports can

take place "in some fashion." The governor said practices will start when school starts Sept. 8. He said the state's guidance, expected to be released next week, will apply to recreation leagues as well.

He cautioned students and parents the sports will look much different, especially high-contact sports like football.

"Now again, this won't be a normal season, but our goal is to

offer a path forward for each of these sports to give some sense of normalcy in abnormal times," the governor said.

Julie Moore, secretary of the Agency of Natural Resources, said the sports will be modified to ensure physical distancing as far as it's practical and to minimize contact. Moore said state officials

See Sports, page A5

**FEELING BLUE**



JEB WALLACE-BRODEUR / STAFF PHOTO

Thad and Martha Blaisdell, left, and their dear friend JoAnn Wolter, pick blueberries Friday at the Blaisdells' Taplin Hill Sugarworks and Berry Farm in Barre Town. The farm has 2,300 blueberry bushes and is open every day from 7 a.m. to dusk. The blueberry season is nearing its end but should be good into next week.

# Montpelier expects hybrid teaching

By **ERIC BLAISDELL**  
 STAFF WRITER

**MONTPELIER** — The superintendent of the Montpelier-Roxbury Public School District says it will likely operate its hybrid model for the entire school year.

The school district held a virtual town hall Thursday to discuss plans for reopening with over 100 people in attendance.

A survey had been circulated to determine how many students plan to return to the traditional classroom when school opens next

month and how many want to enroll in one of two remote learning options the district will offer. Superintendent Libby Bonesteel said the majority of 70 families who responded said they wanted their kids to have in-person instruction.

Bonesteel also addressed multiple questions raised by parents who filled out the survey.

The superintendent said she spent Thursday speaking with staff who are at higher risk for the novel coronavirus.

"We are dedicated and determined as a leadership team to

protect all of our staff and mitigate risk as much as possible. There are staff who are very nervous to come in and so we're going to work to accommodate them," she said. "We're also dedicated to providing high levels of learning for all of our students in person. So sometimes those two things are in conflict, but we think that we can work it out with what options are available. We're being very creative with our teachers' union."

Bonesteel said the school district will be using its hybrid model until a

vaccine is available. Because the state has been handling the novel coronavirus pandemic so well, she said the vaccine might not be available in the community for another year.

There will be a worldwide demand for the vaccine and she said the vaccines being developed now require two doses taken a month apart.

"I am ready to shift (to regular in-person teaching) if we need to. However, I believe that we are

See Capital, page A5

# Federal money is now available

## Grants will mitigate losses

By **PATRICK MCARDLE**  
 STAFF WRITER

Applications are being accepted for grants from Operational Relief Grant program, which has \$12 million in federal funding that will be distributed to help mitigate the losses suffered by child care providers for losses suffered due to the pandemic.

Services that would be eligible to be awarded a grant include child care and afterschool programs, summer day camps, parent child

centers and agencies that provide services for what the Department for Children and Family, or DCF, call local Children's Integrated Services.

In a statement, Gov. Phil Scott said he and the staff of his administration were "so grateful to the child care workers and programs who have stepped up to provide critical services to children and their families throughout this crisis."

See Centers, page A5

**WALKING FOR A CAUSE**



JEB WALLACE-BRODEUR / STAFF PHOTO

Tia McCarthy and Rob Hitzig, of Montpelier, examine a work by Susan Calza during Montpelier Alive's scaled-down Art Walk Friday night, the first since the COVID crisis began. Calza and other artists were donating proceeds from greeting cards to the Vermont Foodbank.

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# VERMONT ARTS

## CRAFTSBURY CHAMBER PLAYERS

### Vermont farm ingenuity saves 2020 season

By **JIM LOWE**  
STAFF WRITER

When the venerable Craftsbury Chamber Players found their annual six-week summer season stymied by COVID-19, it took two Vermont farm girls to find a new direction. Outdoor audiences have now enjoyed three members of the company performing chamber music concerts in Craftsbury, Hardwick, Waterbury and Plainfield.

"This is the essence of what this group started as," explained cellist Fran Rowell, Craftsbury Chamber Players' artistic director. "It was just getting music to people. You look around, and you can't do it the way we used to do it, so you find another way. Who knows what normal is any more?"

The Players' next concert in the "There Will Be Music" series is at 6 p.m. Sunday in South Burlington at The Parking Field (across from Bread and Butter Farm). Fran, sister Mary on violin, and Mary Jane Austin on piano, will perform music of the Americas, short works by Victor Herbert, Amy Beach, Edward MacDowell and Astor Piazzolla. Folks are expected to bring their own chairs, and donations are invited. Future concerts will be announced on the Players' website and Facebook page.

Although Fran and Mary Rowell are currently the backbone of the Juilliard-tinged Craftsbury Chamber Players, they were born in Craftsbury, where they grew up on the family farm. Both were members of the Vermont Youth Orchestra and then earned master of arts degrees in performance from Juilliard. Fran eventually became a member of the New Jersey Symphony while Mary, based in New York City, focused on a solo and chamber music career, with a specialty of contemporary music.

Still, the Craftsbury Chamber Players always beckoned them home. The longtime artistic director was their stepmother Mary Anthony Cox, a doyenne of Juilliard. As they developed as players, they became regular members, first Mary and then Fran, returning to the family farm each summer. Just a couple of years before Cox's death in 2019, Fran became artistic director.

"It was kind of inspired by the trailer," Mary said of this summer's project. "Frannie had a trailer and thought we could take it around and do concerts. My thinking was more guerrilla, just show up and do it, but Frannie's idea was more let's get people to invite us to play so we don't have issues with insurance and things like that. That way,

See Craftsbury, page D5



PHOTO BY M.T. ANDERSON

The Craftsbury Chamber Players perform July 25 at the Plainfield Recreation Field. From left are Mary Rowell, Mary Jane Austin and Fran Rowell. Their next concert is Sunday at The Parking Field in South Burlington.



JIM LOWE / STAFF PHOTO

The Craftsbury Chamber Players perform July 23 in front of the Hardwick Town House. From left are Mary Rowell, Mary Jane Austin and Fran Rowell.

#### ■ CRAFTSBURY CHAMBER PLAYERS

The Craftsbury Chamber Players brings their "socially distanced" concert series "There Will Be Music" to The Parking Field (across from Bread and Butter Farm) at 500 Cheese Factory Road in South Burlington, at 6 p.m. Sunday, Aug. 9 (rain: 6 p.m. Aug. 10). Admission is free (donations welcomed); bring your own chairs (no rest room facilities); for information about this or other upcoming concerts, go online to [www.craftsbury-chamberplayers.org](http://www.craftsbury-chamberplayers.org)



COURTESY HALL ART FOUNDATION

"I try to put myself to one side and deal with the picture itself." — Peter Saul.

## HALL ART FOUNDATION

### Artists share their responses to now

By **JANELLE FAIGNANT**  
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

The videos run between 5 and 10 minutes. I started with Tracey Emin. I wasn't familiar with the English artist. I looked her up and found she had a Wikipedia page, and that people think of her work as shocking. But she says it really isn't — "I've always used myself as subject matter, and my work has always just been a journey for me."

Some of her pieces are fragments of writing in neon on a black background, like "What color is a kiss?" with a hot pink X next to it. Another is a sketch of a bird on a branch traced over in bright blue neon. Her paintings bear a sketched quality as well, just enough to make out what you're seeing.

Emin, 57, has been painting for about 10 years. Since lockdown she

■ **HALL ART FOUNDATION**  
To view Hall Art Foundation's "America Now! Some Artists' Reactions" videos, [bit.ly/HallFeatures](http://bit.ly/HallFeatures). For more information, go online to [www.hallartfoundation.org](http://www.hallartfoundation.org)

has been sleeping in her studio. "It's been lovely going to sleep with my paintings. ... Everything I want in the whole world is my work."

She is one of the participating artists in a video series called "America Now! Some Artists' Reactions" presented by Hall Art Foundation, an international arts organization with a center in Reading, about 35 miles outside Rutland.

"We are in the midst of an important time in this country's history, and we want to provide a platform for the voice of American artists, or artists who are or

have worked in America," said Maryse Brand, director of Hall Art Foundation.

The series offers insight from interesting artists, who were each posed the same five questions — some biography, some information about their work, what they love about this country, their views about what's happening here now and how it's impacting their work. Each artist submits their answers in a video taken at home or in their studio. The result is a fascinating and personal dialogue.

Eric Fischl, 72, an American painter, sculptor, printmaker, draughtsman and educator, is known for his paintings depicting American suburbia from the 1970s and 1980s.

In his video, two are visible. One is a woman skinny-dipping in a waterfall. The other is of a man on a beach, having a moment with a



COURTESY HALL ART FOUNDATION

"It's been lovely going to sleep with my paintings ... Everything I want in the whole world is my work." — English artist Tracey Emin.

child, a stormy sky behind them.

"I paint people," Fischl says. "And I paint people who are doing things. And I try to figure out through the painting what they're doing."

"I'm trying to get to meaningful moments," he added.

"What I love about America is that it's always in a state of becoming," Fischl said. "It redefines itself over and over." His comment on the current situation: "I think we're frightened, and I think we're behaving the way people who are frightened behave."

When asked what kind of insight

they hoped to find through the questions posed to the artists, Brand said: "How current events are impacting their work, their lives and also their broader views about America. We also thought it was important to hear what each artist loves about America, and which presumably they consider as something to be proud of and worth protecting and preserving."

A painting of a woman puking cash, pushing a giant fork with chocolate cake into a man's head with the caption "I'm not

See Artists, page D2

# VERMONT ARTS



JIM LOWE / STAFF FILE PHOTO  
Soprano Allison Devery as the Angel of Depression, right, over the sleeping Tommy, tenor Adam Hall, in "A Fleeting Animal."



JIM LOWE / STAFF FILE PHOTO  
"A Fleeting Animal: An Opera from Judevine," the Erik Nielsen-David Budbill opera in its second production tour in 2015, is now available online. Pictured are tenor Adam Hall and soprano Mary Bonhag as the troubled Tommy and Grace.

## ■ 'A FLEETING ANIMAL'

"A Fleeting Animal: An Opera from Judevine," the Erik Nielsen-David Budbill opera, toured Vermont in its second production in September 2015. The video of the final performance is now public and available online. Note these are very large files, so allow plenty of time for them to load. Go online to:  
— Act I: <https://vimeo.com/270235356>  
— Act II: <https://vimeo.com/271583398>

# 'A Fleeting Animal: An Opera from Judevine' RELIVING A TRUE VERMONT OPERA

By JIM LOWE  
STAFF WRITER

Moments in the 2015 opening night performance of "A Fleeting Animal: An Opera from Judevine" — with the soaring voices of soprano Mary Bonhag as Grace and tenor Adam Hall as Tommy — could have been Puccini, but with a Vermont accent.

Set in Vermont, written and performed by Vermonters, "A Fleeting Animal" is decidedly a Vermont opera, combining a love story with Vietnam War PTSD and the Northeast Kingdom. With music by Brookfield composer Erik Nielsen and a libretto by the late Wolcott poet David Budbill, it has the kind of power that made that great Italian opera composer so irresistible.

The final performance of the 2015 Vermont tour is now available to the public in video made by Jeff Tolbert. Actually two videos, one for each act, include subtitles so you can read along

with Budbill's remarkable libretto.

"A Fleeting Animal" was premiered in another Vermont tour in 2000 by Vermont Opera Theater and the Vermont Contemporary Music Ensemble, directed by Tim Tavcar and conducted by Anne Decker. The 2015 revision proved entertaining as well as devastating, as only opera can be, thanks to the authentic libretto, brilliant score, and beautiful, exciting performance.

The opera tells the tragic tale of Tommy, a Vietnam veteran plagued with vivid memories, and Grace, an impoverished single mother, in rural Vermont. They face not only the disapproval of their close-minded community but their own inner demons. Despite their undeniable love for each other, the mix turns out to be explosive.

The result is tragic — and beautiful — opera.

Budbill's authentic atmosphere and characters are made all the

more vivid by Nielsen's evocative score. Musical styles range from country and folk to blues to Broadway, as well as grand opera, made all the more immediate by contemporary classical harmonic and rhythmic language. As with some of Puccini's operas, there are some weak moments, though few, in the buildup to the powerful climax — and devastating anti-climax.

Nielsen and Budbill, who died in 2016 in Montpelier, based "A Fleeting Animal" on Budbill's 1991 "Judevine: The Complete Poems" (not the play). Commissioned by Vermont Opera Theater, the opera premiered to critical and popular success. Revisions for this reprisal included the elimination of the unnecessary penultimate scene where Grace rails at the audience.

Operatic is the only way to describe the performances by Bonhag and Hall. Bonhag, a Marshfield resident, owns a lyrical

crystalline voice that soared when called upon. Hall, who lives in Burlington, proved a potent and expressive tenor. The two were most convincing — vocally and theatrically.

The production was given its feeling of authenticity and drama by the imaginative and sensitive stage direction of Margo Whitcomb. Expert musical direction was by Decker, who this time led seven members of her TURN-music ensemble — clarinet, string quartet, piano and percussion — all fine Vermont instrumentalists.

The French-Canadian woodcutter Antoine, the story's conscience, was sung with richness and wit by bass Geoffrey Penar. Contrasting was soprano Allison Devery's haunting performance as the Angel of Depression — devastating in a duet with Bonhag's Grace.

Soprano Sarah Cullins proved witty as well as a fine singer as the

town wag, Edith. George Cordes used his powerful bass as Tommy's bigoted colleague Doug, while soprano Stephanie Weigand contrasted as his disapproving wife. Tenor Johnny Lee Green and baritone Thomas Beard were strong vocally and theatrically as Tommy's Vietnam buddies James and William. They were backed by a fine chorus.

Staging was appropriately minimal, and Cora Fauser's costumes felt authentic. Lighting was largely effective, but could have been more imaginative. At times, it was difficult to hear what was being sung, though the story was always obvious. That will be remedied by the video's subtitles.

"A Flying Animal" is a true Vermont opera — authentic, tragic and beautiful.

*Editor's note: Much of the material in this piece was taken from Jim Lowe's Sept. 13, 2015, review.*  
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# 'A VERMONT MUSICIAN'S STORY' 'Gordon Stone: A Retrospective Anthology'

By ART EDELSTEIN  
ARTS CORRESPONDENT

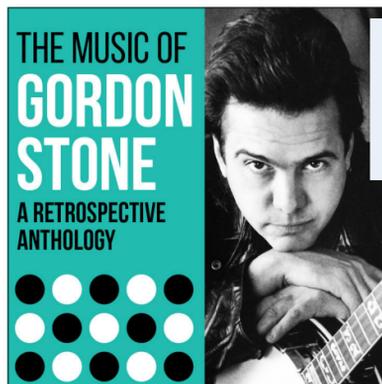
When Vermont musician Gordon Stone died unexpectedly on July 10, his newest musical project "Gordon Stone: A Retrospective Anthology," due for release that very same day was delayed. On July 30 the 21-track double album was released on bandcamp.com The album is available as a double vinyl LP and as a download from the Bandcamp site.

The anthology was released on Astrology Days Records based in Burlington. Patrick Biondo, Astrology Days owner and Stone's close friend, said the album was more than a year in the planning stage.

"He was thinking about it since 2019," Biondo said. Stone "wanted to try and stay relevant and stay in the scene," Biondo said. Stone at age 70 "was struggling with health and aging issues."

According to Biondo, Stone asked him for help in choosing tracks from his discography for the anthology as well as help promoting the record. Also, Biondo put Stone in touch with a record-pressing company.

Asked why the album is available only on LP format and digital download, Biondo said Stone never got around to having CDs made. "He was a big fan of vinyl," and



## ■ GORDON STONE ONLINE

"Gordon Stone: A Retrospective Anthology" can be downloaded at [gordonstone.bandcamp.com](http://gordonstone.bandcamp.com)

tracks.

Biondo, who took banjo lessons from Stone, as did Mike Gordon, called Stone "the funkiest banjo player that ever lived." He said that, "Any banjo player who wants to be funky should listen to Gordon Stone."

Stone chose tracks: "Touch and Go," "Scratchin' The Surface," "Even with the Odds," "Night Shade" and "Rhymes With Orange." There are no cuts from his pure bluegrass days with the Pine Island String Band from Burlington, nor his punk rock band The Decentz.

What the listener hears on this album is a wide variety of virtuosic banjo and pedal steel guitar playing from a master musician who was, unfortunately, not well known outside of New England. We are also treated to an all-star ensemble of fine backing musicians, some of the very best Vermont has to offer. "Many of the musicians I've

worked with over the years have understood my musical intention. I have been honored to have them on my recordings creating magic. They got me," Stone wrote in the liner notes to the album.

They included guitarists Paul Asbell, Josh Stacy, Dan Archer and Tim McKenzie; David Gusakov, Mike Barnett, Gene White and Patrick Ross on fiddle; mandolinists Jimmy Ryan and Jamie Masefield; Stacy Starkweather, Mike Gordon, Jon McCartan, Rudy Dauth, Aram Bedrosian, Clyde Stats, Andy Cotton and Brian O'Connell on bass; and Paige McConell and Charlie Eller on keyboards.

The music that Stone composed for his albums is challenging and the various players and band members appearing on the tracks never falter in their ability to play right along with Stone.

Biondo wrote about the album's release, "This double album is a nostalgic look back at some of the incredible music he had put together with various musicians throughout his long-standing career. Gordon was well known in Vermont for his contribution to the music world and helped contribute to recording/touring artists such as Phish, Max Creek, Pine Island, Breakaway, Al and the

Trans-Americans, Michael Hurley, Twiddle, Srutidarpan, The Decentz among countless others.

"Proceeds from the digital sales of this record will go on to support Backline.care, which is a mental health and wellness hub for musicians and their families. Gordon was kind and loving, always sharing his knowledge to those who had shown interest. We are honored to be a part of his last musical gift to the world."

Biondo said that he is still in shock over Stone's passing but happy to see the album now available. "I'm proud we found a way to release this. It's a great representation of his musical ability and his gift to the world and a remembrance more than an anthology. He had a real desire to get healthy and play again and my efforts were driven by his desire to continue his career."

Biondo believes that Stone did not get the attention he deserved as a musician. The hope is that this anthology "will bring attention to his craft and awareness of his playing to the world. My goal is to make Gordon a household name."

Only 300 copies of the LP have been pressed so those interested in obtaining this anthology should act soon.

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## Artists

Continued from Page D1

your piece of cake" sits in the background of artist Peter Saul's video. Another depicts a person in a graduation cap and gown, the background full of scattered math equations, none of which add up.

"I try to put myself to one side and deal with the picture itself," he said of his politically infused paintings that have a signature exaggerated effect in color and shape.

Hall Art Foundation in Reading holds seasonal, rotating exhibits of contemporary art, but the converted dairy farm closed its doors for the whole of

2020. The "America Now" video conversation series was its way to address and express the current situation.

"We are deeply grateful to the artists who have agreed to participate," Brand said, "for their honesty and openness in sharing their unfiltered views about current events and for letting us into their studios to better understand their process and get a glimpse of the new work they're making."

"(We) started by approaching artists with whom we have worked in the past," she said. "We hope to continue the series through the November elections. New videos by different artists will be released periodically until then."

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"I'm trying to get to meaningful moments." — American artist Eric Fischl.

COURTESY HALL ART FOUNDATION