

A LIFE

## ‘She was a really good person’



Above: Ruth Tucker throws a handful of beans into her basket at her home in Canaan in July 2005. Tucker said that “when they get ripe, I eat fast.” Below: Tucker taught English for 29 years, including for five years at Canaan High School and 20 years at Mascoma Valley Regional High School.

By ADRIANA JAMES-RODIL  
Valley News Correspondent

Ruth Callanan Tucker  
1922 – 2025

CANAAN — Although she lived to be 102, Ruth Tucker never failed to remember a former student — an indication of her dedication as a teacher.

“No matter where I went, someone would come up to her, and they’d say, ‘Mrs. Tucker,’ and she’d remember their name and different things about them,” said Ruth Margaret Pinkham, Tucker’s niece.

Those students and many others also remembered her. On Tucker’s 100th birthday, she received more than 100 birthday cards from people in Canaan, where she spent much of her working life, Pinkham said.

After Tucker’s death on July 19 in

Rye, N.H., the large number of attendees at her funeral service at Canaan Methodist Church in late July reflected a similar sentiment.

“I think she would be impressed by who came to her service,” Pinkham said, noting that neighbors spoke, as did a younger teacher who considered Tucker a mentor.

Born Dec. 9, 1922, in Northampton, Mass., to Edward and Mabel (Tappan) Callanan, Tucker always loved learning, especially literature in high school. She graduated from Braintree (Mass.) High

SEE TUCKER A8



### WILDLIFE CORRIDOR

## Vt. on track to conserve 30% of land by 2030

By GRETA SOLSAA  
VtDigger

As the chestnut-sided warbler flits about the quaking aspen trees under the shadow of Birds-eye Mountain in Castleton, Vt., Vermonters can hunt, fish, trap, bird-watch and trek in perpetuity along the nearly 5,000 acres of land conserved by the state, thanks to a now-completed conservation plan, state officials say.

After eight years, the Department of Fish & Wildlife finished

drafting last month its long-term plan for the land in Castleton, comprising the Birdseye and Blueberry Hill Wildlife Management Areas, according to the department’s state and private lands biologist Travis Hart. Like a quilt, Hart said, the state aims to stitch together a “patchwork” of different habitats to ensure species diversity and connectivity through permanent conservation efforts.

The wildlife management areas situated in the Taconic Mountains bring together a

unique mixture of plant and animal species and landscape features, providing a “critical link for wildlife and ecological processes across Route 4” to the Green Mountain National Forest, said John Austin, director of wildlife for the department.

Over the next 20 years, Hart said the department plans to manage 4% of the Castleton land for ephemeral young growth forests while actively promoting the development of old growth forests on 24% of the land. The state lost much of its old growth

forest during European settlement and logging for agriculture in the 1800s, and now conservationists are taking varied approaches to grow back the old growth trees, knowing their work will not come to fruition for decades if not generations.

This is one of many conservation milestones in southern Vermont in recent months, guided by Fish & Wildlife’s Vermont Conservation Design, which plans out the landscape for eco-

SEE VERMONT A5

CLAREMONT

## Schools chief steps down

Resignation comes amid ongoing financial crisis

By PATRICK O’GRADY  
Valley News Correspondent

CLAREMONT — The SAU 6 superintendent has resigned amid the district’s financial crisis.

The SAU 6 School Board accepted Superintendent Chris Pratt’s resignation and agreed to pay him three months severance under a separation agreement signed on Sept. 8 by Pratt and SAU 6 Chairwoman Arlene Hawkins, a Claremont School Board member.

Both Pratt and the board “agreed that an immediate leadership transition would be in the best interest of SAU 6 as the Claremont School District navigates its historic financial challenge,” the resignation agreement states.

The SAU board voted to accept the resignation at a meeting Thursday.

Pratt, who has been on administrative leave since Aug. 28, will receive \$39,500 from the SAU, which also includes the Unity School District.

The SAU also will pay its portion of Pratt’s health insurance for three months. Hawkins, who was traveling, could not recall Pratt’s salary.

The SAU placed Pratt, who had not attended any public meetings since Aug. 14, on administrative leave two weeks after it came to light that the Claremont School District had a severe cash flow problem that was jeopardizing the scheduled opening of the district’s schools.

SAU 6 Business Administrator Mary Henry also is on administrative leave.

While schools opened on time on Aug. 28, the district remains in a financial crisis and has a deficit estimated to be between \$1 million and \$5 million. More than \$3 million in cuts have been made including eliminating 20 non-teacher positions, not hiring 19 new teachers and eliminating all extracurricular activities.

Matthew Angell, acting SAU 6 business administrator and comptroller who was hired last month, said at a Claremont

SEE SUPERINTENDENT A5

LEBANON

## Housing is discussed

Part of city’s crafting of new plan for homes

By LUKAS DUNFORD  
Valley News Staff Writer

LEBANON — A group of around 20 people gathered last week to talk about how advocates for land conservation might work together

with developers as the city creates a new housing plan.

Toward the beginning of the meeting, Donald Lacey, who sits on the Lebanon Conservation Commission, expressed a worry about the discussion becoming “the conservationists versus the housing folks. We gotta figure

SEE HOUSING A5



SPORTS, B1

### STORM WARNING

Hartford High running back Connor Peyton (3) is stopped by Mount Anthony’s Carter Tift (12) but still earns a first down during the Hurricanes’ 47-21 win over the Patriots on Friday night. Hartford is 2-0 on the year, outscoring foes 80-21.

VALLEY NEWS —  
JAMES M. PATTERSON

### INSIDE



### LOCAL & REGIONAL GOING NOWHERE

In five years, the intricate web of sheriff’s deputies, prison staff and judges that orchestrated the transport of people to and from Vermont court hearings has been upended. **Page A2**

### WORLD & NATION WATCH YOUR MOUTH

Conservative activists have sought to identify social media users whose posts about Charlie Kirk they viewed as offensive or celebratory, targeting everyone from journalists to teachers. The speed at which the firings have been happening raises questions. **Page B4**



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