

# THE CALEDONIAN-RECORD

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**SPORTS**  
Canes Blow Past Hilltoppers  
**Page B1**



**EDUCATION**  
LSC Graduates 59 This Winter  
**Page B4**



## CHRISTMAS-TIME CATASTROPHE



PHOTO BY PAUL HAYES

### AFTERNOON FIRE DESTROYS 1879 BUILDING

12 Apartments  
And 2 Businesses  
Burned Out

**BY JAMES JARDINE**  
Staff Writer

Two businesses and 12 apartments were destroyed in a fire that ravaged a downtown St.

Johnsbury building Sunday afternoon. There was no loss of life and only minor injuries were reported.

Firefighters from all nearby Vermont towns as well as the

Littleton, N.H., contained the fire to the 1879 Building on Railroad Street, although there were some reports of smoke damage in a neighboring building. All of the tenants in the de-

stroyed building escaped safely from the fire and are receiving help from local chapters of the Vermont Red Cross.

Firefighters were toned out at 2:12 p.m. to fight the fire at 430-

438 Railroad St. Firefighters from Littleton, N.H., Danville, Lyndonville, Barnet, Peacham, Waterford, East Burke, and Concord responded to the fire with

See **Fire**, Page A8



PHOTO BY TAYLOR REED

### While Downtown Building Burns, Shoppers Browse At Other Stores

**BY JAMES JARDINE**  
Staff Writer

As firefighters battled a working structure fire that was tearing through a prominent downtown business block, other adjacent businesses remained open Sunday afternoon. Juxtaposed with fire-

fighters pouring water from aerial fire towers and smoke and flame pouring from the Landry's Drugstore block, Christmas shoppers were still browsing for books at Boxcar and Caboose or selecting sportswear from Caplan's Army Store.

See **Business**, Page A8



PHOTO BY DANA GRAY

**LEFT:** Flames shoot from the second floor windows where witnesses reported first seeing the fire. **ABOVE:** Crews from around the region responded. **RIGHT:** Some firefighters suffered minor injuries while battling the blaze. **MORE PHOTOS INSIDE.**



PHOTO BY TAYLOR REED

### Firefighters Briefly Trapped, Others Receive Minor Injuries

**BY JAMES JARDINE**  
Staff Writer

St. Johnsbury Dispatch reported three firefighters suffered minor injuries during the incident, but all were able to stay on the scene.

At one point, a Mayday alarm

was sounded when firefighters were briefly trapped on the third floor of the building. The Mayday went out shortly after all firefighters were ordered out of the building because of the challenges they faced fighting the escalating fire.

The trapped firefighters quickly escaped, however.

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**TODAY:** Mountain Flurries



**HIGH: 27**  
**LOW: 5** Details on Page A2

### NATIONAL DEBT CLOCK

**\$16,345,770,435,526**  
Population: 314,105,835  
Your share: \$52,039.05

"The budget should be balanced; the treasury should be refilled; public debt should be reduced; and the arrogance of public officials should be controlled." --Cicero, 106-43 B.C.

### REGIONAL

Vermont Police To Target Drunken Drivers

Power Restoration Continues In Vermont

Vt. Man Wins Lifetime Hunting And Fishing License

Balloon Launches Set In Memory Of Slain Vt. Couple

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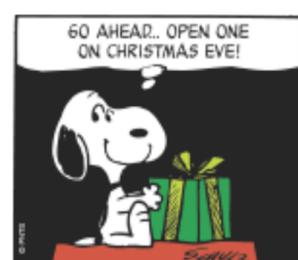
### NATIONAL

Ranchers Split Over Border Security Plan To End Environmental Reviews On Land

Lieberman Blames 'Congressional Irresponsibility' For Fiscal Cliff Woes

Official: Navy SEAL Commander Dies Of Apparent Suicide In Afghanistan

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Dec. 24  
1 shopping  
day to Christmas

FOR THE RECORD

OBITUARIES

**ALICE HAYES**

1925-2012

Alice Hayes died peacefully at home on Dec. 17, 2012. Alice was born Aug. 5, 1925, in Hartford, Conn., daughter of Oscar and Freda (Peterson) Benson. She graduated from William Hall High School and worked at the Probate Court in Hartford, Conn. In 1950 she married Mark John Hayes and moved to Enosburg Falls, Vt. Alice and John were blessed with six children. They moved their family to Newport, Vt., in 1971 upon establishing Hayes Ford.



She was predeceased by her husband, John, and her brother and sisters. She is survived by her children and their families, Mark and Eva of Newport, Michael and Ivette of Maryland, Ann and Bill McGum of Colorado, Susan of California, Mary Beth and David Mooney of Colchester, and Peter and Diana of California. She is also survived by her grandchildren: Mike, Brock, Bryant and Sarah Hayes, Kit and Molly McGum, David, Liz, Kyla and Liam Mooney, Zach, Meagan and McKenna Hayes. Alice enjoyed an abundance of friendship and made friends wherever she went.

Alice was a well-respected and active member of both the Enosburg and Newport communities. She served on numerous boards and supported many charitable and community organizations. A gift to your favorite charitable organization in Alice's memory would be a fitting tribute in lieu of flowers.

A party, at her request, to celebrate her life will be announced in the spring. Online condolences may be sent to the family through the funeral home website at [www.curtis-britch.com](http://www.curtis-britch.com). Arrangements are entrusted to the care of Curtis-Britch-Converse-Rushford Funeral Home, locally family owned and operated.

**BEVERLY J. AMADON**

1925-2012

Beverly J. "Bew" (Scott) Amadon of Main Street, Lyndonville, passed away early Saturday morning (Dec. 22, 2012) at the St. Johnsbury Health and Rehabilitation Center in St. Johnsbury, Vt. She was 87.

Born on May 22, 1925, in Morrisville, Vt., she was the daughter of Harold and Florence (Small) Scott.

Bev married her high school sweetheart Laurence Amadon on Nov. 18, 1943. They enjoyed 63 years of marriage when Laurence passed away in 2007.

Her focus in life was taking care of her husband and raising their five children. She loved to do crafts of all kinds and also enjoyed drawing, writing poems, sewing, and quilting. She spent many hours watching the Red Sox. She also enjoyed coloring with her grandchildren and great-grandchildren.

Bev was a member of the Lyndonville First Congregational Church. Besides her husband Laurence, she is pre-deceased by a daughter Paulette Camber, four brothers, and two sisters.

Beverly is survived by her four children and their spouses: Richard and Karen Amadon of Kingman, Ind., Deborah and James Green of Bronson, Fla., Randy and Sandy Amadon of Lyndonville, Vt., and Tim and Anne Amadon of Skowhegan, Maine; Son-in-law Bradley Camber of Wildersville, Tenn., two brother-in-laws and their spouses: Stanley and Helen Amadon of Waterbury, Vt., and Ken and Marian Amadon of Orleans, Vt.; a special nephew Peter Franceschetti of Kingston, N.Y.; 10 grandchildren; 19 great-grandchildren; and close friends Dot Randall and Liz Williams.

A Memorial Service will be held in May 2013 at the Lyndonville First Congregational Church, Lyndonville, Vt. Burial will be at Lyndon Center Cemetery.

Arrangements are by Pearsons Funeral Home, LLC., 70 Church Street, Lyndonville, Vt.

Memorial donations may be made to Lyndonville First Congregational Church, P.O. Box 193, Lyndonville, VT 05851.

Online guestbook at [www.pearsonsfh.com](http://www.pearsonsfh.com).

NEWS BRIEFS

**Vermont Police To Target Drunken Drivers**

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — Vermont police plan to be out in force keep drunken drivers off the roads during the holidays.

Police say they will be conducting checkpoints to stop impaired drivers and to enforce seatbelt, child restraint and other motor vehicle laws.

Highway fatalities are up sharply from last year. So far this year there have been 75 fatalities, compared to 51 in 2011. Checkpoints are planned around the state between Sunday and the new year.

**Power Restoration Continues In Vermont**

COLCHESTER, Vt. (AP) — Nearly 1,800 Vermont homes and business are without power as utility crews continue restoring electricity following a wind storm that knocked out power to tens of thousands of electric customers.

Green Mountain Power's website shows that 1,797 customers were without power Sunday afternoon. That's down from a high of almost 32,000 electric customers on Friday.

Green Mountain said the vast majority of customers should have the lights back on Sunday night.

The utility said out-of-state crews have arrived to supplement its own crews, with work focused on the Poultney and Middlebury areas where much of the repair work remains.

**Vt. Man Wins Lifetime Hunting And Fishing License**

MONTPELIER, Vt. (AP) — The Vermont Department of Fish and Wildlife says a 50-year-old Williamstown man is the winner of the annual lottery for a lifetime hunting and fishing license. Dan Hegarty won the license in a Dec. 13 drawing of 329 lottery tickets.

The License of a Lifetime Lottery gives anyone, resident or nonresident, an opportunity to win a Vermont hunting and fishing license that is good for the rest of their life.

The \$2 tickets for the lifetime license lottery are available wherever hunting and fishing licenses are sold.

**Balloon Launches Set In Memory Of Slain Vt. Couple**

ESSEX, Vt. (AP) — Family and friends plan to remember a Vermont couple who were killed by a serial killer with a series of balloon launches on Christmas Day.

Bill and Lorraine Currier disappeared from their Essex home in June 2011. Thirty-four-year-old confessed serial killer Israel Keyes of Alaska has confessed to killing the couple, but their bodies have not been located.

Lorraine Currier's sister, Diane Desautels, tells the Burlington Free Press (<http://bfpne.ws/12y1BOR>) that the family is launching balloons at 1 p.m. on Christmas as a gesture of remembrance. She said other Vermonters are encouraged to hold their own balloon launches as well to remember the Curriers and other loved ones.

**NH Hospital To Add 29 Beds In Coming Year**

LEBANON, N.H. (AP) — New Hampshire's Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center is planning to add 29 beds in the coming year.

The Lebanon hospital has begun renovations to have an additional 14 adult critical care beds and 15 beds in the medical/surgical unit by this time next year.

Chief Medical Officer Ed Merrens tells the Valley News that the hospital is often at full capacity and needs more beds to take on more patients who are in need.

The hospital is the only tertiary care facility in the region to treat patients with life-threatening conditions who need constant monitoring, the type of care that requires high staffing levels, training and equipment that smaller hospitals don't have.

Police Log

STATE — BRADFORD

Maxwell Malius, 30, Bradford, was arrested after assaulting several people and spitting in the face of a Vermont State Trooper Thursday. At approximately 6:40 p.m. the Vermont State Police responded to a reported out of control patient at Merry Meadows Farm in Bradford. Troopers responded to the farm and observed Malius grab an employee and kneel him in the stomach. Maxwell was taken into custody and brought to the Bradford Vermont State Police Barracks. An

investigation into the incident revealed prior to the arrival of the State Police Malius had stomped on the head of another patient and kicked him several times. Malius then assaulted the employee who tried to break up the altercation. Neither of the employees were severely injured as a result of the altercations. The patient that was assaulted was transported to the hospital with unknown head injuries. Malius was played in Northeast Correctional Facility with a \$10,000 bail.

HOLIDAY HINTS

BY PAT JAUCH

A few simple precautions can make your remaining holidays and your New Year celebrations happy for you and safe for your companion animal. During your preparations be mindful of the four-legged household members as well as the people.

Stress has become a major factor in holiday celebration. We strive to serve the perfect meal, pick the perfect present, and decorate to the hilt. Amid the frenzy our festivities create, the family pet gets caught up in the excitement. If its personality is mellow the extra activity will be taken in stride. On the chance that Fido is fidgety, or Fluffy is fearful, having a quiet retreat may be necessary to provide some much needed rest and relaxation. (This often works well for the people, too.)

Food (and non-food) needs to be monitored during the holidays. Those rich, fatty, caloric goodies may seem like a treat but could wreak havoc with your pet's digestive system. If it is not labeled "pet food" the safest alternative is to avoid feeding it to your pet. Likewise, plants, including mistletoe, holly, amaryllis and lilies, can make your pet

sick if eaten. Even Christmas tree branches, with their pine needles, can be toxic. Be sure to place small ornaments in high places beyond your pet's reach and make sure that tinsel and garland are not ingested if you must use it.

Batteries are potentially lethal. The corrosive acid contained in them can cause ulcers on the tongue and in the mouth and gastrointestinal tract if chewed or swallowed. This is true of the larger batteries that operate toys to the very tiny batteries used in hearing aids. For safety's sake keep all batteries out of the reach of your companion animal.

Fire can be a dire consequence if a curious cat or dog knocks over liquid potpourri or a burning candle. Just one wagging tail or clumsy movement can result in a catastrophe.

Be safe for the remainder of this holiday season by caring enough to protect your pet and yourself from unexpected consequences.

Pat Jauch is secretary of Caledonia Animal Rescue Inc., P.O. Box 4054, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819; [www.caledoniaanimalrescue.com](http://www.caledoniaanimalrescue.com).



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Merry Christmas & Happy New Year to All!  
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In Memoriam

In Loving Memory of



**SHARI LYNN FOX BRADBURY**

Nov. 2, 1956 – Dec. 24, 1998

Another Christmas without you

But you are in our hearts

and thoughts every day.

Love,  
Mom and Family

In Memoriam

In Memory of

**PRISCILLA M. WESTON**

May 30, 1920 – Dec. 24, 2008

It has been 4 years now and it still seems like yesterday that you went to a better place. We think of you so very often and will be sure that your great-grandchildren know what a great person you were. We hope you, Norris and Girlie are now together and get your walks in each day. Love and miss you every day. RIP

Brenda, Robyn,  
David, Judy and Chris  
Jamie, James, Abbygail & Olivia  
Dan, Meredith and Lane

In Memoriam

In Loving Memory of

**MARILYN (MIMI) GOCHIE**

Nov. 8, 1930 – Dec. 24, 2009

Those we love remain with us

For love itself lives on ...

Cherished memories never fade.

Because a loved one's gone ...

Those we love can never be more

Than a thought apart ...

For as long as there's a memory

They'll live within our hearts.

Sadly missed but never forgotten.

Love,  
Steve & Peg (daughter) Parker,  
Their Children & Grandchildren

CALEDONIAN-RECORD

Periodicals postage paid at St. Johnsbury, VT. Post Office, 05819. Published daily except Sunday, New Years, Thanksgiving and Christmas by The Caledonian-Record Pub. Co., Inc., P.O. Box 8, 190 Federal St., St. Johnsbury, VT 05819. Tel. 802-748-8121. Publication (USPS-083020).

Postmaster send address changes to: The Caledonian-Record Pub. Co., Inc., 190 Federal St., P.O. Box 8, St. Johnsbury, VT 05819

Newsstands and Stores: Daily.....\$0.75  
Home Delivery (by carrier): 4 Weeks \$19.00  
Mail Subscription Rates  
(Postal regulations require payment in advance)  
For VT and NH: 4 wks. \$19.00, 13 wks. \$57.00,  
26 wks. \$110.00, 52 wks. \$212.00  
Rest of Country: 4 wks. \$22.00, 13 wks. \$65.00,  
26 wks. \$120.00, 52 wks. \$235.00  
Back Issues: \$1.00 each, Mailed \$5.00

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**The Numbers**

**POWERBALL (Saturday, Dec. 22)**  
1-18-35-39-44; Power Ball: 11

**MEGA MILLIONS (Friday, Dec. 21)**  
3-18-32-41-56; Mega Ball: 19; Megaplier: 3

**MEGABUCKS PLUS (Saturday, Dec. 22)**  
12-25-26-32-35; Mega Ball: 1

**HOT LOTTO (Saturday, Dec. 22)**  
3-15-19-23-39; Hot Ball: 10

**DAILY PICKS (Sunday, Dec. 23)**  
Day Draw — Pick 3: 7-7-4; Pick 4: 6-7-7-4  
Evening Draw — Pick 3: 7-1-7; Pick 4: 3-1-9-9

**Local Forecast**

Today: Isolated mountain flurries early. Otherwise mostly sunny. Highs 22-27. NW wind 5-15 mph backing to West 5-10 mph.

Tonight: Clear to start, then increasing clouds. Rising chance for light snow or flurries towards dawn. Lows 5-15. Light, variable wind.

Tomorrow: Flurries or light snow likely through midday. Partial clearing during the PM. Highs 24-29. Light, variable wind becoming North 5-15 mph during the PM. Snow accumulation T-1".

Extended Forecast: Tuesday Night: Mostly clear. Lows 0-12. Wednesday: AM sunshine, increasing high PM clouds. Highs 24-28. Wednesday Night: Thickening clouds. Snow developing. Lows 18-23. Thursday: Snow. Highs 27-32. Thursday Night: Snow. Lows near 20. Friday: Cloudy, breezy, lingering snow diminishing to scattered flurries. Highs 20-25.

**Daily Weather Highlights**

A small bubble HIGH has built in behind the weak wave of LOW pressure that crossed northern VT last evening, accompanied by minimal light snow on valley floors, and a light accumulation from snow showers across higher ridgelines. After a quiet day and evening, light snow will spread northeastward after midnight and by Christmas morning light snow or flurries should be falling over the north country. At this point it looks like a dusting to an inch will fall in general, just enough to lend a festive mood to the big day! A potentially major snow storm looks in the cards for Wednesday night through Thursday night, says Steve Maleski of the Fairbanks Museum weather station.

CONDITIONS AT 4 P.M. YESTERDAY  
Light Snow

TEMPERATURE  
Temp. at 4 p.m. .... 27  
Maximum past 24 hours .... 28  
Minimum past 24 hours .... 15  
Yesterday's average .... 22  
Normal average .... 22  
Maximum this month .... 51  
Minimum this month .... 5  
Maximum this date (1957) .... 50

Minimum this date (1943) ..... -28

HUMIDITY  
68%

DEWPOINT  
18

WINDS  
5 mph, 10 max ..... South

BAROMETER  
29.75 ..... Falling

PRECIPITATION  
New ..... 0.03 in.  
Total for Month ..... 2.45 in.  
Normal Total ..... 2.26 in.

SNOWFALL  
Past 24 Hours ..... 1.0 in.  
Monthly Total ..... 8.7 in.  
Season Total ..... 12.6 in.  
Season Norm To Date ..... 21.8 in.  
Snowpack ..... 0.5 in.

ALMANAC  
Sunrise today ..... 7:23 a.m.  
Sunset today ..... 4:13 p.m.  
Length of day ..... 8 hrs. 50 min.

DEGREE DAYS  
Average temp. difference below 65°  
Yesterday\* ..... 43  
To date since July 1 ..... 2485  
To date last year ..... 2295  
\* calculated for the day before yesterday

# LOCAL

## STUDENTS BRIGHTEN UP MAIN STREET



PHOTO BY JENNIFER HERSEY CLEVELAND

Abbie Meredith, a junior in the visual arts class at North Country Union High School, helps brighten up empty storefronts on Main Street in Newport by painting wintry scenes Friday.

## VERMONT FOODBANK SEES BIG DROP IN DONATIONS

BY ALICIA FREESE  
VtDigger.org

Donations to the Vermont Foodbank have dropped precipitously this year, while the demand it services continues to climb. The Foodbank is \$700,000 short of its fundraising goal, and it faces this challenge at a time when charitable food programs are bracing themselves for the impact of "fiscal cliff" cuts.

Foodbank CEO John Sayles said the shortfall is surprising. "I haven't seen this before. Looking back at the history of our funding, we've seen increases really every year for the last 26 years."

Seventy percent of the Foodbank's \$5 million budget comes from donations by individuals or Vermont-based foundations. These contributions surged after the recession and in the wake of Tropical Storm Irene and Hurricane Sandy, but they have been petering out in recent months, Sayles said.

The bulk of Foodbank donations come in between October and December, but this year hasn't seen the typical influx. "We really weren't concerned until recently ... it's not unusual to have a couple months or a quarter that are slow, but this looks significant."

This decline is especially troubling given that it coincides with a rise in the number of Vermonters who rely on charitable food programs, Sayles said. "One of the reasons the Foodbank needs to raise this money is because the need for charitable food is still increasing. The economy has not improved enough ... there is always something that has to give and most often, it's the food budget ..."

The Vermont Foodbank partners with 280 "hunger relief agencies" — these include food shelves, food pantries, daycare centers, and senior centers — to provide emergency food assistance to about 86,000 Vermonters. The USDA estimates that 12.4 percent of Vermonters, or 34,000 households, are food insecure.

Federal funding  
In 2009, the federal stimulus law funneled \$100 million worth of food into food banks across the country.

That extra support has since ended, and the Vermont Foodbank now sits on a thinner federal cushion than ever.

The Vermont Foodbank budget relies on \$350,000 from the federal government and \$83,000 from the state government. These funding streams have stayed steady, but the amount of surplus food the Foodbank gets from the USDA was pared by 40 percent this year.

As part of the Emergency Food Assistance Program (EFAP), the USDA purchases surplus fruits, vegetables and meats to prop up food prices when demand wanes and distributes them to food banks. But with international demand on the rise and reductions in supply due to drought, food prices have been robust. This means less federally purchased surplus food for the Vermont Foodbank, Sayles explained. And, adding to the insecurity, Sayles said, is that fact that EFAP is a component of the Farm

Bill, set to expire at the end of the year.

What would an underfunded Foodbank look like? Depending on how much of a shortfall it faces at year's end, it could mean scaling programs like the Backpack Program, which provides food to children through schools, and the Summer Food Service Program, which provides meals to children in low-income communities during the summer. The Foodbank has been making plans to lease space in Rutland to improve service to the southern region of the state, but it may have to put this project on hold, Sayles said. And, he added, if the fundraising shortfall is drastic, it may have to make staffing changes.

The Vermont Foodbank accepts one-time and sustaining donations through its website <http://www.vt-foodbank.org>; it also accepts stock gifts.

## NEW HAMPSHIRE

### BILL AIMS TO KEEP FOR-PROFIT PRISONS OUT OF N.H.

BY ROBERT BLECHL  
Staff Writer

As 2013 nears, the state is still trying to determine if there is a cost savings to prison privatization as a state representative prepares to sponsor a bill aimed at keeping for-profit prisons out of New Hampshire.

"If the prisons are paid based on population, there is an incentive to keep prisoners in there and not educate them to be better people when they get out," state Rep. Timothy Robertson, D-Keene, said Friday.

Robertson and other privatization opponents are now trying to grow support for his bill, which is in its preliminary stages.

A savings that proponents feel could result from privatization has not been determined.

"We haven't seen anything yet in terms of cost savings," said District 3 Executive Councilor Chris Sununu, an early proponent of privatization. "The financial analysis piece of the report won't be made available to us for a little while, so nobody really knows exactly what the cost benefit analyses are there."

The governor's Executive Council voted to extend the contract with MGI of America Inc., the Florida-based consulting firm enlisted by the state to see if prison privatization in New Hampshire is feasible and a cost-savings can be found.

The privatization study was initially expected to be completed in October and then postponed to early December. The five-member Executive Council has since extended the \$171,347 contract with MGI until Feb. 28.

The order to explore privatization stems from the state's budget crisis and a 2011 vote by the New Hampshire Legislature that requires the state to study the privatization of all or some of its three prisons as a possible cost savings.

Robertson said there are some things government does better than private companies and running prisons is one of them.

"Nobody borrows money cheaper than government and our standards are higher for help," he said. "It's

difficult to find good people willing to be prison guards and if [for-profit companies] find them, they will be paying them less, which means they won't have as many adequately trained guards as we have."

Sununu believes the MGI report will have value beyond the immediate issue of privatization.

"I think the big thing going forward is just making sure that whatever the state does it's done in a fiscally prudent manner," said Sununu. "This report, whether we privatize prisons or not, will have a lot of valuable information in it in terms of those financial realities that the state is going to face."

Such realities range from the infrastructure costs of prisons to corrections management options, he said.

"Whether we do it ourselves or do it privately, it's all good information to have to make the right decision," said Sununu.

To date, four for-profit prison firms have submitted bids in New Hampshire. They are the GEO Group, of Florida; MTC, of Utah; Hunt Companies, of Texas; and Corrections Corporation of America (CCA), of Tennessee.

CCA has proposed private prison sites in Northumberland and Lancaster and has a parcel under contract behind the Lancaster Industrial Park for the location of a 2,200-bed prison.

Several privatization models have been floated.

While the state would pay a private prison firm for the housing of each prisoner, proponents of privatization say New Hampshire will see a savings on the maintenance and operation of the prisons and on the construction of new prisons that state officials say are needed to replace the existing facilities that are aging and overcrowded.

Another semi-privatization option, called the build-lease option, is to have a for-profit firm finance and build a prison and lease it to the state, which would staff it and manage the day-to-day operations.

Opponents of privatization, such as the Americans Friends Service Committee and Citizens For Criminal Justice Reform, argue the savings and host community benefits touted by private prison firms don't match the reality and the state can better serve its communities and inmates by putting money into treatment programs that reduce recidivism.

*"I think the big thing going forward is just making sure that whatever the state does it's done in a fiscally prudent manner."*

— Chris Sununu, District 3 Executive Councilor

*Sounds of Christmas*  
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Jane Sandy

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*Happy Holidays*  
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**HOLIDAY GREETINGS**

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Todd M. Smith, Publisher

OPINION

Dana Gray, Executive Editor

Editorial Comment ...  
THE SPIRIT OF CHRISTMAS, ALWAYS

Newtown, Conn., is overwhelmed in charity. Leaders there are literally turning back non-monetary donations. There's no place left to put toys, food and other charitable goods.

A fund for victims' families now has over \$3 million in it. The post office, churches and social service agencies are overrun with over 60,000 teddy bears, gourmet food, cards, candles, flowers ... you name it, well-wishers are sending it to Newtown.

Which leaves officials asking for people to "Send those teddy bears to a school in your community or an organization that serves low-income children, who are in need this holiday season, and do it in memory of our children."

The outpouring of support for Newtown is inspiring. It tells us that the majority of people are deeply kind, compassionate and decent. But long after the mail and gifts stop, the grief of families there will remain.

Ann Hood, a writer from Providence, R.I., lost her five-year-old daughter, Grace, some years ago. Of surviving that loss, and on the occasion of the Newtown tragedies, she wrote, "What can be said in light of such grief? What can you do? The problem is that no one can give the parents what they want most: their child. Long after the memorials fade and the casseroles stop coming, that child is still dead, and those parents are still grieving."

Hood offers the wisdom of her harrowing experience. "I learned that platitudes don't work. Time doesn't heal. She is not in a better place. God does give us more than we can bear sometimes. I have learned that there is more power in a good strong hug than in a thousand meaningful words. I have learned that even in the face of loss, clothes still get dirty and bills still need to get paid. Friends who laundered our socks and answered our e-mails, who mowed our lawn and put gas in our cars, helped us — a lot. The friend who came one afternoon and went through Grace's backpack, carefully storing her kindergarten workbook and papers, hanging her art on the refrigerator and her raincoat on its hook in the mudroom, had more courage than the ones who told me to call anytime."

"As time passes, people return to their ordinary lives, while grieving parents no longer have ordinary lives... The people who even now, a decade later, still say Grace's name, still comment on her quirky style and artistic talents and love of the Beatles, continue to help me through my days, simply by remembering her."

Hood concludes by offering a powerful guide. Don't look away from the grief, she urges (though for most that comes most naturally). It will always be there for those who endure monumental loss. Rather, "Look them in the eye. Take them in your arms, and do not let them go."

There is little to celebrate for many families in Newtown but tomorrow is Christmas. As the world showers that shattered community with charity and love, we hold out a hope that that spirit of giving and compassion can persist — in keeping with Hood's prescription — not just through this tragedy or holiday season, but for all of our days to come.

Amy Goodman

Lessons From New Town, Australia, For Newtown, USA: Will New Thinking Lead To New Laws?

The initial shock of the latest semi-automatic-weapon-fueled massacre has passed, but the grief only grows. Now the funerals occur with a daily drumbeat. It will take not 27, but 28 funerals, as the Newtown, Conn.,



shooter, Adam Lanza, took his own life after slaughtering his mother at home, then 20 children, aged 6 and 7, and six women at the Sandy Hook Elementary School who tried to protect them. Since President Barack Obama took office, there have been at least 16 major mass shootings, after which he has offered somber words of condolence and called for national healing. But what is really needed is gun control, serious gun control, as was swiftly implemented in Australia in 1996, after another gunman went on a senseless shooting spree. That massacre occurred in Port Arthur, Tasmania, and the shooter was from nearby New Town.

On April 28, 1996, Martin Bryant, a troubled 28-year-old from New Town, Tasmania, took a Colt AR-15 semiautomatic rifle to the nearby

tourist destination of Port Arthur. By the time he was arrested early the next day, he had killed 35 people and wounded 23. The reaction in Australia was profound, especially since it was a nation of gun lovers, target shooters and hunters. The massacre provoked an immediate national debate over gun control. Strict laws were quickly put in place, banning semiautomatic weapons and placing serious controls on gun ownership. Since that time, there has not been one mass shooting in Australia.

Rebecca Peters took part in that debate. She is now an international arms control advocate, and led the campaign to reform Australia's gun laws after the Port Arthur massacre. Days after the Newtown massacre, I asked Peters to explain how the gun laws changed in Australia in 1996:

"The new law banned semiautomatic rifles and shotguns, assault weapons, and not only new sales ... we banned importation sales, we banned ownership, so currently owned weapons were prohibited. The government bought those guns back at a rate of about the retail price plus about 10 percent. You couldn't get them repaired. You couldn't sell them. It was a very comprehensive ban. The buyback ended up buying back and destroying more than about 650,000 of these weapons, which is the largest buyback and destruction program for guns anywhere in the world."

Like the United States, Australia's  
See Goodman, Page A5



Letters to the Editor...

A light in darkness

**To the Editor:**  
It may seem that this December 25th will be met half-heartedly. With the looming fiscal cliff, and now the tragedy that has befallen Newtown, Connecticut, it seems pointless to hold onto any hope. We must all remember, however, that hope can be found in despair. To elaborate, we should look at a bright moment coming from one of the dark periods of the 20th century.

The year was 1914, and the first winter was setting in for the conflict now known as World War One. Due to various reasons, the Entente and Central Powers had been fighting each other since August. What was thought to be a quick scuffle was turning out to be a drawn out period of trench warfare. Fierce battles with terrible losses had already been waged; Mons, the First Marne, Tannenberg, and it was only going to get worse. Early war trenches were crude, and conditions were miserable by December.

Despite the dark outlook that befell Europe, one bright moment stood out as 1914 drew to a close. It occurred Christmas Day, along the Ypres salient, between the soldiers of the British Expeditionary Force (along with a few French), and the German Empire. Across No Man's Land, men on both sides came together on friendly terms. Some sang while others exchanged provisions;

there was even a football game. While the war would drag on until 1918, the 'Christmas Truce' proved to be a hopeful moment for humanity.

It may seem strange that I'm writing about this past event. That being said, I believe that lessons from the past can be used for today. With all that is happening in the world, hope may seem like a foolish notion. We must remember, however, that hope can be found in despair. We should all take this to heart as we journey to meet our families for the holidays.

Reference: G.J. Meyer A World Undone: The Story of the Great War Austin Sullivan Springs, Conn. & Danville, Vt.

Holiday season comes with party liability

**To the Editor:**  
Being a Liability Adjuster, I observed that many homeowners and party hosts are not aware of their responsibilities when inviting people to their homes and serving food and drink. Hosts should be aware that if someone drives drunk or becomes sick after consuming food at a holiday party at your home, you the host could be liable. In fact a casserole could bring just as many risks as a cocktail. Investigating several cases, I found that a homeowner had served food in their home that the

food served was prepared by someone else. That means many homeowners have placed themselves at risk for a lawsuit just by feeding their guests.

Weather the food came from a pizza parlor or a five star catering service, if you served the food from your home and someone gets ill, you will most properly be liable. Even a simple pot-luck dinner at a church social, American Legion and the list goes on from there. Food poisoning could result in a legal liability suit. So WATCH OUT FOLKS.

Investigating several cases, many states have enacted statutes that can be interpreted as mandating non-commercial social host liability. So, if a guest or a third party is injured in an automobile accident that is related to alcohol consumption and the drinking can be linked to the host (homeowner), that host could be held responsible for payments of medical bills, loss of wages and vehicle damage. The list can go on and on. Especially in a worst case — wrongful death resulting in huge monetary settlements.

Solutions. Host can arrange transportation for their guests if they are under the influence of alcohol or drugs, you can also provide them with overnight accommodations. Bottom DO NOT serve your guests who are visibly intoxicated. While party goes and hosts should act responsibly and know their limits, consumers need to acknowledge that

most risks cannot be entirely eliminated. Last solution secure a personal "Umbrella" liability policy — providing at least \$1 million or more in additional coverage over and above your homeowner policy.

When a host (s) is/are responsible for a liability incident, the guest (claimant) may retain an attorney and seek out a sizable settlement. When a claim is presented and once I investigate all the facts and find that the claimant's attorney has a weak case, then I can negotiate a lesser claim. Once the claimants attorney realize that his/her case is weak, then we won.

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays to all the hosts and their guests.

John Kroeger  
Waterford, Vt.

The real Christmas

**To the Editor:**  
The Grinch found out that Christmas doesn't come from a store... that it means a little bit more. The people in Whoville still came out of their homes singing happily even when that awful Grinch took all their gifts and decorations away. The Grinch couldn't believe that the Whos didn't need a lot of presents for Christmas to come.

How many people today are unaware of the reason we celebrate Christmas? I read the Holiday Edi-

See Letters, Page A5

Lenore Skenazy

Does 'Sharing the Pain' Really Help Anyone?

"I want to share the pain," wrote a friend in Australia, where the Sandy Hook victims' photos dominated the front page. "The pain is gut-wrenching. It's in my heart, my head, my womb." One side of me knows just what she's saying: We are all connected, human-to-human.

And another side of me, the reporter side, knows what sells papers. Even 10,000 miles away.

While I understand the media, I actually don't quite understand my friend. She wants to be share the pain, but how is this actually sharing?

I ask not because I am belittling her hurt. I feel it, too, in the same organs. I'm really just trying to figure out what purpose sharing the ultimate pain of certain parents — but not of every parent in deep pain — serves. And also: Who are we sharing it with? I don't think we're sharing it with the actual

families, are we? Their situations and ours are so different. So are we sharing it with our fellow on-lookers? What makes this feel like we are "doing" something — and what, in fact, ARE we doing?

Trying not to sound like a sociologist from Mars, I took to my blog (freerangekids.com) with these questions, and one more: If we do NOT want to share the pain, does this make us "bad"?

Well, this opened a discussion among a silent, almost closeted, group: Folks who feel a little queasy about the outpouring of empathy. "My sympathies go out to the parents and families," wrote one mom. "I cannot imagine what they must be going through. On the other hand, I have heard as much as I want to hear about it. Evil exists in this world and as insensitive as it sounds, talking endlessly about this event is not going to shine any light on why it happened."

Shhh ... I feel the same way. I



even worry that focusing so much on it does the opposite of shining a light. It creates darkness: a belief that, because 20 children died suddenly somewhere, then all children are in danger all the time, everywhere. That belief can lead beyond sensible safety precautions to community-corroding measures, such as the school in Anchorage that held its annual Christmas concert over the weekend, but required all guests to sign in.

Uh — how did that make anyone safer? All it did was add a new layer of bureaucracy, while subtly suggesting that the school considers all visitors at least POSSIBLY mass murderers. (Unless they have proper IDs, then they're fine.)

Another reader voiced this rather taboo thought: Why leave teddy bears in shrines when you could send toys to children in need? And another: Why don't we grieve for all murdered children this way, including the poor ones killed in housing projects? And

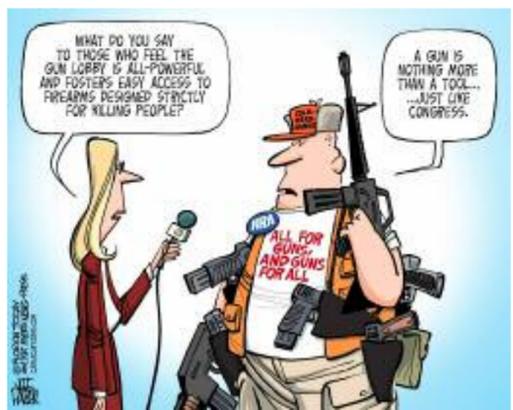
here's one more subversive thinker:

"I don't need to watch interviews with 7-year-olds to know that they will need a lot of time to heal. I don't need to see the pictures of the children and adults who were murdered to know that their families will miss them forever. I don't need to know what happened at the funerals to know that this is one of the hardest days of these parents' lives. And I don't need to talk to my friends about how devastated I am. Because although I feel sad, my life will be the same as it was before in just a matter of days. The lives of those who were actually there and who lost loved ones will never be the same. My wallowing will not do anything for them."

Wallowing is not always voluntary, of course. The sadness hits different people different ways. But to retreat from the mass misery is not evil or uncaring or even a bad idea.

In this era of vigils 10,000 miles away, it's just not common.

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Doonesbury



Mallard Fillmore



# Letters

Continued from Page A4

tion of the Caledonian-Record, the day before Thanksgiving Day. I wouldn't attempt to try to count the number of times the word, "gift," is used in the pages. But the number of times Christmas is mentioned for its real reason may be zero.

Every year I am upset by the Christmas commercials — children telling what they must have if their parents care anything for them, that perhaps their parents have no clue about what they really want, the car commercials, the jewelers spouting that the only way you can prove you love your wife is by getting her expensive jewelry, you really need a new television, preferably one for every member of the family, kindles, computers, cell phones — never mind the price, never mind if you can't afford it, it's the only way to go.

I grew up going to church every Sunday, something I still do. My religion is an important part of my life. I have never said that I am too busy to go to church, too tired to go to church. It has always been a way of life for me. Even when I had to get my eight children ready for church,

I did so, and we got there on time. When I was a young mother, it was a day of renewal — the wonderful comforting Book of Common Prayer always gave me strength for the coming busy, hectic week.

I have never church-hopped — I belong to Saint Andrew's Episcopal Church, the same church that my great grandparents attended when they came to St. Johnsbury in the 19th century, and hence, my children were the fifth generation of my family to attend. I was the secretary of a Congregational Church for 24 years and I dearly loved its pastor, but I felt no desire to change my church.

I like Christmas gifts just as much as anyone else and I get excited at the age of 82 about what my family will be giving me, what I have in my Christmas stocking, if the family will be pleased with what I have carefully chosen to give to them. I love my decorations and I have them to tackiness. We still arrange our 56 year old inexpensive creche and light the Advent candles that are on a form my neighbor made for me over 50 years ago. We celebrate

Christmas Eve at our home with my nephews and nieces and their children attending, something they have always done. We eat my traditional pork pies and gorge on other food too. We have a lot of presents to exchange. It takes a long time to watch 16 or more people opening each present individually. We really help the economy, without a doubt.

But it is foremost in my mind that I am celebrating the birth of Jesus Christ and I am appalled that so many people do not even connect Christ with Christmas.

Betty P. Maynard  
St. Johnsbury, Vt.

## Inflammatory statement

To the Editor:

Attorney Brien Ward at the last selectman's meeting stated that he was told by an apparently anonymous town official that Parker Village is a "cesspool."

If this statement was made, and is not just another unsubstantiated and inflammatory comment from Attor-

ney Ward designed to misrepresent this property, it is highly irresponsible and unprofessional and I ask that the appropriate town officials investigate this allegation and ensure that employees of the town refrain from such disgusting statements.

I have tried to understand Attorney Ward's reason for bashing Parker Village. He claims it is not "safe." The residents feel safe, the children feel safe and the staff feels safe. Has Attorney Ward ever visited Parker Village? I have extended the invitations, and I do so again.

In fact, on Friday afternoon, December 21st, we will be having a holiday gathering for the children of Parker Village in my office. They will be receiving little gifts and Christmas candy. Stuffed animals are available for the little ones. The Parker Village Children's Choir will be singing Christmas carols. I'll be taking pictures to add to our "wall of photos. Maybe he would like to stop by.

Yesterday a 9-year-old girl said "If Parker Village closes, I will have no place to live." I think the Grinch

That Stole Christmas has descended upon the children of Parker Village in the form of Attorney Brien Ward. Nice going!

Pauline DiNatale  
Site Manager, Parker Village  
Whitefield, N.H.

## Thanks for supporting our troops abroad

To the Editor:

The Monday December 3, 2012 article in The Caledonian Record "Volunteers Send Vermont Christmas To Our Troops" was a heartwarming reminder of the spirit of generosity and patriotism alive in our Northeast Kingdom corner of

the world. Kudos to Dorcas Lee, Martin Fortin, Nicquelle Fortin, and the many others who gave and give so freely of their time to make sure that our troops abroad are remembered, particularly at Christmas.

As a past volunteer at the USO package stuffing "parties" at the Fort Belvoir U.S. Army base in Virginia during the 2000s, I know firsthand the great camaraderie and friendships that are formed at these events as well as the underlying kindness of so many volunteers. Keep up the great work Dorcas, Marty, and Nicquelle in supporting our troops so far from home.

Christopher E. Ryan  
Alexandria, Va.

# Goodman

Continued from Page A4

gun laws were a patchwork of state laws. Prime Minister John Howard, from the center-right Liberal Party, took leadership to put strong, national uniform standards into place. Howard wrote a reflection on the gun laws last August, immediately after the Aurora, Colo., massacre. In his piece, titled "Brothers in arms, yes, but the US needs to get rid of its guns," Howard writes of a talk given at the George H.W. Bush Presidential Library in 2008:

"There was an audible gasp of amazement at my expressing pride in what Australia had done to limit the use of guns. I had been given a sharp reminder that, despite the many things we have in common with our American friends, there is a huge cultural divide when it comes to the free

availability of firearms."

Likewise, in Britain, after the March 1996 school massacre in Dunblane, Scotland, which left 16 children aged 5 and 6 dead along with two teachers, handguns were quickly banned. Statistics show that in both countries, gun violence, murders and successful suicides all are down.

What is possible here in the United States, as the nation collectively mourns this latest score of innocents murdered in a moment?

California Sen. Dianne Feinstein promises an assault-weapons ban, to be entered for debate on the new Senate's first day of business in January. She says: "It will ban the sale, the transfer, the importation and the possession [of assault weapons], not

retroactively, but prospectively. And it will ban the same for big clips, drums or strips of more than 10 bullets," adding, however, "We exempt over 900 specific weapons that will not fall under the bill."

"Nine hundred exemptions?" I asked Paul Barrett, assistant managing editor at Bloomberg Businessweek and author of "Glock: The Rise of America's Gun," to comment on Feinstein's likely revision of the 1994 law:

"The 1994 so-called Assault Weapons Ban was one of the most porous, ineffective pieces of legislation. It was shot through with loopholes. It had no applicability to weapons that were made and sold on

the day before enactment. ... If Congress is not proposing to ban weapons that are already out there, then that leaves millions and millions of weapons."

President Obama has now appointed Vice President Joe Biden to chair a commission to review possible actions. Commissions, though, too often allow the moment to pass, the national attention to be diverted. In Australia, the comprehensive ban was in place within weeks, shepherded by a conservative prime minister. How long must we wait for sensible gun-control laws in the United States? How many children will it take?

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Paul R. Bengtson  
Paul R. Bengtson,  
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### Ranchers Split Over Border Security Plan To End Environmental Reviews On Land

NOGALES, Ariz. (AP) — When Dan Bell drives through his 35,000-acre cattle ranch, he speaks of the hurdles that the Border Patrol faces in his rolling green hills of oak and mesquite trees — the hours it takes to drive to some places, the wilderness areas that are generally off-limits to motorized vehicles, the environmental reviews required to extend a dirt road.

John Ladd offers a different take from his 14,000-acre spread: the Border Patrol already has more than enough roads and its beefed-up presence has flooded his land and eroded the soil.

Their differences explain why ranchers are on opposite sides of the fence over a sweeping proposal to waive environmental reviews on federal lands within 100 miles of Mexico and Canada for the sake of border security. The Border Patrol would have a free hand to build roads, camera towers, helicopter pads and living quarters without any of the outside scrutiny that can modify or even derail plans to extend its footprint.

The U.S. House approved the bill authored by Utah Republican Rob Bishop in June. But prospects in the Democratic-controlled U.S. Senate are extremely slim and chances of President Barack Obama's signature even slimmer. Homeland Security Secretary Janet Napolitano testified in Congress this year that the bill was unnecessary and "bad policy."

Still, an idea that House Republicans kicked around for years has advanced

## WORLD BRIEFS

farther in the legislative process than ever before and rekindled discussion over how to balance border security with wildlife protection.

### Lieberman Blames 'Congressional Irresponsibility' For Fiscal Cliff Woes

WASHINGTON (AP) — Senators bickered Sunday over who's to blame for lurching the country toward a year-end "fiscal cliff," bemoaning the lack of a deal days before the deadline but bridging no differences in the debate.

With the collapse Thursday of House Speaker John Boehner's plan to allow tax rates to rise on million-dollar-plus incomes, Sen. Joe Lieberman said "it's the first time that I feel it's more likely we'll go over the cliff than not," meaning that higher taxes for most Americans and painful federal agency budget cuts would be in line to go ahead.

"If we allow that to happen it will be the most colossal consequential act of congressional irresponsibility in a long time, maybe ever in American history because of the impact it'll have on almost every American," said Lieberman, a Connecticut independent.

Wyoming Sen. Jon Barrasso, a member of the GOP leadership, predicted that the new year would come without an agreement, and he faulted the White House.

"I believe the president is eager to go over the cliff for political purposes. He senses a victory at the bottom of the cliff," he said.

### Analysis: Constitution 'Yes' Gives Foundation To Create More Religious Egypt

CAIRO (AP) — With the passage of a divisive constitution, Egypt's Islamist leadership has secured its tightest grip on power since Hosni Mubarak's ouster nearly two years ago and laid the foundation for legislation to create a more religious state.

The opposition's response — a vow to keep fighting the charter and the program of Islamist President Mohammed Morsi — ensured that the turmoil of the past two years will not end as many, especially the tens of millions of

poor craving stability, had fervently hoped.

"The referendum is not the end game. It is only a battle in this long struggle for the future of Egypt," the opposition National Salvation Front said in a strongly worded statement on Sunday.

"We will not allow a change to the identity of Egypt or the return of the age of tyranny," added the front, which claims the new constitution seeks to enshrine Islamic rule in Egypt and accuses the Islamists of trying to monopolize power.

Critics say the new constitution does not sufficiently protect the rights of women and minority groups and empowers Muslim clerics by giving them a say over legislation. Some articles were also seen as tailored to get rid of Islamists' enemies and undermine the freedom of labor unions.

### Official: Navy SEAL Commander Dies Of Apparent Suicide In Afghanistan

WASHINGTON (AP) — U.S. military officials are investigating the apparent suicide of a Navy SEAL commander in Afghanistan.

A U.S. military official says SEAL Team Four member Cdr. Job W. Price, 42, of Pottstown, Pa., died Saturday of a non-combat-related injury that the official says "appears to be the result of suicide."

The official spoke on condition of anonymity because the death is still being investigated.

Troops from SEAL Team 4, which is based in Virginia Beach, Va., are part of the mission to train Afghan local police to stave off the Taliban in remote parts of Afghanistan.

### Public Says Final Good-bye To Late Sen. Daniel Inouye With Memorial In Honolulu

HONOLULU (AP) — President Barack Obama, Gov. Neil Abercrombie and other dignitaries attended a memorial service for the late Sen. Daniel Inouye on Sunday.

A 19-gun cannon salute was fired as Inouye's coffin arrived for the service at Honolulu's National Memorial Cemetery of the Pacific, the final resting place to thousands of World War II veterans. More than 400 members of the storied Japanese-American 442nd Regimental Combat Team — of which Inouye was a part — are buried at the site.

Several cabinet secretaries and a number of senators also attended the service.

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PHOTO BY PAUL HAYES



PHOTO BY STEVE GARFIELD

## Scenes From The Blaze

**LEFT:** A lake from the firefighting effort forms near Bay Street behind the 1879 Building Sunday evening.

**ABOVE:** Flames shoot from the second floor apartments, where witnesses reported first seeing the fire.

**RIGHT:** Building owner Bruno Ravel, a female tenant and tenant Duke Skerry, behind, watch as the 1879 Building on Railroad Street burns Sunday afternoon.



PHOTO BY JAMES JARDINE

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HOLLAND

# MAN FACES POSSIBLE LIFE SENTENCE

## Accused Of Repeatedly Raping Young Girl

BY JENNIFER HERSEY  
CLEVELAND  
Staff Writer

NEWPORT CITY — A 63-year-old Holland man faces life in prison after being accused of repeatedly raping a juvenile female over the course of two and a half years.

Robert Stacey, who lives on the Cross Road, pleaded not guilty in Orleans Superior Court-Criminal Division Friday to three felony counts — lewd and lascivious conduct with a child, repeated and aggravated sexual assault of a child, and obstruction of justice.

He's being held for lack of \$100,000 bail at Northern State Correctional Facility in Newport City.

If released, he must remain in Orleans County under a 24-hour curfew and is not permitted to contact or harass two victims, a 10-year-old girl who she allegedly molested when she was 5 years old, and a 27-year-old woman he allegedly repeatedly raped between the ages of 13 and 15 or 16, beginning in 1998.

"Mr. Stacey is an extreme person," Deputy State's Attorney Jim Lillcrap said during the arraignment. He said that fact is supported by the tattoos he sports on his fingers that say, "Hate Pigs" and "Love C\*\*\*."

Lillcrap said the affidavit is replete with threats of violence to the older victim if she told anyone about the abuse, as recently as November, after being interviewed by Detective Trooper Lyle Decker.

Stacey allegedly told her that he'd kill his wife, Wanda Stacey, himself, and all others who are aware of the abuse if the allegation were ever made public.

Lillcrap said Stacey told one witness, Denise Washburn, that because of the investigation, he planned to either blow his head off or run.

As such, Wanda Stacey must turn over all firearms and deadly

weapons to the state police prior to her husband's return home, if he's able to make bail.

Public defender Jill Jourdan took issue with Lillcrap mentioning the tattoos, saying Americans have the right to express themselves, and that in light of Stacey's service in Vietnam and coming of age in the 1960s, the content of the tattoos is not surprising.

She objected to the amount of bail requested.

Judge Howard VanBenthuyzen said the affidavit contains credible threats, and that in order to protect the public and ensure Stacey's continued appearances in court, bail must be set high.

Allegations came to light when Washburn took the 10-year-old girl to the doctor after she'd learned the girl may have been sexually abused.

On Nov. 9, she told Department of Children and Families investigator Megan Gyles that Stacey had touched her genitals when she stayed over at his Orleans house when she was 5 years old in 2007.

The girl told investigators she'd overheard the older victim telling Richard Mason about Stacey abusing her when she was younger.

Decker asked to meet with Stacey Nov. 30, where he said he'd never touched any kids and that this was all coming up because Washburn had a grudge against him and his wife.

Decker asked him about comments he made to another woman, who is now 19 year old, in which he allegedly asked to touch her in exchange for a German shepherd puppy.

Stacey acknowledged that he'd told the woman if he was 30 years younger, he'd consider "taking it out in trade."

When asked about the older victim, who lived with him and Wanda Stacey, Robert Stacey got very upset, Decker said. Stacey said Decker was trying to get him to admit to things he hadn't



Robert Stacey.

PHOTO BY JENNIFER HERSEY CLEVELAND

done and left the barracks.

Washburn was interviewed by Decker the same day. She told him that when she'd found out at age 24 that Stacey was her father, she was immediately warned about him by family members.

His brother Mark Stacey told Washburn that he'd walked in on Robert Stacey holding their mother down on the floor, with a pitchfork to her throat, trying to rape her, Decker wrote.

Washburn said she went camping with Stacey in Maine when she was trying to get to know him at age 25, and he tried to get her to get in bed with him.

The older victim was interviewed Monday and told Decker that the abuse started shortly after her 13th birthday. When Decker asked how she was sure of the timeframe, she said that she'd heard Stacey talking about how in Vietnam, fathers start doing sexual things with their daughters after they start menstruating or turn 13. As a result, the girl was afraid to tell the Staceys she'd started her period.

Stacey told his wife that he didn't spend enough time with the girl and asked to take her out into the woods in Orleans to visit an old trailer.

Decker wrote that the woman started to break down emotionally at this point in the interview.

From then on, Stacey sexually assaulted the girl nearly every day for two and a half years, Decker wrote. "It got worse and worse and worse," the woman

told Decker.

If the girl ever told anyone what was happening to her, "Robert said he would kill Wanda and then kill himself," Decker wrote.

"Victim #2 advised Robert was always saying if anyone found out Robert would kill all of them," Decker wrote, adding that at times, Stacey showed the girl a gun.

Stacey told her that he couldn't help himself and should just kill himself. The final time was just before Stacey visited his father's grave. After that, the abuse just stopped, the woman told Decker.

After each occasion, Stacey told her not to tell anyone, Decker wrote. Stacey bought the girl a lot of presents, including a horse, to the point where Wanda Stacey remarked that the girl had Stacey wrapped around her finger.

After Stacey spoke with Decker, he called the woman to make sure she wasn't going to tell anyone what he'd done to her in the past. The woman expressed concerns for the safety of both Wanda Stacey and the police if they arrested Stacey.

Stacey checked himself into the VA hospital in White River Junction shortly after his conversation with Decker and finally admitted that he'd lied about the abuse. He told a worker there — a mandated reporter — that he'd also molested another girl in Windsor in the 1980s.

Scott Beck said, "we don't need another cellar hole downtown." St. Johnsbury community leaders present at the scene all commented that the town must move quickly to rebuild the Railroad Street district as quickly as possible.

As the firefighters continued to pour water on the blaze, the enormous amount of water diverted onto the blaze is believed to have triggered a fire alarm system and activated a sprinkler system because of low pressure at a state office building located on Eastern Avenue. Firefighters were diverted to the state building, but quickly turned off the sprinkler, which was only activated in a control room, and determined there was no fire. East Burke stood by until the building manager could be located.

Another disruption occurred when a structure fire in McIndoes Falls drew firefighters from the on scene Barnet fire department to assist in Ryegate. Twin State Mutual Aid relied on N.H. fire departments across the river from Ryegate to respond to the structure fire.

IRASBURG

# HANDY MAN HORROR SHOW

## MAN ACCUSED OF BILKING HOMEOWNER OUT OF \$3,000

BY JENNIFER HERSEY  
CLEVELAND  
Staff Writer

NEWPORT CITY — A contractor who allegedly bilked a woman out of more than \$3,000 denied a felony count of home improvement fraud in Orleans Superior Court-Criminal Division Tuesday.

Eugene Menard, 27, of Irasburg, was released and ordered to have no contact with the homeowner, Shirley Donovan. He is not permitted to enter any agreement to do home improvement work while his case is pending.

Menard has no connection to Menard's Total Home Construction of Irasburg, owned by Jonathan Menard.

Donovan hired Menard on June 29, after meeting him at a yard sale at her home, according to senior trooper Andrew Jensen's affidavit.

Menard claimed that he was an experienced carpenter and worked for less money — \$12 an hour — than other carpenters.

Donovan would soon find out that Menard wasn't who he claimed, however.

Donovan told Menard she needed eight windows replaced, fascia and soffit repair, scraping and painting of the exterior of 15 windows and two doors, and replacement of damaged or rotten overhead garage door trim.

The work would have to wait until after Labor Day, Donovan told Menard, because she needed to hold another yard sale to come up with the money.

They agreed that he'd start work Sept. 10, but on Sept. 6 Menard called Donovan to say he needed to be paid up front for \$1,657.95 in materials from Poulin Lumber and \$1,400 for labor. He'd been burned in the past by a customer, Menard explained to Donovan, and had had to file for bankruptcy.

On Sept. 11, the materials minus the windows arrived at Donovan's home, and Menard said he'd have the work done in a few days. He stayed for about a half hour that day filling gaps around the garage door with spray foam. Menard said he had to pick up his child and would return, but did not.

On Sept. 12, he didn't show up, claiming he had to cover for hired help on another job, Donovan told Jensen.

On Sept. 13, he worked just over an hour, painting two boards and laying some cement. To properly correct the rotting wood near the bottom of the garage door, he'd need more money, Menard told Donovan.

The following day, he didn't show up. This time his excuse was that he'd been at the emergency room with two children who had strep throat.

By this point, Donovan was getting fed up and she read him the riot act, saying he'd been paid in full and she wanted the work done over the weekend while she was out of town.

Menard did not show up to do any work on Sept. 15 and 16, however. That Monday he told Donovan that he'd had to install a new water heater in his trailer. Again, he said he needed more money for cement, foam, metal sheeting, paint and screws.

Donovan said to take it out of the money she'd paid him for labor, but Menard said that money

was all gone. He'd spent it on truck repairs after a disgruntled former employee put sugar in his gas tank, Menard said.

That day, Menard and his girlfriend did some work. When he asked for more money, Donovan said she wanted to see some receipts.

On Sept. 18, Menard showed up with a handwritten list of what he needed to purchase, which added up to \$300. Menard complained that he had only \$5 to his name and couldn't even afford medication for his strep throat.

Donovan questioned why he listed three sheets of plywood on the list, and Menard said it was a mistake because he wasn't thinking clearly.

"By this point, Donovan was disgusted with all of Menard's excuses but figured she would never get any work out of him unless she gave him more money," Jensen wrote.

Donovan gave him another \$100, and he said he'd return to do work after getting his medication. But he did not, because he had to go lie down, Jensen wrote.

On Sept. 19, Menard didn't show up to work and didn't return calls. Donovan called Poulin Lumber only to find out that Menard wasn't who he claimed. He'd only been a customer there for a month and had no charge account. Worse, he'd only ordered seven windows instead of the eight needed.

On Sept. 20, Menard couldn't work because he had to take a child to the hospital.

"Donovan states she pleaded with Menard and told him she trusted him to do the work he promised, that she had saved for seven years in a freezing house during the winter for the new windows," Jensen wrote.

Menard said he'd be there in the morning to do the work, but he didn't show up or return calls for two more days. A neighbor saw Menard and another man walking around Donovan's home Sept. 23, but no work was done.

Donovan called Poulin and spoke with manager Andy Starr, who said Menard used some of her money to purchase personal items and that there was still a balance due on the windows.

She also called Scott Shipley, owner of Habanero's Restaurant, who had Menard do some work for him. "Shipley did not have anything good to say about Menard and advised Donovan he would like to see Menard go to jail and would be willing to testify against Menard if needed," Jensen wrote.

Donovan had finally had enough and told Menard she wanted her money back. He said he'd have to collect it from other jobs in the works and it would take some time. She gave him until Sept. 29.

Shane Lantagne from Poulin had more bad news for Donovan — Menard didn't measure the windows properly and she was now the owner of seven windows she couldn't use.

Lantagne looked at the work Menard had done and said it would all have to be redone to avoid the potential of major damage to the house.

Jensen also looked at the shoddy work, like paint over rotten wood.

He went to Menard's Simino Lane home, where Menard said that due to myriad family and vehicle problems, he would not be able to repay Donovan her \$3,157.95.

## Fire

Continued from Page A1

the Lyndonville ladder truck and the Littleton, N.H., ladder truck mounting an aerial attack and pouring water onto the building for hours. CALEX and Lyndon Rescue were also summoned as well.

A large crowd of onlookers followed the fire's progress, held back by St. Johnsbury police officers who erected wooden barricades and used yellow police line to secure the scene.

According to St. Johnsbury dispatch, as of 10 p.m., the Railroad Street fire had not been declared under control, as firefighters continued to pour water on the building for eight hours without letup.

St. Johnsbury Select Board Chairman James Rust said there was concern that the structural integrity of the Landry building may have been impaired by the fire. St. Johnsbury Police Chief Clem Houde also expressed concern about the building's safety. The building, according to Rust, is a wood frame building with a brick facade on the front. No officials from St. Johnsbury Fire Department were available as of press time.

Numerous witnesses said the first indication of a fire in the

building was when flames were spotted coming out of second floor windows on the front of the building. The second and third floor of the building house apartments while the first floor houses the closed drug store, operated for many years by the parents of the present building owner, Bruno Ravel, St. Johnsbury.

St. Johnsbury Fire Chief Troy Ruggles was out of town when the fire was first called in and Assistant Chief Marc LaRose commanded the St. Johnsbury firefighters until Chief Ruggles was able to return to town and take over command.

Barb Byrne, with the Caledonia County Chapter of the Red Cross assisted by Aden Heuslein, with the Orleans County Chapter of the Red Cross, said the Red Cross had served over 300 meals to firefighters, police and other first responders as well as everyone displaced by the fire. By early Sunday evening, Red Cross teams, set up in the ground floor of the Pomerleau Building, had opened 12 cases involving at least 15 residents displaced by the fire. Those who lived in the destroyed building or in an adjacent building who are unable to

spend the night there, will all be placed in motel rooms for the night. The Red Cross volunteers said they will remain available to those in need as long as their services are needed.

Rural Edge, formerly Gilman Housing Trust, operates senior housing in a new building just down the street from the fire. According to Emily Keith, the Director of Community Building Organization, said all of the tenants were safe and were free to remain in their apartments during and after the fire. The eight-year-old building replaced a downtown block destroyed in another major St. Johnsbury fire just over a decade ago. Keith said the steel and concrete, fully sprinklered building was untouched by the fire and escaped any smoke or water damage.

A building, known as the "1867 Block" and also operated by Gilman Housing, also houses senior citizen housing and also was undamaged.

Rust and State Rep. Bob South both said they would be in touch with state officials first thing Monday morning to seek a swift state response to the downtown disaster. St. Johnsbury Chamber Executive Director

## Business

Continued from Page A1

According to Scott Beck, executive director of the St. Johnsbury Chamber of Commerce and owner of Boxcar and Caboose Bookshop and Cafe, the firefighters did a fantastic job containing the fire to a single block and, as far as Beck can tell, the only business destroyed by the fire is Artistic Gardens, a flower shop on the first floor of the Landry building. It is owned by Mike and Sue Taylor.

Beck said almost all of the businesses on Railroad Street will be open for business and will keep normal business hours on Monday, the last shopping day before Christmas. Stores such as Frame Dames, Podo Shoes, Boxcar and Caboose and Moose River will all be open. All are on the same side of the street as the structure fire. None of the buildings on the opposite side of the street were damaged and all should be open for business as usual.

Beck said he plans to be one of the St. Johnsbury business people who will be in contact with State of Vermont officials Monday morning about providing services to the town, residents and businesses.

Dunkin Donuts kept right on operating and folks

were still dining at Cantini Di Gerardo restaurant on Railroad Street, just a few blocks south of the major fire. The AquaRealm pets and pet supply store may have suffered smoke and water damage, but the extent was not known. Power was shut down to the building. According to a tenant who asked to remain anonymous, the building housing R.J. Meats and Aqua Realm did not suffer fire or water damage and he was waiting for electricity to be restored so he could return to his basement apartment in the block.

Miriam Briggs, the owner of Wool Away, adjacent to the Landry's Drugs building, said it appeared all of her merchandise was ruined by heavy smoke damage. She said she was covered by insurance and hoped she could, at some point, reopen in the same location, saying, "It's a great location." She's operated her business in St. Johnsbury since 1995 and has been in her present location for three years.

Artistic Gardens, owned by Mike and Sue Taylor, was in the ground floor of the destroyed structure and is a total loss.

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## Scenes From The Blaze

ABOVE: Crews from all over Caledonia County and beyond battle the blaze at the 1879 Building on Railroad Street in St. Johnsbury Sunday afternoon. The fire destroyed 12 apartments and at least two businesses.



PHOTO BY PAUL SEATON

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BELOW: St. Johnsbury Fire Department Captain Will Rivers and Firefighter Troy Darby, sitting on left, receive medical attention while fighting the fire Sunday afternoon.



PHOTO BY JAMES JARDINE

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