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HEATING UP

Vermont hot sauce is having its moment



PHOTOS FROM CLAIRE GEORGES AT BUTTERFLY BAKERY OF VERMONT.

By SOPHIA BUCKLEY-CLEMENT

For a state known for its cold weather, some local businesses know how to keep things hot.

Despite this brave little state's small size, residents have proven they can support dozens of locally produced hot sauces. Moreover, many of those brands have ended up on the shelves of our favorite East Coast and national retailers.

According to some of the state's spice connoisseurs, the widespread love of Vermont's heat isn't just coincidence — it's a product of hard work, local pride and good peppers.

Benito's Hot Sauce, Morrisville

Started in 2006 with a bumper crop of chili peppers and a suggestion from a friend, Ben Maniscalco's brand "Benito's Hot Sauce" has since made a name for itself across the state and beyond.

The Morrisville producer said despite his work just being a part-time gig, he spends much of his time traveling to sell his products at local farmer's markets and, somehow, has ended up distributing in over a dozen states.

"In the beginning it was just an idea. Once I figured I could kind of be my own boss, so to speak, it really stuck after that. (It offers) a lot of freedom," Maniscalco said. "I have a 60-gallon kettle here in my little factory. It's pretty much just me making it. It's about a 1,400 square foot spot, so it's pretty tight."

Vermont-grown chiles, alongside other local goods like onions, carrots and maple syrup, make his product a standout brand, according to Maniscalco, as well as some experimentation on his part.

He shared one of his newest, a black garlic hot sauce, features a savory-sweet profile, with just a tingle of heat in the background.

"Our classic one is called Local Tang, and that's more of a citrus (profile with) fresh, local paper lantern chiles," he said. "That's a good medium heat. One of our hottest ones is called the Old Coy Dog, which is a ghost chili blend."

Though he said he only ever wanted to be "Vermont famous," his national acclaim has proven to him that making hot sauce is just what he's meant to do.

Butterfly Bakery of Vermont, Barre

For Claire Georges, owner and operator of Butterfly Bakery of Vermont, it was her baked goods that led her to the pepper business.

Though she started her business in 2003, it wasn't until 2011 that she began to accumulate peppers through trades after farmer's markets.

"It was pretty common for farmers to have chili peppers left over at that point, because they actually grow really well in Vermont, but there wasn't a huge market for them at the time. And so, then I would get a bunch of chili peppers. (I started) making hot sauce at home and at the next farmer's market, (they) sold out. We started gaining a reputation for them," Georges said.

Between 2015 and 2021, she and her business went from contracting 800 pounds of chilis to over 100,000 pounds.

Attributing her success to experimentation and local produce — all of which comes from farms within 200 miles — Georges and her business offer a wide variety of heat levels for every level of spice-enthusiast. Maple Wood Smoked Onion is the most popular sauce, but other favorites are the milder Mellow Vibes Only, made with serrano and sweet peppers with nostalgic taco spices, and Taco Vibes Only, which was hot enough to make it on season 20 of the popular YouTube series "Hot Ones."

Other flavors have also landed them on the acclaimed YouTube show and Georges' love for the game has since led her to create her own hot sauce podcast, "Flavor, Balance, Heat."

"(Vermont) hot sauce is absolutely having its moment right now," Georges said.

Vermont Pepper Project, Clarendon

Though newer to the Vermont hot sauce scene, Alex LiCausi and his brand grew from his love for spice and some overzealous planting.

Around 2019, LiCausi returned to his hometown in Vermont to support his mother after a lung cancer diagnosis. He decided to grow some 300 pepper plants to help distract her.

"I wasn't really sure exactly how many peppers each plant would produce, so I kind of overdid it," he said with a laugh. "Making hot sauces was kind of like the trendy thing at the time. ... I experimented and made a few recipes and gave them to friends. From there, they were like, 'These are really good. Maybe you should consider selling them.'"

His mother is now cancer-free, but the pepper production didn't subside.

In just one weekend, LiCausi sold over \$3,000 worth of hot sauce. Fast-forward to today, the hobby has become a full-time gig.



Ben Maniscalco stirring a batch of sauce.

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Alex LiCausi of Vermont Pepper Project passes out samples of his hot sauce.

Of his 12 different recipes, some of the standouts are his sweet and mild mango jalapeño sauce, a pickle sauce based on his mother's recipe for bread and butter pickles and a Sicilian ghost pepper sauce that ties in his Italian American heritage with a pasta sauce-like flavor.

In addition to the staple peppers, LiCausi added that he likes to experiment with growing some of the more exotic, fad and extreme peppers, adding that "people really love hot, hot stuff," even if they can only manage a few bites.

"Vermont hot sauce is definitely exceptional. Because I feel like most Vermont makers ... use Vermont grown peppers," he said. "Our attention to detail with ingredients really goes above and beyond."

The pepper people

Almost everything about Vermont's growing conditions seems inadequate for pepper production, but local hot sauce makers agreed that it's the Vermont peppers that make their recipes stand out.

"The difference in the quality of the peppers that come in the door is just mind-blowing," Georges said. "When they come in from the farm, they're crisp, juicy, flavorful (and are) just everything that you want a perfect piece of produce to be."

Both she and LiCausi agreed that since many brands use a similar generic mash — a fermented mixture of salt and chilies that is shelf stable — they tend to share a similar taste due to the distinct mash flavoring.

"I think what makes (Vermont hot sauce) special is really the connection to the ingredients," Maniscalco said. "A lot of the ingredients local producers use come right from the farmers. We're buying direct from the farm and really supporting the social and economic fabric of what makes Vermont, Vermont."

Eli Hersh, co-owner of Norwich's Honey Field Farm, said he frequently hears that Vermont peppers are something special.

Each season, Honey Field Farm produces three acres worth of peppers spanning 40 varieties, many of which end up bottled in local hot sauces.

"It seems like, by the books, a lot of what would make a pepper happy is not what is available here. They want a nice long season. They want these really warm conditions all summer," he said. "I wonder if it's because the bulk of what you might be getting (on the market) are going to be grown in milder climates. ... Maybe they don't have the stressors there to develop the flavor that they get here."

Georges agreed that the incredible Vermont soil in addition to being picked at the appropriate time and spending less time in transportation are part of what creates an ideal pepper.

And according to LiCausi, the cherry on top of Vermont's fine sauces is the added layer of community between producers across the state.

"The hot sauce world, in general, is very friendly. Even though ... we make the same product and sell the same products, it's a Vermont thing," he said. "We just look out for each other."



New things to see at
**SHELBURNE
MUSEUM**

PROVIDED PHOTOS

By PETER COBB

Paintings by famed artist Norman Rockwell, posters from the rock history of Higher Ground in Burlington, a celebration of the 70th anniversary of the 220-foot steamboat Ticonderoga's arrival at the Shelburne Museum, and the Ben & Jerry's Concerts on the Green series, are just some of the highlights of the museum's 2025 season.

"This season features an array of contemporary artists working in a number of mediums from screen printed concert posters to bronze sculptures to porcelain to textiles to works that merge sound and textiles," said Leslie Wright, director of communications.

The museum opens for the season on May 10, closes Oct. 26 and will reopen for Winter Lights, a holiday lights extravaganza, in late November through early January.

On May 10, five new exhibitions will open at galleries across the museum's 45 acres. A sixth exhibition, "Making Noise: Indigenous Sound Art," opens June 21. Opening day is Community Day with free admission, gallery talks, art



making activities and entertainment.

"Spring always brings the spectacle of hundreds of blooming lilacs across campus in shades of purple and white. Their color and fragrance make them a perennial favorite draw in the spring. The lilacs jump start Shelburne's gardens that bloom

all season across campus,” Wright said.

For rock fans, “Sound, Art, & Ink: Higher Ground Gig Posters,” celebrates 27 years of gig posters (more than 250 of them on view) created by a collaboration between a music venue, visionary designers, and a group of dedicated printmakers.

“Many of the posters commemorate concerts held at Shelburne Museum as part of the Ben & Jerry’s Concerts on the Green series, and will surely spark fond memories of summer concerts at the museum,” Wright said.

The museum recently acquired paintings related to Vermont’s granite industry by well-known American artist Norman Rockwell. “The Craftsman,” which depicts an artisan granite carver working on a stone, will be on view in Webb Gallery of American Art.

“Making a Noise: Indigenous Sound Art,” features Native American artists who merge sound and textile design to create interactive, thought-provoking works that explore the relationship between humans and the nonhuman world.

The iconic steamboat Ticonderoga celebrates 70 years at Shelburne. Getting the huge boat to the museum grounds was no simple task.

“In a remarkable feat of maritime engineering, the walking beam, side wheel, passenger boat was moved 2 miles over land from Lake Champlain to the museum, where it has been a favorite and beloved part of the museum ever since. Check the website throughout the season for special programming around the Ti’s 70th anniversary,” Wright said.

Karen Petersen’s “Bronze Horses” will transform the museum’s grounds into a pasture for her striking equine sculptures. Stripping away details like manes, tails and ears, Petersen distills the horse’s form to its essence, revealing primal yet elegant and powerful shapes. Petersen, originally from Michigan, now lives and works from Randolph.

“The Possibilities of Patterns” explores the rich imagination of Vermont-born artist Dahlov Ipcar. Best known as an author and illustrator of beloved children’s books, Ipcar’s talents extended into textiles, including needlepoints, hooked rugs and soft sculptures of real and fantastical creatures.

David Sokosh reimagines objects from the museum’s collection through the 19th-century cyanotype process. Known for its vivid blue tones, the medium highlights Sokosh’s ability to create works ranging from documentary photographs to experimental compositions on unexpected surfaces like quilts and hatboxes. This immersive exhibition invites viewers to consider American material culture in new ways, blending historical and contemporary perspectives.

A retrospective of Mara Superior’s acclaimed porcelain art. Originally trained as a painter, Superior found her true medium in porcelain, combining intricate painted imagery with sculptural forms to explore themes of art history, environmentalism, and domesticity. Her pieces, often described as love letters to the world, invite audiences to engage with their timeless beauty and layered meanings.

For more information, go to shelburnemuseum.org.



May 3	Annual Thunder Road Car Show (9am – 12-noon) – Open Practice to Follow	Post Time 9:00am
May 4	27th annual Community Bank 150 – Milton CAT American-Canadian Tour	Post Time 1:30pm
May 25	62nd Mekkelsen RV Memorial Day Classic 125 - Round #1 Squier Cup pres. by Milton CAT	Post Time 1:30pm
June 5	McGee Hyundai of Barre presents Super Thursday!	Post Time 7:00pm
June 12	Casella Waste Systems Night – Scout Night – All Scouts in Uniform Admitted Free!	Post Time 7:00pm
June 19	Nolato Vermont Night - Myers Container Triple Crown Series #1	Post Time 7:00pm
June 26	Community College of Vermont presents 2nd annual Superstars of Thunder Road	Post Time 7:00pm
July 3	Preston's KIA Independence Day Spectacular – Northstar Fireworks Display	Post Time 7:00pm
July 10	Vermont Construction Night - Myers Container Triple Crown Series #2	Post Time 7:00pm
July 17	46th Vermont Governor's Cup 150 presented by the Vermont Liquor & Lottery	Post Time 6:30pm
July 24	Times Argus Midseason Championships – Double Points, Extra Distance	Post Time 7:00pm
July 31	WDEV Radio / Calkins Portable Toilets – Squier Cup pres. by Milton CAT Finale 100!	Post Time 7:00pm
Aug. 3	41st Bolduc Metal Recycling Enduro 200 & Street Stock 50-Lap Special	Post Time 6:00pm
Aug. 7	Five Star Roofing Company Night feat. 7th annual Road Warrior Challenge!	Post Time 7:00pm
Aug. 14	Vermont Tire & Service Night - Double purse courtesy of FloRacing	Post Time 7:00pm
Aug. 21	Cody Chevrolet/Cadillac Night – Myers Container Triple Crown Championship 100!	Post Time 7:00pm
Aug. 28	Jet Service Envelope/Accura Printing Night – Run-What-U-Brung!	Post Time 7:00pm
Aug. 31	47th Labor Day Classic 200 presented by EastRise Credit Union	Post Time 4:00pm
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RAISING SHEEP

in Vermont



Vermont has always been known for its sheep herds. It is part of the foundation of the state's rich agricultural history. Sarah Stewart Taylor of Hartland comes from a long line of sheep farmers. She has carried on the tradition, and along with her family continues to build a community of "sheep people" who love the process and all that comes with it.

How did you first become introduced to sheep farming?

My paternal grandfather had sheep, though they were mostly gone by the time I was born. Some other family members also raised sheep, but I didn't have any direct experience with them (other than cuddling lambs) until I married into it! My husband, Matt, had grown up raising sheep and doing lambing and the whole business, but by the time I met him, his family was just pasturing lambs. That is actually the sane way to do it and it was working very well, but right around 2016, I decided I wanted to breed sheep and have lambs on the farm. Matt was great about stepping back and letting me learn on the job but also helping out when I asked! We started with two ewes and a borrowed ram and they each had twins the first year. Two were bottle babies, likely because I was so anxious and stepped in when I shouldn't have, but it was all education. It was a great way for me to learn about lambing. Over the past nine years, we have added quite a few ewes to our flock. We were at a high of fifteen bred ewes and 27 lambs a couple years ago, which was chaos. We're down to a smaller



PROVIDED PHOTOS



PROVIDED PHOTOS

number right now, but we will probably go up again.

What is the biggest challenge?

Lambing season is a challenge — sleepless nights, complicated births, strange health conditions, figuring out when to call the vet and when to handle it yourself — but it's mostly a fun challenge. The biggest challenge we've had lately has been predators — coyotes. We lost nine lambs last year and are trying to figure out how to keep the coyotes out. An experienced shepherd once told me that sheep are "really good at finding ways to die." This is very true.

What makes it the most rewarding?

There is something so primally satisfying about looking out at a green pasture with grazing sheep. I don't know what it is, but your heart rate slows and you feel this incredible sense of peace come over you. Lambing is also just pure, unadulterated joy. It can be heartbreak too, but when all the lambs are out and thriving, it's just the best thing in the world. Having a bunch of lambs running around and playing on a spring day — heaven. It's also really satisfying to raise healthy animals and to serve our own lamb to friends and have them talk about how delicious it is.



The sheep farming community seems very close-knit. How has it been helpful to you?

Sheep people are the best people. I had neighbors who really walked me through a bunch of complicated situations my first couple of years. They came down in the middle of the night to help with a delivery. Other sheep farmers here in Hartland lent me equipment and offered advice. I'm so grateful and hope I can return the favor.

What is the most common misconception about farming sheep?

That you can make a lot of money at it! No, maybe that it's simple. Sheep aren't simple or easy, but they are fun.

What advice do you give someone interested in raising sheep?

Learn from other shepherds. Spend some time on a farm helping out so you'll know what you're getting into. Don't do it on a whim. Open yourself to being a beginner. You can do it for a lifetime and still learn something new every year.

THE PUZZLE MASTER

PHOTOS BY JEB WALLACE-BRODEUR

Rick Winston has been doing puzzles most of his life. He has been making them for decades now. Many of his puzzles appear regularly in The Times Argus/Rutland Herald weekend edition. But there is more to making puzzles than just being clever. Winston, of Calais, takes us into his routine, and shows around his puzzling process.

Where did your interest in puzzles originate?

I've always enjoyed doing crosswords but my interest in crostics (or "acrostics" or "double crostics") comes from trying — and usually failing — to solve the Sunday New York Times puzzles by Thomas Middleton, and then trying — and almost always succeeding — to solve the ones by Middleton's successors, the team of Henry Rathvon and Emily Cox.

What made you decide you wanted to create your own?

It was much like the mechanically minded youngster who decides to take apart the radio to see how it works. I got very curious to understand how crostic puzzles were constructed, and after a few false starts, realized they were as much fun to construct as to solve.

What is your process for creating a puzzle?

You have to start with a quotation that a) is by convention no more than 180 letters and b) has all the letters of the author's name and the particular source material in the quote — these letters in sequence will be the first letters of each answer. The quotation has to be pithy,



A. Top-grade
12 104 58 180 89 190 124 157 20

B. Health care giant
160 29 18 2 110 94

C. The one percent, colloquially (two words)
189 145 123 179 62 111 30 143 171 31

D. French actress Nathalie
47 156 166 109

E. Searchlight element
128 140 165 95

F. Naval-themed Sinatra-Kelly musical of 1945 (two words)
55 133 53 21 142 26 83 173 38 161 184 10

and should make sense as a standalone thought.

What is the biggest challenge in creating a puzzle?

There is no shortage of insightful, concise quotes to use, but sometimes the book's title is too long to use (the standard is a total of at most 26 letters for author and title) or the quote just doesn't have the letters that appear in the name of the author and title. Sometimes there are too many "tough" letters (think Scrabble) to use.

Over the years, what has the response been to your puzzles?

Overall, there's a very positive response. I like to hear about couples who do them together as part of a weekend routine. Sometimes I laugh when one person complains that the puzzle was too hard, and 10 minutes later, I meet another says the same puzzle was too easy.

What do you see as the benefits of doing puzzles?

There is nothing scientifically conclusive about puzzles like crosswords or crostics keeping one's mind sharp, but it makes sense to me. You are always thinking and making connections. And doing these puzzles often affords the same pleasure as reading a good mystery novel, with a similar feeling of satisfaction on completion. Plus, one gets to pick up some arcane vocabulary along the way. I've never had occasion to use the word "etui" (a needlecase) in a sentence, but learning it was like adding a rare bird to a "life list."

Do you have a favorite kind of puzzle?

If I had to choose, I'd say "cryptic crosswords," of the sort first



developed in the United Kingdom but now quite popular here. In these puzzles, the constructors have great fun with anagrams (I learned that "manila folder" is a perfect anagram for "Alfred Molina"), puns, hidden words (if you put the word "laugh" inside "Charleston," you get "Charles Laughton"), homophones, etc. My favorite constructors were Henry Rathvon and Emily Cox before they retired, and now the team of Henri Picciotto and Joshua Kosman. I get their puzzles via email every Thursday and it's always something I look forward to.

On Saturday, April 12, at 10:30 a.m., Winston will be leading a Community Crostic Construction in the Hayes Room at Kellogg-Hubbard Library in Montpelier. The group will create a puzzle off a poem of Winston's choice. It will be published in The Times Argus/Rutland Herald in May.



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PHOTO BY PETER COBB

Cyndy Golonka making donuts in her home bakery.

MAPLE



By PETER COBB

Although maple syrup may not be king in the world of baking ingredients — that title goes to flour or butter — it is definitely in the royal family, at least in Vermont.

“Maple is huge in my business,” said Cyndy Golonka, owner of Capitol Cupcake Company in Montpelier.

Golonka bakes a variety of maple syrup-based products including maple cakes, cookies and maple glazed doughnuts. Maple cakes, she said, are a bestseller but her maple doughnuts are her family’s favorite. She also sells handmade, small batch-produced maple caramel.

“I came up with a recipe and made a maple caramel that is the best caramel you’ll see because most maple caramels are made with maple extracts but mine is made with pure maple syrup. There are four cups of maple syrup in every batch. It took me four years to perfect my maple caramel,” she said.

Golonka started her business when her kids were in high school. She frequently baked cookies and cakes for various high school fundraising events and one day a friend asked her to cater



PHOTO BY PETER COBB

Customers, Chloe Davis and Wes Schooler of Boulder, Colorado, participate in a maple syrup tasting handled by Morse Farm Employee, Tim Murray. Davis is originally from Barre.



PHOTOS BY PETER COBB

Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks.

a party. The rest is history, she said.

“Capitol Cupcake Company started in 2013 as a passion project and quickly became so much more. Having spent my entire life baking, I knew I wanted to find a way to share my sweet treats with the community. That’s how I started. I love it. I tell people baking is my therapy,” she said. Golonka sells her baked goods — cupcakes and cookies to extravagant wedding cakes and more — from her home.

Maple is definitely king at Morse Farm Maple Sugarworks, in Montpelier, and has been for many years.

Current owner Jake Shattuck is the nephew of former owner Harry “Burr” Morse Jr. whose family has been sugaring the land for several generations.

The farm was founded in 1966 by Burr’s father Harry Morse Sr. who passed the business to Burr. Under Burr’s leadership Morse Farm became not just a maple producer but also a bucket list stop for thousands of tourists and Vermonters.

The Morse ancestors, who helped settle central Vermont, were taught how to tap maple trees by Native Americans, and have been boiling the sweet sap ever since.

Maple syrup-based products available at Morse Farm range from maple syrup, to maple cookies and candies, to maple kettle popcorn, to maple creams and much more. Also available at the store is a large selection of Vermont made crafts and specialty foods. The farm also sells three different cookbooks, two written by the Morse family, that feature recipes using maple for breakfast foods, breads and pastries, entrées and salads.

A Morse Farm bestseller, for anyone looking for a special treat, are maple creemees.

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PHOTOS BY PETER COBB

Right, Bragg Farm gift room. Left, Bragg Farm employee, Lisa McGinley, with maple creemee.

The maple story is similar at the Bragg Farm in East Montpelier. The Bragg family has been producing pure Vermont maple syrup for eight generations. A recently discovered collection of old family letters, written between 1858-1914 by Anna Bixby Bragg, depicts farm life on the Bragg Farm in Fayston, owned by Anna and her husband, Azro.

The letters are now preserved at the Vermont Historical Society in Barre. According to the letters, the Braggs exported maple syrup to contacts in the western states where there was a large demand for maple syrup.

One letter from May 1865 states: "March was warmer than April this year, spoiling our sugar season. We didn't make enough to fill half our orders."

Another from March 26, 1909 states: "We had a nice warm day on the 24th and some farmers got out their tubs and tapped the trees. Then yesterday was one of the worst of the winter. "It 'snews and blewed' furiously all day. — 12 inches of snow. Hurrah for old Vermont! Today is warm again and the maple sap is running."

"It is instructive and humbling to realize that the problems and perils and rewards of life on a Vermont farm are in many ways the same today as they were for our ancestors," said Doug Bragg, owner of Bragg Farm. "We still depend on the weather, hard work and the whims of nature for our success or failure, particularly for our beloved maple syrup production."

The Bragg Farm gift shop, which includes a variety of gifts, maple products and more, the creemee stand, and sugar house are open seven days a week.

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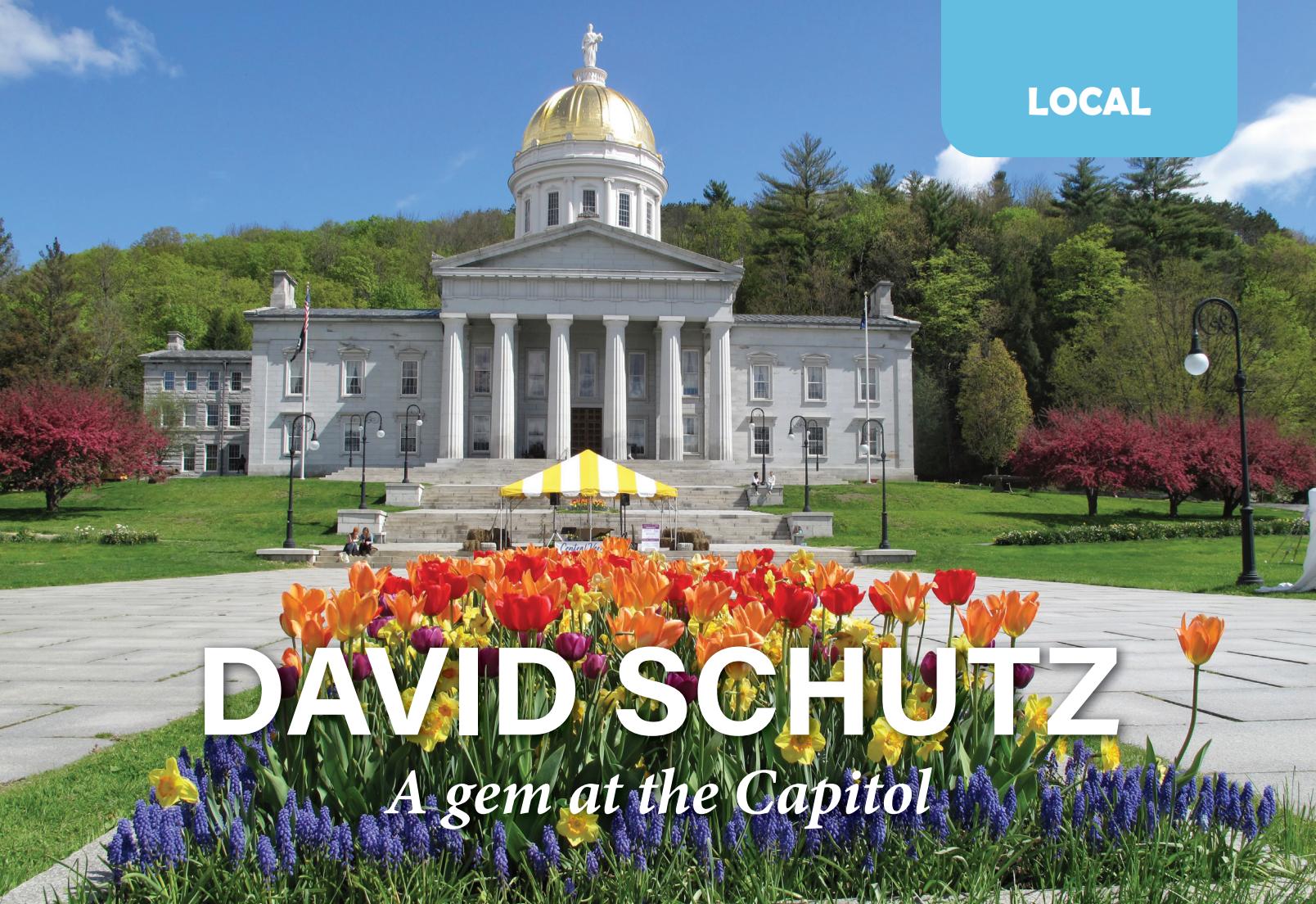
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PHOTOS BY PETER COBB

By PETER COBB

If it were possible to extract DNA from a building, it's likely the DNA of the state Capitol in Montpelier and the DNA of its curator, David Schutz, would be similar.

Schutz, now 71, has been involved with the Capitol, either as a volunteer, grant-hired staff or curator, since he was 26.

Schutz lives and breathes Capitol air.

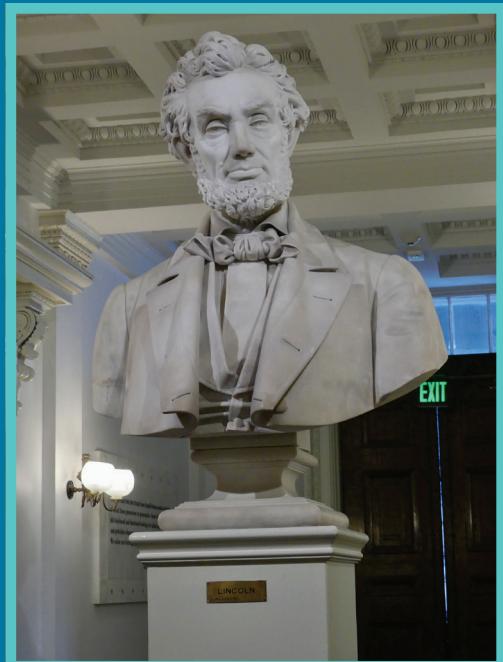
"The Capitol building has been the center of my life, absolutely, for most of my adult life. I'm not a play person or a pickleball person, I'm a cause-oriented person," he said. His cause since 1979 has been to help make the Capitol building the best it can be.

"What better advertisement for the state is there than the Golden Dome. When the tourists first see the Capitol from the interstate, it is a moving experience," he said.

The Vermont State House is among the best preserved of our nation's state capitols. The House and Senate chambers are the oldest active legislative halls in the United States that have preserved their original interiors.

But that wasn't always the case. When Schutz first entered the building as part of a team hired to determine how to make the building more accessible and more historically authentic, it had lost its original grandeur. The inside resembled a 1960s,





PHOTOS BY PETER COBB

low-rent, office building with cheap dropped ceilings, glaring fluorescent lighting and dull, utilitarian carpets.

Forty-five years later, Vermont's Capitol building rivals any state capitol in the nation with its enormous front door that opens to a grand hall, with curving staircases to the left and right of the hall, the distinctive black-and-white marble floor (some of the black tiles have evidence of sea creatures from millions of years ago), the imposing bust of Abraham Lincoln, the stately House and Senate chambers and the "War Room," with the iconic painting of the Battle of Cedar Creek by Vermont artist Julian Scott, a drummer boy in the Civil War.

The Cedar Creek Reception Room also includes the moving "The Mounted Sentry," featuring a Civil War soldier looking soulfully off to the sunset.

Schutz gives much of the credit for restoring the Capitol to its original splendor to The Friends of the State House, an all-volunteer nonprofit begun in 1980 to preserve the historical integrity of the building and provide education and outreach to Vermonters.

"They have been crucially important to the success of the restoration," he said.

The greatest challenge at the State House museum, Schutz said, is meeting the various functions of the building while retaining the integrity of its history. While most museums have just one main job, to be a museum, the State Capitol has many roles — it is the center of the state government, it's a symbol of Vermont, it's a classroom for students and a museum for everyone.

It's also important to keep the exhibits relevant, Schutz said.

Forty years ago, the art on display was limited to portraits of deceased Vermont governors, all white men; Vermont's two presidents — Chester Arthur and Calvin Coolidge — and Vermont native, Admiral George Dewey, famed for the battle of Manila Bay in the Spanish American War.

Today's exhibits are an eclectic mix of the past and present. There is an exhibit on prominent women in Vermont history, and a gallery in the cafeteria and adjacent rooms featuring contemporary Vermont artists.

Recently added on the first floor is a life-size painting of Alexander Lucius Twilight (1795-1857) created by artist Katie Runde, of Middlebury (formerly of Bethel). Twilight was the first African American to earn a bachelor's degree from an American college, graduating from Middlebury in 1823, and the first African American elected as a state legislator, serving in the Vermont House of Representatives and the only African American elected to a state legislature before the Civil War.

Schutz is the first — and, so far, the only — Vermont State Curator. After 45-plus years he is not yet ready to step aside.

"There is still so much more to do," he said.

One project being considered is an addition to the back of the building, which Schutz said is sorely needed. Lobbyists, lawmakers and anyone who works in the building can attest to the need for more space.

Schutz has a bachelor's degree in history from DePauw University, a private liberal arts college in Greencastle, Indiana, as well as a master's degree from Ohio State. He served originally as a research assistant with the 1979 project that laid the groundwork for curatorial management of the State House, coordinated the ongoing restoration of the building throughout the 1980s and 1990s, and worked on many other restoration projects throughout the Capitol District and Waterbury Complex. In 2015, he co-authored, with Nancy Price Graff, a comprehensive history of the State House, "Intimate Grandeur: Vermont's State House."

"It's a continuing challenge to make the building more welcoming and more accessible. That's been my passion for 40 plus years. I've never been more motivated to do the work needed than I am now," Schutz said.



Making winter linger on at SKI AREAS

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY BOLTON VALLEY

By PETER COBB

By March, most Vermonters are thinking of spring. They're starting their gardens, tuning lawn mowers, deep cleaning their houses, and wondering whether their bathing suits will fit.

But avid skiers are a different breed. They're not interested in letting go of winter until the last chairlift runs, which can be as late as May.

To reward them, most ski areas offer a variety of events both for the avid and casual skier, from pond skimming, to barbecues, to concerts, to mogul (bumps) challenges.

Every spring, Killington, Sugarbush and several other Vermont ski areas hold an event that causes non-skiers and many skiers to scratch their heads and ask: Why?

The event is the pond skim. Skiers, often dressed as if they were celebrating Halloween, in Captain America costumes, or dresses fit for a princess, or full Elvis, go as fast as they can, 70 to 100 yards down to a small pond at the bottom of the hill. The goal is to "skim" across the pond without falling into the cold water. Most fail, and end waist deep in water barely warmer than ice.

Whatever the draw for the participants, many spectators





alternate between cheering on the skiers who successfully skim from one end of the pond to the other, to secretly hoping for an epic fall, especially one where the skier ends tumbling headfirst into the water.

Everyone, skiers and spectators, are welcome. It's a fun event, even for the pond skiers.

The Killington pond skim, open to the first 100 registrants (slots fill quickly) who are at least 48 inches tall, is Saturday, April 12.

“While technically anyone can try their luck, it takes some serious skill to make it across the pond,” said Brooke Geery, Killington’s marketing specialist.

The Sugarbush and Smuggler’s Notch pond skims are set for Saturday, April 5. Mount Snow and Stratton pond skims are March 30. The pond skim at Jay Peak is Saturday, April 19.

Another fun activity for spectators is Killington’s Bear Mountain Mogul Challenge, which is Saturday, April 5.

“The Bear Mountain Mogul Challenge is one of our signature events and challenges even the best bump skiers in the world on the longest, steepest mogul run in the East, Outer Limits” Geery said.

PHOTOS PROVIDED BY KILLINGTON

Bolton Valley in central Vermont solves the riddle: “When is night skiing, day skiing?” The answer is in the spring.

Night skiing in December through most of February is just that, skiing in the dark under the lights. But night skiing from late February to the end of the season is basically day skiing because the sun sets later every day and the trails that are usually closed for night skiing are open until 6 or 6:30 p.m., or even later as the days lengthen.

Sugarbush is holding its “Spring Fling” Saturday, April 12, which includes live music. Its end-of-the-season Luau is May 3-4.

The annual Mad River Triathlon is April 13 which includes paddling, skiing and biking.

Burke Mountain Resort and the American Red Cross are hosting a blood drive, Saturday, April 26, from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Burke Mountain Hotel and Conference Center.

March 22 is Vermont Specialty Food Day at Jay Peak, a free celebration of the best flavors Vermont has to offer. Held at the Tramside Cafeteria, guests can sample a variety of Vermont-made treats.

For more events across Vermont, check the Vermont Ski Areas Association’s website at skivermont.com.

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 WEEKLY DIVISIONS - DIRTcar Sportsman Modifieds (SM), DIRTcar Sportsman Coupes (SC), Xtreme DIRTcar DMA Midgets (XM), Sportsman Modifieds Limited (SML) Late Models (LM), Dirt Stocks (DS), & Ridge Runners (RR) ~ plus monthly 4/6 Cyl Enduro, visiting Granite State Mini Sprints (GSMS) & Sprint Cars of New England (SCoNE) (DP=Double Points)

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Saturday 3rd BRS official Car Show Bradford VT. 10:00-1:00 location TBD - Practice all divisions 2:00-4:00	
1st Green Flag 5PM on our 58th season Opening night	
SM-SC-SML-XM-LM-DS-RR (DP) Adults/Teens/Seniors \$15 Presented by: NAPA of Bradford "F.M.S. Autoparts LLC"	
Saturday 10th (RS) SM-SC-SML-XM-DS-RR plus GSMS (XM OFF)	Presented by: TBA
Saturday 17th VP Racing Fuels DIRTcar Eastern Region Sportsman Mods Series Race	
SM-SC-XM-DS-RR Adults \$18 Teens/Seniors \$15 (SML & LM OFF)	Presented by: Ron's Fix It Shop
Saturday 24th (RS) BRS remembrance of Lost Friends SM-SC-SML-XM-DS-RR (LM OFF) 4/6 ENDURO	Presented by: Leroux Brothers, Inc.
Saturday 31st SM-SC-SML-LM-DS-RR (XMOFF) plus SCoNE Adults \$18 Teens/Seniors \$15	Presented by: Woodsville Guaranty Savings Bank
JUNE	
FRIDAY 6th Xtreme DIRTcar DMA Midgets @ Albany Saratoga!	
Saturday 7th (RS) VT Food Bank Benefit Ridge Runner Madness SM-SC-SML-XM-DS-RR plus GSMS (XM OFF) Bring in 2 non perishables get \$2 off 1 GA ticket	
Presented by: Valley Floors	
Saturday 14th (RS) Kids Bike RACES SM-SC-SML-XM-LM-DS-RR	Presented by: JTB Towing and Recovery
Saturday 21st (RS) 4/6 ENDURO SM-SC-SML-XM-DS-RR (LM OFF)	Presented by: Wells River Savings Bank
Saturday 28th 4TH OF JULY Fireworks SM-SC-SML-LM-DS-RR plus SCoNE (XM OFF)	Presented by: Woodsville Power Equipment-Bobcat

SEPTEMBER	
Saturday 6th (RS) Dad Preston Memorial David's House Benefit plus Sportsman Modified Madness	Presented by: April May & Butch
SM-SC-SML-XM-DS-RR plus GSMS (LM OFF)	Presented by: Twin State Tractor
Saturday 13th SM-SC-SML-XM-DS-RR (DP) Sportsman Mods Limited & Late Model FINAL night twin 15's & Time Trials plus SCoNE (XM OFF)	Presented by: TBA
Adults \$18 Teens/Seniors \$15	
OCTOBER	
Saturday 20th 95.3 The Wolf NE Dirt Track Championships 4/6 ENDURO	Presented by: General Auto Salvage
SM-SC-XM-DS-RR Time Trials, 100 lap Mods, 50 lap Coupes, "Growlers" Mods & Coupes LCQ for Growlers (non winner race)	
Adults/Teens/Seniors \$20 SPECIAL 4pm START TIME!!	
	Presented by: General Auto Salvage
OCTOBER	
SUNDAY 12th 1:00pm 9th Annual FUNDAY-SUNDAY 4/6 Cylinder Enduro, Demolition Derby & MORE	
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Dirt Stocks & Ridge Runners
plus SCoNE
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Kids 11 & under \$2.00 w/paying adult

DIRTcar Sportsman Modifieds Eastern Series Event Race! May 17th

Plus Coupes, Dirt Stocks, Sportsman Modifieds Limited, Xtreme Midgets, Late Models, Dirt Stocks, Ridge Runners & visiting GSMS

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