

# Life At 43 Main Street

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## Local News

### Robberies

Tim Rumrill

During the past few weeks a rash of robberies were reported throughout Vermont and local areas. The alleged bandit made numerous stops at local pharmacies demanding the relaxant pill, OxyContin. He has stopped at local pharmacies in Bradford, Whitehall (New York), West Rutland, Rutland City, and Ludlow.

The man is described as a man between 5' 8" and 5' 11" wearing a black coat with a white horizontal line across the chest. He looks to be in his early 20's and wears a brown baseball-style hat with earflaps on the sides. When pursuing the robbery the man slips a note to the pharmacist that states he wants OxyContin. After reading the note the man will lift the jacket revealing a handgun to the clerk.

Some other robberies have been reported in Maine asking for the same pill and using similar techniques. "I've been told people are paying \$50 a pill depending on potency" Officer Billings explained. Billings also believes that the robberies could be related to others happening in numerous locations. It is supposed that the bandit is using a White Jetta which has been spotted at the scenes. Although it is said that the bandit was driving, it is believed that the robber used his own two feet to make the majority of his getaways.

This is really an eye-opener as it shows people that things of this nature are not impossible. Most people will believe they are oblivious to the bad things that they hear on the news, but they will eventually find out that tragedy can strike whenever it feels like it.

### Local Job Cuts

Jesse Gillette

The recession happening in our current economy has made many jobless. Companies cannot afford to pay every worker they have, while still paying their bills. Because of this, they have to slim their staff. This is not only happening on a local level, but a national level.

General Electric in Rutland, VT announced that they are offering a temporary furlough package to 50 hourly workers at its Rutland plant and a voluntary early retirement to another 10 workers. "The 50 hourly workers will receive approximately 75 percent of their pay during the 90 days or less they'll be out of work. She said affected workers will receive GE Income Extension Aid combined with state unemployment compensation. Workers will also continue to receive their medical insurance at little or no cost." Said Rutland GE spokeswoman Kellie Morton. Although workers are being temporarily let off, there will be no permanent layoffs by the company.

Yankee Power in Brattleboro, VT is letting off few workers, just enough to save some money.

The state house in Montpelier was offering to cut the pay of their employees by 5%. The State Auditor was the only employee who accepted the cut.

Many families are being affected by the job cuts on a local and national level. The recession is causing a trickle down effect on the entire economy. When people get let off, they don't have as much money to buy things from companies, which causes more jobs to be lost. This recession can be fixed, but it will take a lot of effort and time by everyone.

Barack Obama  
Jake Covell

A little over a week ago, our new president Barack Obama was sworn into office in the inauguration ceremony. Hundreds of thousands showed up for the event at the Capitol building. The crowd was backed up with people wanting to be a part of the celebration. Before inauguration there were musical performances by Aretha Franklin singing "My Country 'Tis of thee" and Yoyo Ma playing a special composition on a cello. Overall, it was a great and inspiring event. But how has he done since then and is there change?

One of the latest breakthroughs Obama has been able to accomplish was the equal paying rights bill he passed. It stated that a person cannot be paid less because of their sex or race. This is a huge improvement for our country and it shows that Obama is giving the things he promised so far. He's showing that he does really want to establish change and create hope in this country.

Another thing he is trying to do is get rid of the jail in Guantanamo Bay. He feels that it's an unfair jail and that the torturing going on is unacceptable. Jesse Gillette said "I disagree about his decision on closing it down" when asked about it. Mr. McKaig said "I think it's a good idea" when asked about it also.

Overall Obama is making changes in the country already. So if things keep going the same and Obama keeps his word there will be a lot of new changes to the United States.

Madoff Makes Off with Billions  
Letty Mauriello

With our economy sinking and Wall Street on the ship with it, it seemed the markets of America, and the world, couldn't get worse.

Enter Bernie Madoff.

The billionaire broker had it all, a luxurious penthouse in New York City, private jets, yachts and all of the above. As well as material items, he had status, being a chairman for the major stock exchange, NASDAQ, but as we learned in December of 2008, all of this was the outcome of a crook in charge of our money. 50 billion dollars worth, to be exact.

For decades, Mr. Madoff had been carrying out what would become the largest Ponzi scheme in history without anyone even knowing it. And who

would suspect him of such a crime? After all, he had a great job, showed a warm attitude to his employees and co-workers and had a wife and two sons.

In some cases, however, Madoff is believed to have a different side, a deceiving and manipulative side. This second personality of his was rarely seen, but it was definitely the total opposite of the crusading hero he had made himself out to be.

His reputation was shattered on December 11, 2008 after telling his sons on the previous day that all of the money he had earned was "one big lie" as he put it.

As a result of the charges, he has been put on house arrest, given up his passport and had to pay a 10 million dollar bail to avoid prison. Hopefully, this will give him some time to think about what a terrible crime he has committed.

I interviewed many people, asking them about their thoughts on the situation. None held positive views on the once-admired broker.

"No government regulation [in the stock market] only works to a point," says Mr. Bannon, history teacher at BRHS, "Madoff has given another reason to be afraid to invest."

Ludlow lawyer, Gregory Mauriello comments, "I feel bad for the victims of his greed, and I am disappointed [that] the government didn't do what was necessary to prevent it." Mauriello continued with, "I also think that, assuming Madoff's found guilty, he should receive the severest penalty available to the sentencing judge."

Janet Johnson, legal assistant to Mr. Mauriello, comments, "The height of his betrayal, to people who entrusted their life's savings to him, is frightening. You trust, you work, you invest your money, and then you find there's nothing there." She finishes with, "If he's found guilty, I would like to see him working in the kitchen of the prison to help repay the retirement funds of all the poor widows who have nothing because of him."

Blagojevich Impeached on Corruption Charges  
Letty Mauriello

Rod Blagojevich was removed from his position as the governor of Illinois on January 29th for allegations of attempting to sell President Obama's empty Senate seat to the highest bidder last December. After being voted out 59 to 0, he is the first governor in over two decades to be ousted

out of office and he is also prohibited from running for office ever again due to his abuse of power. Despite several desperate statements to the media about his supposed innocence, as well as claims of partiality and injustice in his trials, not a single lawmaker rose in Blagojevich's defense.

Many Illinoisan's are pleased with the outcome of the four-day long trial, and the same seemed to be true for many Vermonters.

"He was obviously guilty," says Mr. Winters, a science teacher at Black River High School. "He was playing political games saying he wasn't having a fair trial," continued Winters, "when he really wasn't being fair to himself. He should have admitted it."

"He was definitely guilty," stated Mrs. Ballou, an English teacher at BRHS. "Truth is the daughter of time, as the saying goes," she continued, "If you do something wrong, don't talk about it to anyone over a wire."

Mr. Bannon, one of BRHS's History teachers, jokes, "Just look at his hair." He goes on to say, "What Blagojevich has done is not good for democracy and is following in the tradition of corruption of Illinois politics."

## Sports

### Snowboarding

Tim Rumrill

This year has been a good one so far in the chase for states concerning Black River High School girls and boys snowboard team. With some new additions, the teams are shaping up to be contenders for the 2009 state championships. Led by Coach Matthew Pincus, and veterans returning again, the teams look towards a promising and excellent year in BRHS snowboarding.

The teams have competed in a total of two competitions so far with one located at Bromley Mountain and the other at BR's home turf Okemo. The competition at Bromley was where the GS was held for teams around the southern part of the state.

The other was a half pipe competition, a success for the girls team where Sandy Roundy placed first and with Chris Olesky placing sixth for the Boys side.

There are some new faces on the squads including sophomore Gabe Macklin and freshmen Lucey Gagner, Tim Rumrill, and Morgan Webster.

All of these members show potential for the future of BRHS snowboarding.

The team looks forward to the rest of the 2009 season at Black River in hopes to capture the title of champions.

### Superbowl XLIII

Kyle Milligan

Super Bowl XLIII was an exciting game to watch. The Super Bowl was between the Pittsburgh Steelers and the Arizona Cardinals. The Arizona Cardinals had never been in a Super Bowl game. The Steelers won for their sixth time and that is a record.

The Steelers led most of the game until the end when Larry Fitzgerald caught a ball and ran it for about forty yards to give them the lead with three minutes left in the game. When the Arizona Cardinals' fans were happy and freaking out in a good way the Steelers drove the ball down the field and decided that Santonio Holmes would be the one to catch the ball for a touchdown and he did with thirty five seconds left in the game. Santonio Holmes was named MVP of the Super Bowl. Then the Steelers recovered a fumble which would secure their win.

The one thing that people like the most is commercials. I thought the commercials were lame. Some were funny but they didn't do that well this year.

### NBA Update

Kyle Milligan

The Los Angeles Lakers have one of the best records in basketball. Kobe Bryant and his play making have helped his team. With Andrew Bynum injured Kobe will have to play harder and better than he has been playing. The Lakers have the Celtics and Cavaliers up next on their schedule. On February second Kobe scored 61 points against the New York Knicks. Kobe knew he would have to start to play harder and he did. Pau Gasol also scored 31 points. Andrew Bynum was told he would be out six to eight weeks. Kobe's performance set a record for most points scored at the Madison Square Garden.

The NBA this year has been a blow out by four teams the Lakers, Celtics, Cavaliers, and the

Orlando Magic. The Dallas Mavericks are playing well because of Dirk Nowitzki, one of their strongest players. The Lakers' Andrew Bynum got hurt. The Lakers strong center was injured during last year's NBA finals.

## **Okemo Mountain**

Valentine's Day at Okemo  
Rachel Brzoza

This year, Valentine's Day falls on a Saturday. Many may not know about the plans Okemo has for this special day. The snowmaking and grooming teams at Okemo have been working with the recent snowfalls and hoping for pleasing weather to leave skiers and riders with great conditions.

They will also be having a scavenger hunt, where ten red hearts will be hidden on the trails of Okemo. When a red heart is found, the skier or rider may take it to Okemo's Learning Center Desk where they will receive one of the ten unknown prizes. In addition, one of Okemo's lift operators will be wearing a bright red heart on their uniform. Anyone who reports the name of this person to Okemo Clock Tower Base Area Ski & Ride School desk will also receive a prize. "I think scavenger hunts are exciting and very fun," says Jake Covell.

There will also be a moonlight snowshoe tour for couples who wish to attend. This is an hour long tour in which will be lead through a wooded trail that winds along the Inn. So, if you have not yet made plans for Valentine's Day, there are many activities going on at Okemo for you to join.

Okemo Mountain Resort  
Divyam Shah

Okemo, the ski mountain in Ludlow was founded by a couple of local businessmen in 1955. It officially began on January 31, 1956. Later, it was purchased by the Muellers in August 1982. Since then there was no stopping. The facilities have been expanded in every aspect, including new chairlifts, snowmaking, lodging and trails. Year by year, Okemo kept increasing its base, and every year the ownership of Tim and Diane Mueller kept expanding and putting more money into trails, snow-making and on-mountain lodging

improvements. Then, about a decade ago, the ski industry awoke to the realization that Okemo, the ski area that winter travelers used to pass on the way to other mountains, was more popular than almost any other resort in Vermont. Almost two months ago, on December 6, 2008 the Muellers sold Okemo with Crested Butte and Mount Sunapee to CNL Lifestyle Properties, Inc. in a lease-back deal worth over a \$130 million dollars. CNL now owns the underlying assets of the resorts, while the Muellers will continue to run the resorts as usual.

The mountain has 119 trails spread across 632 skiable acres. 96% (605 acres) of the trail area is covered by [snowmaking](#), the highest percentage in the East. Okemo meaning "All Come Home" in Native American, is a great attraction to Tourists from around the world and Ski/Snowboard lovers. A lot of people have bought houses or so called 'Second Homes' around Ludlow and even at the mountain so that they can come up here to Ski or Ride during winter.

This mountain has been a great importance to the local people especially the youngsters as Skiing and Riding are the major winter sports. It gives them a good reason to go out in the cold during the weekends or holidays. Like last year, there have been lots of visitors on the mountain, most of them being foreigners.

Another good thing is that the downfall in economy around the country hasn't affected the mountain a lot. The housing and hotel reservations like always has been quite packed although the reservations for the condos have not been that good like previous years. The mountain always brings up new activities to attract people like the Valentine's Day celebration this month. Over all, this season has been great.

## **School News**

Winter Carnival  
Jesse Gillette

It is once again that time of year. The time of year when students get out of class and gather in various places for fun and games. I am talking of course about Winter Carnival. Winter Carnival has been a tradition among the school since way back when the school opened. In the past, Winter Carnival has been two days, but just recently, it has

been 1 ½ days, as it will be this year. The schedule has been modified since last year, possibly taking out events such as mat ball. There could also be new events added such as Rock Band. Otherwise, the schedule will be the same as last year including some favorites such as dodge ball, soccer, floor hockey, and of course the pie eating contest. There will be further adjustments made by the student council, but nothing is official.

As much as students always enjoy Winter Carnival, there are always some things that need to be changed. "Winter Carnival is the most majestic time of the year, but it needs to be longer" says Jake Covell.

"I think Winter Carnival has been a great success in past years, yet I still think it could be extended by a small amount" said Tim Rumrill.

The current seniors will return as reigning champions, but will face a challenge for the title from the rest of the school. Winter Carnival is February 12th & 13th, so make sure you come prepared and ready to play.

### NECAP Testing

Alyssa Collins

If there's one thing we all agree on, I think it's the necessity of a good education. On this principle, the State of Vermont decided to join in with New Hampshire, Maine, Rhode Island to create the New England Common Assessment Program or NECAP test. This test is administered to children in grades 3-8, and 11.

The NECAP test consists of portions of reading, writing, math and science. Students can score on four different levels.

4. Proficient with Distinction
3. Proficient
2. Partially Proficient
1. Substantially Below Proficient

The reading, math and writing portions of the test are taken every year in October. In May the science test is administered. When the results of these tests come back to schools, many of them decided to change some aspects of their curriculum. The feedback from the NECAP's taken today helps schools make constructive decisions to benefit the children that will come through our schools and use the education system.

The NECAP test consists of:

- Multiple-choice items
- Short-answer items
- Constructed-response items
- Writing prompts

Each portion of the assessment tests the students on different things. The multiple choice part of the test requires students to fill in the correct answer. The short-answer part requires students to provide a solution to a problem, while the constructed-response item requires students to write a brief response, or show the solution to a problem. Writing prompts require students to answer the prompt through an extended response in writing.

The Times Argus printed an article on the rise of NECAP scores on January 29, 2009. In this article written by Sarah Hinckley, she quotes Armando Vilaseca as saying "Vermont students and Vermont teachers are doing a great job. We're seeing an upward movement."

This quote by Vilaseca brings hope to schools and parents across the state. Hopefully we continue to see a rise in NECAP scores.

### Semester Two

Anna Sanford

On January 26, 2009 the BRHS students welcome a new semester. A variety of new classes have been added to the schedule, along with the added class and extended school day.

Several new classes are being offered this year at BRHS including; Forensics, taught by Ms. Salmon, Russian taught by Senor Bostock, Fun and Fitness, Introduction to Athletic Training, and Contemporary Issues on Sports all being taught by Mr. Pullinen. Business and Personal Finance taught by Ms. Renard, SAT Prep taught by Ms. Kelly and Mr. Milne, Yearbook taught by Ms. Kelly, Children's Lit, and Vermont Authors taught by Ms. Ballou. Mr. Pincus also took on two new classes, History through Film, and Reel American History, and finally Journalism taught by Mr. McKaig.

In addition to the new classes, the BRHS school day has also added an extra seventeen minutes to squeeze these classes in. "The extra time is horrendous and I am appalled" says sophomore Jake Covell. With the added time, BRHS has a half day every second Wednesday of the month, which makes up in a small way for the

longer days “I don’t think that it really makes up for the extra 17 minutes, I’d rather just go to school Monday through Friday every week at the old dismissal time” says junior Myles Chung.

With the second semester kicking off, it’s time to be thinking of class choices for the upcoming school year of 09/10!

### Drama Program Anna Sanford

The drama program lead by Ms. Gardner, Black River Middle school’s English teacher, is in the midst of preparing for the winter play of the 08/09 school year. “The Effect of Gamma Rays on Man-in-the Moon Marigolds,” written by Paul Zindel, may be one of the most emotional and dramatic productions that the drama program has performed. “This play is going to outstanding and I love the cast I’m working with” says sophomore Gabrielle Macklin.

The play is only a five person cast. The role’s include Beatrice played Anna Sanford, Tillie played by Rachel Karner, Ruth played by Lucey Gagner, Janice Vickering played by Hannah Tobey , and Nanny being played by Gabrielle Macklin. The production takes place in an abandoned vegetable store turned into a one room home. Beatrice is the widowed mother of two daughters, Tillie and Ruth. Both daughters are very different, Tillie is very interested in school and science, as for Ruth who couldn’t care less about school unless there are boys involved, although both girls are quite different they share the harsh and violent home environment, which is portrayed by their mother.

The production will be performed on February 26, 27, and 28. Doors open at 7:00 pm, and English teachers will be rewarding extra credit points for those who attend. The fee at the door is \$5.00 for students \$7.00 for adults.

### Myspace Terror Hannah Brzoza

As many children and adults have started using Myspace, an updated way to communicate with friends, family and others, there has been many problems. One of the most horrifying incidents that have occurred was when a young girl (13 years old) began speaking to a young boy, or at

least who she thought to be a young boy around her age. He began talking to her and abruptly stopped and told her “he heard she was cruel”. The next day this young girl committed suicide. The parents of this young girl then discovered that this boy that their daughter had been chatting with on Myspace was actually “created by a neighborhood family”. The girl’s parents are hoping that these people will be prosecuted. This goes to show that how you treat people could affect someone’s life forever.

### Vermont Legalizes Medical Marijuana Hannah Brzoza

As many people believe that marijuana is used for just for people to get high so that they can have a good time. It has now been legalized, Medical Marijuana that is. Within the last year there has been much research by the Department of Health on how marijuana can help people in therapeutic ways. Marijuana is said to help reduce nausea, chronic pain, wasting, and seizures in seriously ill patients. The law is also increasing the number of plants patients and caregivers can grow. “The program shall be used only for treating cancer patients and for such other medical uses as are prescribed by the commissioner by rule” (The Vermont statutes online). So this could be the solution to many peoples pain. At this rate maybe someday it will be legal for everyone.