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Castleton, Vermont

SCASTLETON SPARTAN

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Somda's journey

Graphic designer Ruben Somda shares highlights of Castleton career

By Maddie Lindgren
Castleton Spartan

The journey to Ireland had the charm of a dream: castles in the mist, streets overflowing with art and history, and the thrilling anticipation of attending a one-of-a-kind presentation on graphic design for film.

Ruben Somda and one of their closest peers, Wes Simard, and their Professor William Deforest embarked on this creative journey last spring. They submerged themselves in the Irish surroundings and hopped from one spot to the next. Between the conference, cobbled alleyways, and lively areas, Somda felt their lifelong passion and creative direction begin to take shape.

"It was probably the biggest highlight of my life so far," Somda said.

Somda, a senior at Castleton University, described the workshop in Ireland as the culmination of years of exploration, struggle, and eventual clarity.

"They were right; you don't have to know what you're doing career-wise just yet because it happens. If you told me a year ago this is what I would be doing, I wouldn't have believed you," Somda said.

At first, Somda's journey to this point was anything from simple. Their life took a significant turn once their family won an opportunity to come to the United States through the green card lottery.

Somda was born in Burkina Faso, West Africa. As they reflected on the unexpected voyage from their youth home to Vermont, Somda revealed, "My mother was chosen, which is ironic because she never wanted to move."

After a brief time in New York, Somda's family moved to Vermont, where they adjusted to a new language, culture, and way of life.

But Somda thrived, attending four different schools throughout their young life and gaining determination and adaptability. These are qualities that would later support their artistic endeavors. Before finally choosing to come to VTSU Castleton, they grew up attending Burlington-area in-



COURTESY RUBEN SOMDA

VTSU Castleton senior Ruben Somda poses with a favorite knit hat.

stitutions including Champlain Valley Union High School and JFK Elementary in Winooski.

They initially considered enrolling at the University of Vermont, where their father was a maintenance staff member and offered tuition remission.

"I have beef with UVM. They had eliminated all the programs I wanted to do the year I enrolled," Somda said.

Although Castleton wasn't their first choice, it was the best option in a strange turn of events.

"I feel terrible saying all this now, but I'm glad I chose Castleton; I feel like this is the better call," they admitted.

Somda's good friend, Wes Simard, who's known them since high school, has witnessed the growth from "unap-

proachable" — at least at first glance — to a cherished creative partner and friend.

"I first met Ruben in high school. I was a junior while Ruben was a sophomore. We met through a Dungeons and Dragons group. I thought Ruben was very unapproachable at first. If you've never talked to them from an outside perspective, it's like, oh my gosh, that person hates me," Simard said. "Then you talk to them, and they're like, this is so great. I thought that Ruben was not cool with being friends with me, but then I met Ruben and talked to them, and they were great."

Eventually, Wes and Ruben became close friends in college and through the pandemic.

"I transferred to Castleton just to be with Ruben because

I didn't know what I wanted to do. I was like, oh wow, awesome, let's go hang out with Ruben. We eventually did every club together. Anything Ruben did, I was also a part of," Simard said.

At Castleton, their collaboration blossomed from design projects like the Rutland Pride logo to an independent study on graphic design in film and television.

After meeting them in an introductory graphic design course and visual storytelling, professors William Deforest and Sam Davis-Boyd immediately recognized Somda's unique style and talent.

"They came in and immediately did beautiful work. They did beautiful work, matching type and images, and you could see already their involvement

in InDesign and beautiful messaging."

He pointed out that politics, social identity, and the reflection of modern society have significantly impacted Somda's art. Their work frequently challenges convention by combining artistic talent with a consciousness of the world's significant issues, Deforest said.

Professor Sam Davis Boyd recalls Somda's early days in her course.

"Ruben took my Visual Storytelling class in the spring of 2022, and they've been a force in the program ever since," Boyd said. "They've done much in their time here and made a big impact. It's going to be weird when they're not here anymore."

As the current leader of the university's Content Lab, Somda took on projects like the recent voter registration campaign and the merger.

"This was the first voting campaign we've done as a merged institution," Boyd explains. "Ruben did a phenomenal job navigating new challenges, working with different departments, and even managing to get materials posted on new websites."

Deforest also noticed this while in Ireland.

"The creative energy around them constantly inspired Ruben and Wes and they bounced ideas off one another. It was really exciting to see," Deforest said.

When asked, "what's next?" Somda didn't really had a sure answer, at least not until the journey to Ireland to see graphic designer Annie Atkins speak at the Adobe MAX Conference.

Atkins, a renowned film graphic designer, wowed them with her method of creating movie sets and props. She talked about how she makes everything from documents and newspapers to carpets and wallpaper. Atkins immediately created excitement in the duo.

"Wes and I got through half of the presentation and kept pausing to talk about how cool it was. You can do anything in this field; it's exciting. We were talking afterward and told each other we had to do this,"

Somda said.

Before the trip, they created an independent study course on graphic design for TV and movies due to their newfound enthusiasm, looking into various projects and finally reaffirming their common objective: attending Atkins' workshop in Ireland.

It was an undertaking to raise the money for this trip. Encouraged to follow their goals, the duo set up a GoFundMe campaign. To help with some of their costs, they also created a presentation seeking assistance from Castleton's Student Government Association (SGA).

"At that point, we began considering what we could say to SGA to get them to agree to support us," Somda said.

In their presentation to SGA, they highlighted the potential for bringing these new talents back to campus and the educational advantages of attending the workshop. They hoped that Castleton could provide opportunities for additional students interested in graphic design and film.

"At this point, we had already gotten the tickets for the workshop, so we were going either way. It was just a matter of whether it would be easy," Simard said.

The workshop was a hands-on graphic design experience.

"It was probably one of the biggest highlights of my life so far. I've never really been a person who thinks that when I put my mind to something, it will happen, and it takes time for me to get to that point. So being confident in something and thinking this needs to happen helped," they said.

Somda said they will leave the University believing that artistic expression has the power to bridge cultural boundaries, tell stories, and influence people's lives, in addition to having a deeper appreciation for design. Somda said they are prepared to leave their mark on the world of opportunities that lie ahead, whether that's here in the United States or in Ireland, where the duo plans to move to.

Select Board approves rec. center

By Reilly Marsden
Spartan Contributor

Cheers and applause erupted during the Castleton Select Board's Nov. 11 meeting as the former Castleton Village School was taken off the active market.

The board voted unanimously in favor of recreation center advocates who want to continue transforming the school into a recreation hub.

Selectman Mark Brown championed the effort, passionately promoting the potential opportunities the building could offer the community and surrounding areas.

"Leadership has to be bold, and I think this is a time for the community to be bold and make a positive move forward," Brown said.

Brown spoke of several advantages a recreation center would provide the town. Attracting younger families to the area, boosting the local economy and keeping youth out of trouble keyed his motivation. The meeting room was

packed with some people left standing in order to hear the board's decision.

To curb the time spent listening to public testimony, the board requested a "spokesperson" for those in favor of a rec center and for those who wanted to keep the building on the market. The Select Board allotted both sides five minutes to plead their cases.

Andy Vermilyea, the President of the Friends of Castleton Parks and Recreation, spoke on behalf of the public who supported utilizing the former school as an activity center.

"Having the building off the market would be incredible for our ability to fundraise," he said. "We're willing to write grants to improve the gym floor, do other projects in the building that would increase its value. We can't write those grants if the building's up for sale," he added.

Vermilyea, who is also a science professor at Vermont State University's Castleton campus, talked about several "one-off" activities and weekly

staples such as theater auditions, paint and sips, hiking trips, cornhole, and the wildly popular pickleball, which attracts 40-50 people a week.

His goal of providing family-friendly activities for people of all ages was met with a unanimous vote of approval.

But the decision did not occur without apprehension.

Although no one from the public spoke in opposition, Selectman Robert Spaulding conveyed concern prior to the vote—citing poor revenue and potential costly repairs.

"Now that you've got all these programs, the revenue side should be coming up. If it's not coming up, we have an issue," Spaulding remarked. He noted his apprehension did not mean he was opposed to the idea of a recreation center, but he concluded if there was a serious buyer, the town should consider the potential income.

"If we ever in the future were looking to build something like that, there's no way possible we'd ever be able to afford any kind of building



COURTESY ANDY VERMILYEA

Residents play pickleball at the former Castleton Village School.

or a rec center anywhere... any maintenance that we have to put in it for the foreseeable future, regardless is just going to increase the value of the property," said Selectman Rob Steele in response to Spaulding's concerns.

Steele made his support

of the center known when he recognized the members of the parks and rec group's effort to better the community.

"They've really shown initiative and done awesome in the past couple months, and I think they'll be able to keep it going," he said.

Vermilyea and the Friends of Castleton Parks and Recreation celebrated their newfound freedom with one goal in mind—transform the former village school into a treasured part of the Castleton community.

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COURTESY WILL SMITH

Graduate student Will Smith, in the background with the hat, works on a film project at Savannah College of Art And Design. Smith graduated from VTSU Castleton last May.

Holy crap I'm flying!

Will Smith is a 2024 graduate of VTSU Castleton now pursuing a master's degree in Film Studies at the Savannah College of Art and Design in Georgia.

When I was asked to write a guest piece for the Spartan, I was worried—worried about saying the wrong thing about my experiences and dissuading someone from going to graduate school. I will say, much like undergrad, I am not the target audience.

So far, my time has not been the “typical” student experience. Also, in the words of Sir Charles Barkley, “I am not a role model.”

I have been waiting almost 30 years to write that last line. Digression aside, as with everything, take this piece with a grain of salt. If you decide to go to grad school, it could be the best thing that has happened to you. It could be the best decision you will ever make. Or.

When Dante wrote the Inferno, he did not include all the levels of hell because if he had, there would have been a lengthy chapter about graduate school and the students who go there.

I think the level is in between sloth and gluttony. To pass to the next level, Dante must sit through two three-hour lectures, a lab in which no one knows what to do, and then do homework until Seth Meyers comes on the Television every day for the next few years.

All the while, Beatrice or Virgil asks if you want to hang out, but you can't because you have to watch 50 films in a week, and they don't understand because it looks like you are just relaxing.

No, I am in film school.

I have to watch films forever.

I don't want to do it on my time off.

Also, I do not remember hearing that people are just not like you for no discernable reason. It could be another student, that worker with no hair and an evil squint that rolls his eyes every time you say hello, or the custodian who wants to go home and not deal with your crap.

They will just not like you.

And to be fair, most of the time, they will not like you for petty reasons you will not understand. Then also, they may not like you because they are jealous of how freaking awesome you are.

Unless you're a jerk and do not understand constructive criticism, there is probably no way of knowing why someone doesn't like you. If you are a jerk and do not understand constructive criticism, then that's why people do not like you.

The worst part is that you can't turn it off. In my downtime, I sit there and wonder what else I should do. I try to relax, but the guilt and stress get to me. Honestly, I think this could be a me problem, but I know many people go through this.

Regardless of all of these things, I am making it. I am clueless about how I have gotten this far, but like the baby bird that gets kicked out of the nest, I'm doing it; I'm flying.

Landing may be a problem, but who cares while I'm in my element? That's a problem for another time.

I have learned some things, mainly about myself. That should count for something. One of the things I have learned is to cherish the ones you can lean on. I could not do this by myself. From friends who help me by watching my films to my family who make sure I eat, none of this would be possible without them. I thank the stars that I have them in my life. Seriously, you people rock and thank you.

- Will Smith



JOE VYVIAL

These aren't your average rolls

I have yet to live a year where my mother's delicious rolls are not the front and center of our Thanksgiving feast...and I hope that day never comes.

A soft and airy inside with the perfect amount of crisp to the exterior of the knotted lump of dough.

No one knows what makes Momma Lisa rolls so addictive, however I believe it's love.

Not only does my mom, Momma Lisa, make at least four dozen of her infinite rolls for our family each Thanksgiving, but people will call her and offer her money for a couple dozen for themselves.

The love my family has for my mom's rolls is so big that whenever she makes some, my dad and I will take the first pick, placing the rolls in Ziplock bags, and hiding them throughout the house away from the others. However, this trick of ours isn't so fun when my father forgets where he put the buttery goodness.

The recipe came from my Aunt Patty (although my mom claims hers are better.) The first time my mom tried out the



recipe was around the period of 2001, and never stopped perfecting them since.

These rolls have been the highlight of Blanchard's Thanksgiving table for as long as I can remember and continue to gain love from other families each year.

When asked what this year's Thanksgiving menu was going to look like and who was making what, before anything was discussed my brother's girlfriend, Olivia, sputtered out “WILL YOU MAKE YOUR ROLLS,” while gleaming into

my mother's eyes.

There have also been many times that I have had my mom make her rolls for my best friend, Kallie, as a birthday present. Kallie is the pickiest eater I know (she refuses to eat rigatoni shaped pasta but LOVES spaghetti because the shapes “taste different”) but will devour a dozen of Momma Lisa's rolls within two days.

Not only can these rolls be eaten by themselves, but they work in every way; dip them in your gravy, make a sandwich with your turkey, slap some

butter on them and warm it up. No matter how you choose to bless your mouth with these fluffy delights, you will be filled with warmth as your taste buds dance.

I remember one year when we did not have an oven, however, don't be fooled, because we would have never let Momma Lisa slide out of making her annual dish.

That year we went as far as buying a convection oven that sat on two cutting boards and placed on top of our blue countertop. The oven was so small that you could only fit about eight knots of dough at most. But after many rotations of baking then cooling, we still had enough rolls for all 30 family members to enjoy that year.

The rolls are the first thing on everyone's plate, the last thing to be eaten, and the start to all leftover inventions. Momma's rolls continue to be the beginning, middle, and end to every one of my Thanksgiving meals.

- Gabby Blanchard

Our weekly food for thought

On a Monday night at 6:30 p.m. sharp you'll find six girls gathered around the coffee table in an upstairs apartment on Main Street or sitting around the big circle table in another apartment on Elm Street.

They'll be sharing stories about their day, playing music, sharing a meal with some wine, and of course they will be sorting out their highs, their lows, and their buffaloes (Don't fret, I'll explain later).

I met Hadley and Reilly freshman year of college.

Scratch that—I knew Hadley in high school. But we didn't officially meet until college.

When sophomore year rolled around, (and) I was randomly paired with Reilly, Hadley, and Hannah as roommates. But we didn't become close friends until junior year.

Now enter Sya and Abby.

We all lived together in Wheeler before Sya, Reilly and I studied abroad.

I remember us all having such a fear for the unknown future. It felt like we were just barely starting to get settled into our friendship and life together and now we were all being separated.

This would be the last time we lived together.

Flash forward six months and we were determined to keep our closeness. Abby and I signed the lease for our apart-



COURTESY JESS EMERY

Senior Jess Emery, front left, enjoys a weekly meal with her closest friends. But the gatherings are about a lot more than food.

ment on Elm and Sya, Hadley, and Reilly had theirs on Main.

Hannah was tragically stuck in the dorms but she's fine, she spends the majority of her time at the Main Street apartment anyway.

We came up with a plan for weekly dinners pretty immediately. We wanted something to look forward to during the week and a set time to force us to all get together.

We alternate hosting Family Dinner each week. Whichever apartment is hosting, the other will contribute a side dish or dessert.

However, this last week was an exception, we're all pretty

broke so we stole popcorn and had a movie night instead.

Every Monday night, we meet at one of our places. If it's at Reilly, Hadley, and Sya's, then Abby will bring cupcakes, I'll bring wine, and Hannah also contributes a little something.

During dinner, I'll usually propose we discuss our High, Low, Buffalo.

It's simple, the high is the high of your day (or week, or weekend, depending on how we feel). The low is the low of your day, and the buffalo is a like a wild card. You could share a fun fact or a silly story. It's just something you'd like

to share with the group.

I cherish these Family Dinners with my friends. It's one thing to stumble upon friendship due to forced proximity, but it's another thing entirely to keep the friendship up after we pass the roommate stage.

It all feels very adult, and it feels very purposeful. We're actively making the choice to spend our last years of college together. And there's no one else we'd rather do it with.

Very recently I was so excited to get the hell out of Castleton, out of Vermont, out of the United States.

But soon, life will never look like this again. We'll be sharing our High, Low, Buffalo across text instead of the dinner table. We'll send each other links to music videos and shared Spotify playlists instead of smooching together on the old brown couch to watch them together.

It's so cliché but it really is funny how life works that way. We're in such a rush for the Next Big Thing that we forget to cherish the moments we're in.

I'm so relieved my friends and I all slowed down to share a meal and a chat before we can no longer do that.

- Jess Emery

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Graduate program presentation success

By Emily Ely
Castleton Spartan

On Nov. 14 at the Academic Center, the final presentation in the three-part “Focus on Your Future” series took place.

Titled “Graduate School: Right for You, Right Now?,” the session attracted a group of students hoping to gain insights from experts about how to take the next step toward graduate school.

As attendees arrived, each received a raffle ticket and a TRIO goodie bag containing sticky notes, pens, pencils, a highlighter, and a stress ball. A raffle drawing also offered one last bit of excitement to the presentation,

Following the distribution of apple cider and donuts, Doe Dahm, the Director of Writing and Communication, introduced speakers; Deborah (Debbie) Warnock and Brit Green from the VTSU McNair Scholars Program.

Dawn gave thanks to two of her academic support mentors, Tiara Robinson and Erin Forkin, saying they were “instrumental in getting this series off the ground.”

The presentation began with a question for the audience: “What are some reasons one would go to graduate school?”

Tiara Robinson responded, “To broaden the spectrum of what I’m learning now.” Rachel Mark, the director of Academic Support, added, “For certifications, licenses to teach, to receive a higher pay grade.”

The presenters also discussed reasons some may choose not to attend graduate school, citing factors like delaying the inevitable, cost, and avoiding the job market.

“It doesn’t have to be [expensive], though, and we’ll talk about that,” Green added, aiming to debunk some common concerns.

Warnock offered her perspective on attending graduate school just to delay entering the workforce.

“So, you don’t want to go just because you don’t know what else to do. That’s not a good reason to go to graduate school,” she cautioned.

Erin Forkin, who is currently applying to graduate school, shared advice on choosing a program.

“Something important to note is that your master’s does not have to be the same degree type as your bachelor’s,” they said.

The presentation then outlined the different types of graduate degrees. According to Green, options include professional degrees, PhDs, and MAS.

“There’s no one-size-fits-all for graduate school, and there’s no path that you have to take,” Green emphasized. “You can still get to where you want to go.”

Warnock reflected on her own graduate experience, highlighting the role of mentorship.

“What’s really important is the relationship you develop with your faculty mentor and the work that you do with them. I thought it was just like undergrad, in terms of taking courses, writing papers, and getting through classes, but that’s not the case,” she said. “Developing a relationship with a faculty mentor, publishing, and doing research together is really the most important part.”

Green gave her own advice.

“You have to find out, by reverse engineering, what you want to be when you grow up. Figure out if you need to go to graduate school and what kind of track you need to go into,” she said. “You’re going to have to learn how to prioritize this long list of responsibilities, and it will be scary and daunting at first. But at many schools, there are Resource Centers specifically for graduate students. Utilize those. Utilize your resource centers, time management—all the things we’ve worked hard on in undergrad.”

As the presentation ended, both Warnock and Green encouraged students to consider the McNair Program and explore scholarships available to low-income students, first-generation students, and students from underrepresented demographics.

Juggling motherhood and news

‘21 grad Jana DeCamilla balances 3 kids, TV news, and crime podcast



VTSU grad Jana DeCamilla stands proudly in front of a screen showcasing her Evidence Room podcast.

By Gabby Blanchard
Castleton Spartan

The sound of her 2-year-old’s breathing comes through the baby monitor placed next to her phone while she was on an interview call after a very emotional day at work.

“Seeing my daughter see me on TV and screaming and jumping up and down is like better than a million dollars, so it’s worth it,” said Jana DeCamilla in a shaky voice as tears filled her eyes.

DeCamilla – a mother of three, fiancée, digital content creator for WRGB in Albany, independent author and all-around go-getter – one way or another, makes it work.

“I’d like to think of her as the next Liz Bishop, maybe one day the next Barbra Walters,” said Silke Johnson, friend of eight years and godmother of DeCamilla’s youngest.

Her start

DeCamilla has a brother, Billy, and a sister, Erica Bombard. Although they all share the same mother, Karen Kasold Hymes, DeCamilla almost felt like an only child growing up. Billy was 11 years older, Erica was nine, and the two lived with their father from Hymes’ first marriage.

DeCamilla and her family bounced around a little bit in her younger years, living in three different houses, the first in the small country town of Cooperstown, New York.

The whole inside of the house was filled with bright colors and the vibrant paint spread onto her bedroom walls, along with a waterbed and a cage in the corner filled with baby ducks.

After Cooperstown was Albany, New York, the place where she really grew up.

DeCamilla has been true crime obsessed since a very young age and remembers when she was just 8 years old watching true crime documen-

taries at home with her best friend, Juliana Bernier.

They were so fascinated with the psychology of these monstrous crimes, that they needed their questions answered. “Why would someone do this? What is wrong with them?”

When DeCamilla fell in love with the process of digging up the childhood of serial killers and getting to the bottom of cold cases, she knew it was going to be a lifelong love interest.

School and style

Electric blue, tropical pink, wild orchid purple and fire engine, stop the room red.

Ever since she was 11 years old (the first time she dyed her hair) DeCamilla has always had a unique way of expressing herself. She loved to stand out, and for her, colored hair felt like the right way to do that.

“I remember quite a bit of red,” VTSU Castleton Communications Professor David Blow said.

“She always had really bright hair,” said fellow Communications Professor Sam Davis-Boyd.

“I think she had bright pink hair when she first joined my class,” Communications Department Chair Michael Talbott said.

As it was not common in her developing years for people to be walking around with full heads of neon, “unless you shopped at Hot Topic and wore baggy jeans with chains,” dying her hair was an important part of who DeCamilla was. She liked being remembered as the girl with bright hair who, instead of baggy jeans, wore Uggs and splattered her bubbly personality all over you.

“It hurts my soul to have to have this boring brown hair. But, colorful hair is more common now, so I like to think that I can blend in and STILL stand out,” DeCamilla said.

College started slow for DeCamilla. She began at a



COURTESY OF JANA DECAMILLA

Jana and her family posing for a New Years photo.

college prep school when she was 18 but knew she was “in no way ready to be there.” So, the young adult started to waitress at “The Lagoon” in Lake George instead.

“I got her published in the Lake George Mirror, about the Lagoon, and I think it ignited a little bit of a spark. She always liked to write, but I think she had fun getting published,” Blow said.

But writing was in her veins prior to meeting Blow. In April of 2019, DeCamilla published her first book on Amazon called “Scarlet’s Angel.”

“She was always a great communicator and those are skills you need for writing,” Talbott said.

About three years after starting at the Lagoon, in January 2016, 21-year-old DeCamilla had her first son, Cire, and she

knew she needed to give the college world another try.

The following year she started her college journey at SUNY Adirondack, located in Queensbury New York. At the time, the school had a partnership with VTSU Castleton where you could get in-state tuition if you went for your bachelor’s degree. After receiving her associate’s degree in creative writing at SUNY, she headed to Castleton, but this time in Communications.

Once DeCamilla was two years deep in creative writing, she realized that it was unrealistic for her to pay bills by writing crime fiction. That’s when she found the communications program, but she wasn’t sure the news world was for her.

“I don’t wanna tell someone else’s story,” DeCamilla said with passion.

With a little time and various classes, DeCamilla realized that someone’s story can be just as much fun, if not more, than the stories she could spin in her head.

She started off great, driving to Castleton each day from her house, located near the Vermont-New York border. Then came COVID, and she was forced to finish classes online.

Thanksgiving that year looked a little different than usual for DeCamilla and students, Marty Kelly, Jake McCarthy, and Sophia Buckley-Clement.

Not a lot of people were willing to volunteer their time to personally fill cars of those less fortunate with holiday goods, but DeCamilla, while seven months pregnant, was one of four who did.

See “Jana” on page 6

Only Bod Pod in Vermont looking to expand to the public



TORI RAYMOND

Vermont's only Bod Pod is located in Jeffords.

By Tori Raymond
Spartan Contributor

Doing an accurate lab requires many different methods and equations, and for certain labs on body mass studies, that involves a collection of data from a skin fold.

There are all different types of equations that represent the parts of each individual de-

pending on factors like age, gender and race.

One day in one of Health and Exercise Professor Andrea Corcoran’s classes, a problem became evident. One student’s race and ethnicity were not in the textbook or anywhere online for equations. There weren’t any equations made for this person to use.

“I was mortified because

I’m not just going to tell the student just pick something else that’s not you,” Corcoran said in a recent interview.

That’s when Corcoran decided something needed to change to make sure this wouldn’t happen again.

“We needed to start collecting data and make our own equations that then sometime in the future, when a student who doesn’t fit into one of the categories for whatever reason... Now we have equations,” she states.

The equations weren’t quite enough to fulfill Corcoran’s desire to create the most accurate formulas to calculate body fat percentage though.

Through thorough research, she decided a machine known as the Bod Pod would be the most effectively accurate way to track and calculate someone’s body’s true weight distribution.

The Bod Pod is a large machine that uses air displacement to determine someone’s body fat percentage and muscle mass to find a true weight. It sits at about six feet tall and has a simple plastic sitting place inside.

It’s used to help Corcoran

and her classes create the most accurate equations possible while asking everyone who uses the Bod Pod to also do a skin fold. Students are able to use the Bod Pod as a tool for independent research, which two students have done and been able to present their findings at conferences in Springfield, Massachusetts and Washington D.C.

Corcoran said there has also been some public interest of people wanting to use the Bod Pod to simply know their body composition in general.

“The goal one day is to turn that room into a health and exercise testing center so that not just people on campus, but even in the community, could sign up for a time slot to come and have their body composition done using this super accurate method,” Corcoran states.

Plans are already being set into motion for the testing center with the sign already hanging on the door. The vision is to have a public pathway into the building and have the room set up like a medical examination room. The public would be able to book appointments and have their testing done and get

their results after calculations are made by students.

The health and exercise students would be the interns conducting the testing and have the ability to gain in-field knowledge while working with the public on the Bod Pod in this center.

“This is the only Bod Pod in Vermont,” she said proudly.

Corcoran is keen on making this available to as many people as possible because of how incredible of an opportunity it is to have the Bod Pod here on campus in such a rural area.

“The more that we know, the more we know that percent body fat is really important to be thinking about and body composition in general and not just the value on the scale, because the scale doesn’t tell you whether you have body fat or muscle mass, so it’s kind of a key part on a health journey,” she states.

The two-part renovation needed for the Bod Pod to become publicly accessible has already begun with the second part of the renovation hopefully coming over the summer of 2025, she said.

Maddie on the street

By Madeleine Lindgren
Castleton Spartan



Question:

What are you thankful for and what's your favorite Thanksgiving food?



Anthony Persi
Junior

"This year I am thankful for the boys on the hockey team. My favorite Thanksgiving food has to be the stuffing."



Joe Russel
Graduate

"I am thankful that I will be able to spend Christmas at home this year. My favorite Thanksgiving food is definitely stuffing."



Ryan Macoy
Senior

"I am most thankful for moving to New England. My favorite Thanksgiving food is the Turkey."



Josh Peters
Senior

"I am a religious person so I am thankful for Jesus. My favorite food has to be the Turkey because my dad always fries it in peanut oil with cajun seasoning injections. I'm trying to make it myself this year."



Annin Daley
Junior

"I am thankful for my family, friends and my dog, Mac. My favorite food during Thanksgiving is probably mashed potatoes."



COURTESY OF WILLIAM DEFOREST

DeForest when he was in his twenties, above, and his home art studio.



COURTESY OF WILLIAM DEFOREST

Graphic Design professor Bill DeForest posing with the "Big Picture," in his office.

Becoming Bill

Castleton professor Bill DeForest discusses life and his career in graphic design

By Emily Ely
Castleton Spartan

Not many people would call the Oxford Dictionary their favorite book. And not many people would even have a nickname for this lengthy, comprehensive collection of words. But Bill DeForest does. He calls it the "OFD," by the way.

DeForest was a senior in high school when he became part of a group of regional scholars. Being a regional scholar required him to go to one scholar class a day and then spend the rest of his time doing an unlikely task.

"You have to sit by these fire alarms all day except for lunch and one class for the regional scholars. I didn't mind skipping class after that," the VTSU Castleton graphic design professor said.

He would often head over to SUNY Adirondack, a college near him in New York, to fill up the time he didn't spend sitting next to the fire alarm. He would peruse all the books and randomly pick one to read. The visits sparked his curiosity and inspired him to read books he would have never picked up otherwise. He was interested in many topics.

DeForest described his high school self as "shy" and a bit of a "misfit." But misfits are always bound to find each other, especially in high school.

"Eight or nine of us found each other. We called ourselves The 641 Club, which is the case of Matt's beer plus tax," DeForest said, reminiscing.

The band of misfits hung out together at their pal Ed-

die's.

"It was a farm outside of town with no parental supervision. That's where we would go to hang out. Ed Manor," DeForest said matter-of-factly.

He said he has kept in touch and remained best friends with almost all of the 641 Club members – except for Ed.

"He's missing now. No one can find him; he's just gone. Disappeared. We're still searching for him," DeForest said glumly.

DeForest's typical outfit in high school was almost the same every day.

"Levi jeans, work boots, a tee-shirt, and a denim jacket," he said.

He mimics this outfit decades later but switched the tee-shirt for "a short sleeve button-up front shirt."

"I never learned how to dress myself well," DeForest said, laughing and throwing his hands up in defeat.

Colby Tucker, a graphic design major and student at VTSU Castleton, has a personal relationship with DeForest outside of academics.

"Bill's my advisor. He started as my teacher, not really knowing if graphic design was it, and then I met Bill. He guided me through all of it. He runs the Content Lab, a club that I'm a part of. We're closer than just advisors and students. I think we're genuine friends," Tucker said.

Tucker was unsure how to describe Bill; there were no right words to truly show his character.

"Between you and me, I am working on a theory about time and the universe. BUT, it

is backed by physicists," DeForest remarked during an interview.

Unfortunately, the details are classified.

"He's someone you need to meet for yourself," Tucker said, laughing. "He introduced himself to me as the reverend of the Church of the Spiral Love Jelly," Tucker said.

DeForest discovered an online form to create your own church, and he knew that it needed to be his next adventure. He became the official ordained minister of his very own church, The Church of the Spiral Love Jelly.

"He's out there, and it's easy to get engaged with him. That's what happened to me," Tucker added.

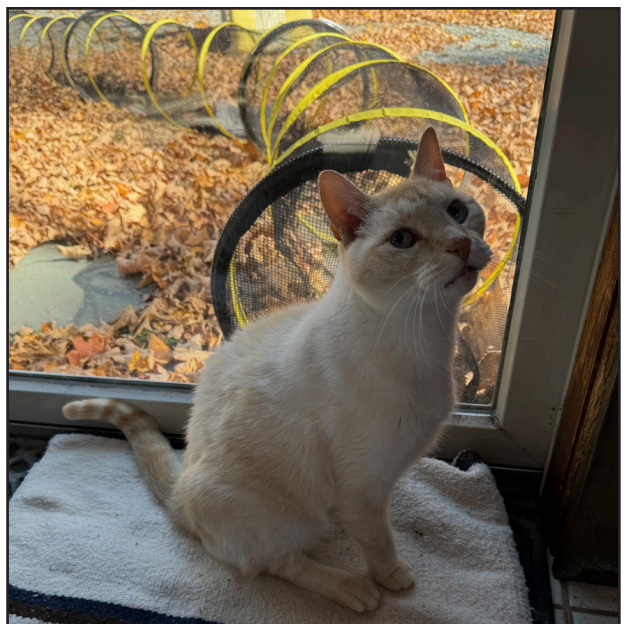
Like Tucker, many people began to interact and meet Bill through the graphic design program, but graphic design doesn't limit Bill and his creativity.

"I was living in Ithaca, New York. I was living a great life on a communal farm, bartending, painting, and teaching as an adjunct instructor in painting. My life was hilariously good," DeForest recalled.

But, he knew that this picturesque life couldn't last forever.

"I could see the writing on the wall and knew it wasn't going to last forever. I thought I should have some commercial art training, and I thought that medical illustration would fill that need," DeForest added.

He went to the Rochester Institute of Technology to pursue a master's in Medical Illustration with a concentration in computer graphics.



COURTESY OF WILLIAM DEFOREST

DeForest's cat Charlie with his lengthy outdoor tunnel behind him.

The coursework in this major included pre-med coursework, which involved human dissection.

"It was amazing, it was life-changing. It didn't answer some of the fundamental life questions, but it blew my mind," he said.

"The medical illustration program was where I first encountered Adobe creative products. My first love was Illustrator," DeForest said, sighing.

Medical illustration allowed him to explore other forms of art and sparked his creativity.

"That's when I got wicked into graphic design. I learned to love the white space. I love type, I love color, I love arranging things," he said. "In my se-

cret real life, I do paintings and drawings. I drew the human figure a lot, but now I mostly paint flowers."

DeForest lives in Poultney, Vermont. He bought his house in 2019. It was his very first home.

And his home is what every Vermonter dreams of. A picturesque piece of land with super tall maple trees. He describes his home as "parklike" as the maple trees line the land.

His home is complete with his art studio, something he never owned before. A place for his art, a place for him to explore his talents and become immersed in his "secret real life."

See 'Bill' on page 6

Balling on a budget: holiday edition

By Maddie Lindgren
Castleton Spartan

Balling on a Budget is a blog devoted to saving college students money. This week we are talking about holiday savings and how to keep it festive and reasonable!

With the holiday season coming up, we need to be prepared. As we all know, the holiday season is known for breaking the bank. Between getting that sweet pair of boots "for your sister" on Black Friday and finding your partner the perfect gift, things can get pretty pricey. Here are some must-know hacks on how to cruise through this season on a budget.

The Creative Gift: Do-It-Yourself Presents

Nobody needs another pair of socks, let's face it (unless they are themed socks, in which case, please). Get creative and embrace your inner Picasso! Homemade presents can be both sentimental and humorous. Think about creating something unique and personalized:

Customized mugs: Take a basic mug from Walmart and some Sharpies, then let your creative side run wild. The hand-drawn portrait of your friend appearing like a potato will be a hit with them.

Baked goods: Baking is a science experiment that results

in deliciousness, and everyone loves cookies or brownies. No fruit cake, though; no one likes a fruit cake.

Jars of memory: Put some inside jokes and amusing memories in a jar. This will make your friends and family laugh more than a dad joke because it's the idea that matters.

Framed photos: You know what my mom and grandmother love more than anything: a framed photo. You can print out pictures from Walmart for 65 cents, no joke. Then get a cute frame from Dollar General and you're golden. That family photo from your trip to the beach will be a hit!

Group Gifts for Secret Santa: Combine Your Resources

Get rid of the stress that comes with giving gifts alone. Get your friends together for a group gift or a Secret Santa! You can purchase something special for your best friend without going over your entire holiday budget if you set a budget (say \$20).

If you're feeling particularly festive, make it a "white elephant" gift exchange to add a unique touch. Who wouldn't like a funny garden gnome or a half-used candle that has a photo of Jesus on it? Just be ready for some friendly theft when exchanging gifts!

Budget-Friendly Holiday Events

The holiday season can feel

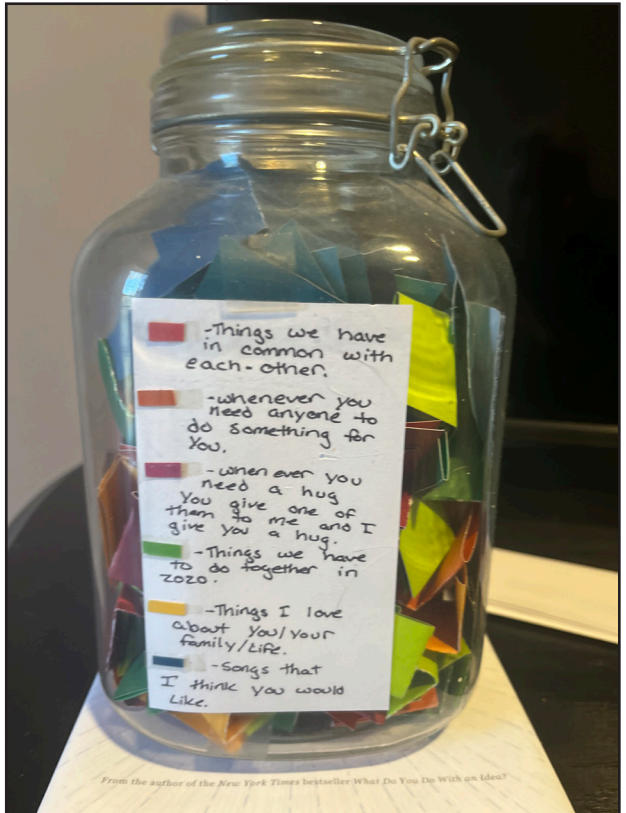
like a never-ending series of parties and events that require serious cash. But it doesn't have to be that way! Check out Castleton's calendar for free events, hosted by different groups on campus. Think holiday markets, tree lighting ceremonies, or even movie nights. Castleton has a holiday fair downtown every year where you can get cheap gifts that families will love.

Are you feeling ambitious? You can host your event! Grab a hot chocolate, whip up some popcorn, and binge-watch holiday movies in your dorm like Charlie Brown Thanksgiving or Elf. Ensure you're stocked up on the good snacks—those are non-negotiable.

Black Friday, Cyber Monday, and Student Discounts

It's coming up quickly! Since Halloween has passed, Thanksgiving is right around the corner, which means Black Friday deals are already on the rise. Make the most of your student discounts. What is the point of college without that student discount?

Since you are a student, you are eligible for many discounts! Student pricing is available at numerous establishments, including big brands like American Eagle, Nike, Aeropostale, Amazon, Apple, and plenty more. For more local ideas, Cloud 9 Cannabis in Fair Haven gives Castleton students a 10% discount on all purchases



MADDIE LINDGREN

A DIY jar full of memories and momentos given as a heartfelt Christmas gift.

es... just saying! Wave your ID around and see the costs drop, it's like having a magic wand!

Remember that spreading joy doesn't have to cost a fortune this holiday season. With a little DIY imagination, some savvy planning, and a little comedy, you can celebrate in

style without making your bank account sound like a depressing holiday carol. So, grab that hot cocoa, pull on your favorite sweater, and enjoy the benefits of being a college student. I wish you a happy holiday season and continued success with your savings!

Three artists present their senior exhibition

By Pearl Bellomo
Castleton Spartan

Immediately upon entering the Fine Arts Center, students, faculty and guests are struck with three captivating fine art collections displayed on the walls of the Christine Price Gallery.

The Senior Exhibiton 2024, comprised of work from senior artists Julie Griffith, Jorja McLeod and Matthew Stoddard, was assembled the week-end of Nov. 9 after months of planning, preparation and support from fine art professors Oliver Schemm and Phil Whitman to fulfill their Senior Exhibition graduation requirement.

“As we were putting up this show, people would come into the Fine Arts Center, and both students and faculty and visitors would literally stop in their tracks and be kind of taken aback by the scale of the work,” said Whitman. “That’s something that doesn’t always happen.”

Griffith, McLeod and Stoddard each have their own section of the gallery, which are simultaneously very different yet contain relationships and parallels with one another.

“All three of these seniors have different styles that I think work well together in this group show, but there is an energy and immediacy that is emanating from all the work that binds them together,” Schemm said.

Stoddard said he is inspired by “decay and time” and explained how his interests have broadened over time, beginning with abstract and then to surrealism, cubism, and contemporary styles. He has many different mediums on display as well, ranging from painting to sculpture, printmaking and digital art.

When discussing his multi-



The Senior Art Exhibit is currently on display until Dec. 21 in the Christine Price Gallery of the Fine Arts Center, showcasing work from Matthew Stoddard, left, Jorja McLeod, and Julie Griffith, right.

media 3D paintings, which include recycled materials such as Styrofoam, he explained that he “is very much into texture” and creating “ugly art.”

“[It’s about] Finding the beauty in old things, discarded things. Decay. Stuff that people have forgotten, and I kind of relate that to people who are downtrodden in society. Like the homeless, people struggling with drug use and stuff like that. People that society sort of ignores and kind of hides and wants to put away.”

Stoddard is grateful to Whitman and Schemm for teaching him new techniques, especially with creating 3D art, and said group critiques and collaboration during classes has been “incredibly valuable.”

Griffith noted how the “organic feel” of Stoddard’s work is similar to her own and went in-depth about her display entitled “Sea Level,” also containing her “Surfer Series.”

She revealed that the “Surfer Series,” a colorful, mixed

media body of work spanning the larger of her two wall spaces, originated while at the beach with her daughter.

“Three years ago, I went to the ocean with my daughter for the first time in the spring, and I saw this gentleman out on a surfboard waiting for a wave, and he was like the only one in the water because it was so cold. And it really struck me how detached he was from everything going on, all the craziness in the world. He was only just waiting for the wave,” she said.

Griffith immediately went home and drew the man from memory, thus originating a puzzle of imaginative scenes and characters that are “up for interpretation.”

“Sea Level” on the other hand, is mostly comprised of on-site portraits of her friends and family, tying in a sense of reality.

“There was something about the surfer series that was really pretty and took a ton

more time to apply the layers of paint and everything, but something was missing. But when I put them next to the portraits of my family, which are often really quickly done... they seem really meaningful compared to the surfer series.”

She said that learning to draw on site has been a “game changer,” and talked about the business skills she has learned at Castleton including portfolios and artists CVs they each made for the exhibit.

McLeod created a unique overlap with Griffith by including a portrait of her in her collection themed after social issues and mental illnesses.

“I’m really excited to be able to show all my work at once. Some people have seen a few of these pieces, but for the most part I’ve kept them kind of hidden away. They are very personal, and they needed to be shown together,” she said.

McLeod delves into a range of difficult subjects through her work, including depression,



CURTESY JULIE GRIFFITH

grief, body dysmorphia and loneliness. But she offers hope through specific pieces as well.

One of her favorite paintings is titled, “Look at Me,” which depicts lines representing stimulus overload and phrases often said to those with autism. Another, “Uncertainty,” is a self-portrait surrounded by hurtful things said to her personally.

McLeod shared that a specific goal of her work is to not be hyper-realistic.

“I still want it to look like a painting and not a photograph,” she said.

She named the Woolridge art house and Whitman and Schemm’s honest feedback as two driving factors in her artistic development.

“They’re always hard on us, and they always push us to do our best. If something’s not right with the artwork, they will tell you straight up about it...I appreciate that,” she said.

Schemm and Whitman expressed great pride in the

exhibit and these students’ growth throughout their time at Castleton.

“It has been a joy to work with these student-artists over the years, watching them find their artistic voice. Seeing them have stylistic breakthroughs and frustrations overcome. Mainly it’s watching them evolve to find their themes and visual vocabulary and building a body of work they are proud of,” said Schemm.

“We’re always proud of our senior shows, but this one is really exemplary,” added Whitman.

On Sunday, Dec. 8 from 5:30 to 7:30 p.m., Stoddard, Griffith, and McLeod will host a reception for the exhibit in the Christine Price Gallery with flashmob at 6:30. There will be music, refreshments, and a chance to answer questions about their artwork. They welcome all to attend!

‘Once Upon A Mattress’ reimagines a classic

By Maddie Lindgren
Castleton Spartan

Attending VTSU Castleton’s performance of “Once Upon a Mattress” was like walking into a fairy tale that got a little confused on its path to happily ever after—and I mean that in the best way possible. This three-hour adventure, which played from Nov. 14-17, was an elaborate retelling of “The Princess and the Pea,” complete with head-bobbing songs, funny characters, and a few moments that had you checking your watch.

The story revolves around Princess Winifred (“Fred” to her pals), who arrives in a kingdom with a no-marriage policy set by the intrusive Queen Aggravain. She’s introduced as the next contender to marry the desperate Prince Dauntless, but Fred is no average princess—she’s loud, unrefined, and, quite frankly, a queen in her own right. Watching her march to her drum (and swim an actual moat) was empowering and refreshing. The actress, Kathryn Osburn, played Winifred with fierce charm, making every scene she appeared in an optimistic performance.

Then there’s the strange relationship between Prince Dauntless and his mother, Queen Aggravain. Let us face the elephant in the room: their relationship was ... awkward. The queen’s obsession with keeping Dauntless to herself was so intense that it felt like a mama’s boy fever dream. However, props to the actors, Vidur Katyal and Siobhan Gallagher, for nailing this bizarre, unpleasant tension. The Queen’s dramatic dominance was cringe-worthy and captivating, and Dauntless’ eventual rebellion against his mother was satisfyingly enjoyable. When he eventually stood up to

his mother, the audience practically cheered and gasped—because we’d had enough of Aggravain’s controlling behavior.

Now, for the comedy standouts: the Jester, the Wizard, Prince Harry, and the Minstrel. These four stole every scene they were in, injecting much-needed brightness and excellent comedic timing into the show. The Jester’s antics and silly songs were witty and foolish, and the Wizard’s dry wit had the audience applauding. Prince Harry’s exaggerated chivalry and the Minstrel’s hilarious commentary gave the show a spark that kept it moving during its more drawn-out sections. But let’s not forget the King, who added an unexpected layer of comedy to the show. His character, cursed to be mute, relied on excessive physical humor that involved running around trying to “catch” women and get handsy. The actor, Hunter Day, was committed to the role of the King and brought uncomfortable to the stage.

Three hours is a long time to sit through any play, let alone one as openly whimsical as this. There were times when the speed slowed, and it felt like happily ever after would never come. However, the vibrant musical numbers and the cast’s dedication to the story drew us back.

Overall, “Once Upon a Mattress” was a mixed collection of wonderfully strange characters, awkward relationships, and some killer voices. It isn’t every day that you get to see a princess storm a castle (or a moat) while a jester and wizard argue in the background. While the play may have slightly overstayed its welcome, the cast’s charisma and the sheer ridiculousness of the plot made for one of the best plays that’s taken the stage yet.



MARTIN VAN BUREN III

Once Upon a Mattress hit the Casella stage last week, based on the classic tale “Princess and the Pea.”

Blog: It’s all consuming

By Jess Emery
Castleton Spartan

Hi! I’m Jess. I want to start consciously consuming media. And I want to help you do the same! I’m so sick of mindlessly scrolling on my phone, refusing to have a say on what I see and how it affects me. From now on I will be very purposeful with the books, films, articles, music, art, photography and podcasts I consume.

Listen up!
On YouTube I watched the Sierra Ferrell Tiny Desk Concert. She’s a folk and bluegrass singer. I listened to her music

while I was in London because her style of singing reminded me of home. Her Tiny Desk Concert was insane. Her voice live is incredible. I especially loved her performance of American Dreaming. I would cry if I saw her live in person.

Reading (except I’m not really enjoying it right now)

I’ve been reading this book called “No One Belongs Here More Than You” by Miranda July. It’s a collection of short stories and they get increasingly weird as you go along. I don’t remember exactly where this book was recommended, but for a while I was

into some super weird literature where everything is just me of slightly disturbing and uncomfortable and this book is no exception. Like, I’m actually having a hard time finishing the book it’s so fucking weird. So, I’ve been reading one of the short stories and then I read something else for a while and then come back to another short story. If you want to feel so uncomfortable and disturbed, I definitely recommend.

Movies!

I watched the movie X which is an A24 horror/thriller. And, um no one told me it was

a lot of porn and a lot of blood so that was actually shocking. I’ve been on a bit of a streak of encountering weird sexually disturbing media (refer to “No One Belongs Here More Than You”). Jenna Ortega’s character got her finger cut off and Mia Goth’s character was sexually assaulted by an old woman, but the old hag having missionary sex with her bag of bones husband could be considered the most frightening scene. I don’t mean it in an ageist way, but they were both covered in the blood of those they killed so like I don’t feel that bad for calling them old

okay. From my understanding, the premise of the movie is that when you age, you’re no longer attractive and your husband won’t have sex with you or else he’ll have a heart attack, and then you’re so horny that you kill people for some sort of satisfaction. A really hopeful and inspiring film.

Erm, you guys should check out Substack

I’ve been into Substack for a while, but I only recently started investing more time into the website. Substack is a website where writers and other content creators can publish newsletters of all their work.

You can subscribe to people’s blogs and donate money to help them out. I found some of my favorite small authors on Substack and I recently started publishing my own stuff on there. It’s a really low-pressure way to get your work out there but it feels more intentionally than say, Instagram or TikTok. It’s also really cool to know there are other writers out there who all relate to the same things. There’s something on Substack for everyone and it’s really inspiring.

Big reward is being offered for the killer of a bald eagle

By Gavin Bradley
Castleton Spartan

Five thousand dollars is always a respectable amount of money. That is precisely the reward the Vermont Fish and Game Commission offers the public for any information leading to a suspect for a crime that occurred on October 15. The crime committed wasn't just some crime. However, this event resulted in the death of a bald eagle. Officials

discovered that the Bald Eagle found near East Street in Bridport, Vermont, died from a gunshot wound. According to NBC 5, Investigators found metal pellets and wounds on the Bald Eagle that consistently gave off evidence of shotgun wounds. In addition, the bald eagle did have a research band on its leg. The band indicates that researchers have observed the bird in Vermont since August 2006. NBC 5 also recorded the thoughts of Warden Detective

Sergeant David Taddei: "Right now, we do not have a lot of information. We've done knocks and talks in the area surrounding residences," he said, "Basically, any leads that will generate a suspect for us, that's what we're looking for." (Haliaeetus leucocephalus), more formally known as the American Bald Eagle is a trendy animal. The bird has quite the reputation of being famous and is constantly linked to human ideas such as freedom and strength. The species is one

great example of a comeback story in conservation and is frequently used to show the benefits of working with a species population threatened with endangerment. The Bald Eagle population is so high that they were officially taken off the Endangered Species Act in August 2007. However, according to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service, the American Bald Eagle is still protected federally by the Migratory Bird Treaty Act. In addition, the species is

also protected by the Bald and Golden Eagle Protection Act. NBC 5 also states that the financial mentality for killing an Eagle in this manner can range between 15,000 and 100,000 dollars. In the end, there is no excuse for killing an American Bald Eagle. I genuinely hope that they find whoever killed this, and I hope that whoever did this beautiful animal finds their way in life. If you ever have a conflict with wildlife, don't hesi-

tate to contact your local fish and wildlife service. Wildlife experts would be more than happy to help you with any situation. The only situations I can think of that would be acceptable to kill a wild animal is if you are being attacked, are hunting, or accidentally hit an animal with your car. Killing a wild animal just for something to do is the purest form of stupidity and ignorance I can think of.

Bill:

"The walls are bright yellow and the ceiling is white and there are drawings and paintings of flowers," Tucker said. The yellow and white illuminate the studio making the space big and bright, an artist's dream. "An artist actually lived there before me. She put on some of the crazy patterns and paint, and I just went with them," DeForest adds. Unfortunately, his house has yet to be visited by his family. "They have not and will not make it up to Vermont to see my first ever home, my home. They just can't get it together," DeForest said without elaboration. But, DeForest has good company at home. Charlie is a creamy white, short haired cat, with three legs. According to DeForest, Charlie is the "heart and soul" of his home. Charlie is obviously well-tended-to and valued. He has his own personal fountain which he loves, and even though Charlie isn't technically allowed outside, DeForest makes exceptions. "He's a bit of a captive, I can't bring myself to let him just go outdoors anymore so I bought these mesh tunnels, it's like a cat habitrail," DeForest describes. The mesh tunnels are doz-

ens of feet long, extending throughout DeForest's backyard, with a large tent at the end that Charlie can visit as he pleases. Bill's house is a quick 15-minute jaunt from where he teaches, which makes it ideal with his busy schedule. His job is hectic and sometimes it seems like the emails never stop coming. "Email, Email, Email," DeForest said of how his day starts and ends the same way. "It seems that during the semester, the day and the week are never done. You get home and think of everything you need to do and the weekend comes and you try to get ready for the next week," DeForest said, smiling through the pain. But like many hardworking individuals, coffee keeps DeForest afloat. Tucker noted how Bill always had a coffee cup in his hand or at least within close proximity of him. "The secret that most people don't know is that I only drink decaf. I can't handle full caffeine, you don't want to see me. If I drink full caffeine I'm a fiend, it's too much. People think I'm a little wired already so full caffeine would be no good," DeForest laughed. DeForest started teaching at Castleton in 2017, and students

from the university like Zoe Ukasik flocked to his classes. "I heard about him before I even knew him. He's got a chaotic energy, and I like it. That's what makes him different from other teachers, and that's why I wanted to take a class with him. The chaos keeps you engaged," Ukasik said, smiling. Ruben Somda has only taken one class with him, but the impact he has had on their life is long-lasting. "He treats me like he knows me personally, which is something that I really appreciate when people do that. He is very invested in people," Somda said. Sam Davis-Boyd, a colleague in the Communications Department, describes him as "one of the most kind and energetic and friendly people that I know. I can't go anywhere with Bill without him, like, stopping to talk to pretty much almost every single person he meets because he knows everyone," Davis-Boyd said. Davis-Boyd told how after she was first hired to work at Castleton University. She was living in California and needed to find housing near the university, but it was hard to actually look for a place for obvious reasons. "Bill was in the process of purchasing a home in Poul-



COURTESY BILL DEFOREST
Professor DeForest dressed up as a Star Wars Jedi.

ney that had an attached apartment that he was planning to rent out. And he very kindly, before his own deal had even gone through, said, 'As long as the deal goes through, y'all can live here,'" Davis-Boyd recalled. The first year of her and her wife's life at Castleton was spent living in an apartment attached to his home.

Board:

Also (discussed) on Monday night, the board revealed the draft 2025-2026 operating budget. Residents can expect a 2.9% or a 7.6% tax jump depending on if the budget includes a \$200,000 increase for highway paving and fire department reserves. The 2.9% increase is the result of a \$124,611 increase stemming mostly for wage and benefits increases, said Town Manager Mike Jones. "That's a low number, \$124,000 dollars, we've only done that one other time in the last six years," Jones said. If paving and fire department reserve costs are included, the increase would be \$324,611 representing the 7.6% increase. The total proposed budget for 2025-2026 is \$4,384,951, up from last year's budget of \$4,238,000. In a follow up interview, Jones said the operating budget was "pretty bare bones" and there is little to no unnecessary expenditures. "We've cut that [the budget] down so much over the last six years that there's not much to cut anymore," he said. In other news: •The board deliberated on whether or not to continue maintaining three private roads: Higgins, Cedar Mountain, and Gump. One road used to house a disabled child, and the town needed to ensure the school bus had access during the winter months. Another road provides access to a town sewer, while the third one is split between town (state) land and private property. "We either need to maintain all private roads, or we need to maintain none," stated Selectman Steele. •Chris Immel, the town's former tree warden, cited concerns about eight overhanging trees on Main Street. "They either need to be pruned out or cut down because they're a danger. We've had trees falling on people," he said. •The board reappointed Police Chief Peter Mantello as Emergency Services Voter and Mike Jones as Emergency Manager Director as Castleton's representatives to the Regional Emergency Management Committee •The Castleton Fire Department will withhold an \$800 payment to McGee Ford after not receiving a trailer hitch despite purchasing a tow package.

Jana:

"I remember her out by the road with her big belly and waving people in," said Blow, who at the time was leading the holiday drive as part of a Media Ethics class. "It made an impact on me." Marty Kelly, current SGA graduate assistant at VTSU Castleton, DeCamilla's former Media Ethics classmate and current Strategic Marketing Management classmate, remembers her being the first Castleton student he got to see in person that year. "It said a lot about her that she was willing to drive an hour out of her way to volunteer with a baby at home and being pregnant," Kelly said. But DeCamilla is always putting others before herself, including student Lance Robinson, from Blow's Media Writing class that produced the book "COVID Chronicles." DeCamilla was part of the College Steps program and would meet with Robinson on Zoom once a week to help him stay on track with assignments. "I just always want to help and give back," DeCamilla said. DeCamilla, who was not enrolled in the class, was asked by Blow if she wanted to be included in the book because of how driven Blow said she was. She jumped at the chance and wrote about her old car and the drives to escape she took with her son during COVID. When the end of 2021 finally rolled around it was time for DeCamilla to graduate—but she wasn't alone. Three weeks prior, she had birth to her second child, Monarch. "I was so sad we couldn't have an in-person graduation, I wanted to bring this little nugget," DeCamilla said, while holding up her now 3-year-old daughter who was wearing a yellow and black sunflower dress with Band-aids on both knees from falling earlier that day. But her graduation wasn't where her education ended. The now 29-year-old is back at VTSU Castleton working at her MBA in business communication. "She is a nontraditional student but was always very focused when coming back because she loves getting the most out of everything," said Talbott.

Career

Toward the end of her first stint at Castleton DeCamilla got an internship at the Chaffee Art Center in Rutland, Vermont. The director of the Art Center later offered her a makeshift position because of how much

she loved the neon haired bubbly gal. DeCamilla wasn't sure what to do, so she went back to waiting tables. About a month back into the world of rude customers, under tippers, and cleaning up disgusting messes, DeCamilla received the text that would shape her whole career. Imessage from Dave Blow: "Hey, there's an opening at the Post-Star." "Ugh, I don't wanna live in Glens Falls forever, and I don't even know if I wanna work in news," DeCamilla said re-enacting her initial thoughts. Despite the hesitation, she applied for a reporter position. After only a week, it was clear to DeCamilla that her heart was in the news. Later into the 2023 year, DeCamilla set a goal for herself; "Within the next five years, I want to break into broadcasting," she said. "That was weird because that had never crossed my mind before." Her professors weren't surprised. "She always sets high goals for herself. It is fun and exciting to see her journey in what she is doing," said Davis-Boyd. After just six months, DeCamilla got her current job as digital content producer at WRGB CBS6 News in Albany and was soon pregnant with child number three. Daily tasks now include website reporting, working ahead on projects, some managerial tasks for the assignment desk. But she wanted more. "I wanted a passion project," DeCamilla said. In April 2024, Evidence Room was born and what started off as something she was going to dabble with, is now a successful podcast with 23 episodes focusing on the nitty gritty of cold cases. "I call it my fourth child," DeCamilla said with pride.

Family

Episode one of Evidence Room came out the same week DeCamilla's father passed away. The strong mother of three and new fiancée did not stop when things got hard, but Instead, she overcame. "I'm gonna make him proud. I like to think that the Evidence Room is for him," DeCamilla said, through tears. Her father knew about her podcast and even though he couldn't watch it on YouTube, she knows he is somewhere seeing it. The mother of three children, Cire, Monarch and Kenzo, also recently got engaged to her longtime partner Stakk M Kennedy.



COURTESY JANA DECAMILLA

Before meeting Kennedy, the single mom at the time would walk down the street while pushing Cire in his stroller. It was to her surprise that Kennedy used to see her and knew that someday "she was gonna be his girl." In December of 2018, DeCamilla and Kennedy officially met through mutual friends. After a month of hanging out and becoming each other's companions, they both knew there was something more there than a friendship. Fast forward to the end of 2021, when DeCamilla and Kennedy had their first child together, Monarch. DeCamilla's first child, Cire, is 8-and-a-half years old and known as the family politician. He will debate with anyone until he gets them to agree with him. "I never met a young child so political with their answers," DeCamilla added. Cire is from her previous relationship. She met his father when she was 12 and had their baby boy at age 21. Her first tattoo was the father's name and was placed on her left shoulder. Now, it's covered by a big, beautiful, yellow flower that took three sessions to complete. "That tattoo was the last pain I had to feel from that relationship. Now I have this big beautiful thing, and an amazing boy to replace all the bad mem-

ories," DeCamilla said, giving a tour of her tattoos. Monarch, 3, the middle baby. The sweet-mannered toddler has an incredible love for animals and already knows she wants to be a vet when she grows up. "People come up to me and say that she is the sweetest kid. She will come up and rub your face while telling you how beautiful you are," DeCamilla said. Kenzo is the youngest at 2. He is "out of this world smart," can hold complete sentences, state the whole alphabet, and tell you that his favorite shape, the triangle, has three sides with three angles, DeCamilla said. Kenzo also happens to be the last of DeCamilla's children...ever. She had a medical scare when he was born, with both of them in danger. Kenzo is now known in the family as being the happiest baby ever. "We always say how he is the definition of just happy to be here, literally," DeCamilla shared. DeCamilla explained how one of her favorite things that she carried into her motherhood was a favorite childhood memory of watching movies as a family in the living room. "I'm like come on guys, let's watch a movie. Then we all pile on in my bed," DeCamilla said while smiling at her

children. The family of five lives in a three-bedroom apartment between Albany and Saratoga. The white doors of the kids' rooms are decorated with a theme of their choice. Monarch's door is covered in pink and purple stickers matching the color of the LED lights that cover her bedroom walls, surrounding her room full of toys. "I have been told it looks like a toy store," DeCamilla said of not only the bedroom but the whole house. While DeCamilla answered questions, Monarch and Kenzo were on her lap, screaming for attention. "The Nightmare Before Christmas" movie was on TV, DeCamilla's phone is repeatedly buzzing with work messages. "I apologize for the caffeine induced giggles," DeCamilla said. Kennedy walks into the bedroom to finally save DeCamilla from their screaming children. "What's poppin?" he said. Now, finally getting relief from the piercing screams of her overly tired kids, she said through a yawn, "I'm going to try and take a nap while these children rest. I feel like I'm 29 going on 45."

New look this season for women’s hoops

By Stone Stelzl
Castleton Spartan

Behind the doors of Glenbrook Gym on Nov. 10, the Spartans women’s basketball team started their season on a high note by defeating in-state rivals, Norwich, 63-55.

Despite the quick start, the Spartans fell in both their games during the Cardinal Classic the following week where they took on Plattsburgh State losing 52-45 and SUNY Potsdam falling 59-45.

Leading the way for team in scoring this year so far has been junior Emily Adams, who is averaging 10 points and six rebounds a game so far. Adams is one of the few returning starters from last season.

The Spartans this season have a much different look than previous season after the graduation of Elise Magro, however although it might be a different look the team is no longer struggling with limited numbers.

“We have a young team, no seniors with five freshmen with a roster of 11. That is big numbers for us though, and it’s huge we can practice and go five versus five unlike last year. We are working out the little things like talking and defense,” Adams said. “We lost two of our leading scores from last year, Liz (Bailey) and Elise, so we need pick it up on offense and have confidence when attacking the basket. We struggled with offense at the Plattsburgh tourney, but we all understand that we need to shoot the ball. I think we can be very successful this year once we adjust to our new team.”

Even with the young team and adjustments that are different from last season, the team continues to have high expectations.

“We’ve started a little slower than we would’ve liked but there is always room for us to improve on it. We have high expectations for ourselves, but other people don’t see us amounting to anything this year because of who we lost. This team is super close and we’re all ready to go out and prove people wrong this year,” said freshman Emily Trepanier.

The Spartans look to get back on track when they host the Spartan Classic on Nov 22-23, which will see the team host the University of Maine-Farmington and Hartwick College. The Spartans topped University of Maine-Farmington last season 59-42, however it might take a different approach this time as then the Spartans were led by their two headed monster of Magro and Bailey from last season.

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CASTLETONSPORTS
Emily Adams, coming off a screen to drive the hoop against Norwich.

Spartans stellar season comes to an end

By Wyatt Jackson
Castleton Spartan

Coming off an impressive regular season, the Castleton field hockey team felt confident going into the LEC tournament. The team was riding a nine-game winning streak coming into their semifinal matchup against Southern Maine.

The Spartans won a nail biter against Southern Maine 2-1 to advance them into the championship. Senior captain Haley Lassen was encouraged by the gritty win.

“I think our win against Southern Maine showed our team has some fight because we had to come back in that game,” Lassen said.

Head coach Emily Douglas thought the defense is what ultimately prevailed the Spartans into their win against Southern Maine.

“I feel like we definitely played a defensive heavy game. Our defense is what really held us together in that game. You know, we had some good opportunities in front of the net and thank God we did, but it was a very back and forth game and our defense really held us together,” Douglas said.

The win sparked a rematch with Keene State in the championship game. They were able to defeat Keene 6-1 in a regular season matchup but the team knew they would get Keene’s best effort in the rematch. The game came down to the wire and the Spartans fell just short of claiming the LEC tournament championship, losing 3-2. Douglas sensed a disconnect within the team throughout portions of the championship game.

“Lack of connection, we just had an off day. There were moments where it was not the way we typically play and I think we just had about 5 to 7 minutes where it was evident we weren’t able to recover from that,” Douglas said.

Although execution wasn’t on par with what Douglas was looking for, she believed the girls played their hearts out to win that game.

“I mean it, there’s nothing that I could really say that was going to make them feel better. It wasn’t the outcome that any of us wanted. I don’t believe that anyone could walk away and say they didn’t give everything they had. It wasn’t a lack of effort,” Douglas said. “It was a lack of connection but I told them, you hold your head high because we were still regular season champs, we still hosted this championship, and yeah it was a really close game but there’s no regrets after that.”

Graduate assistant Alexis Ruiz felt the team had a phenomenal season and that they should be proud of how much they were able to accomplish. Although they weren’t able to accomplish their ultimate goal, Ruiz has kept spirits high.

“I definitely had given them their space after the championship loss just because it was on our home turf and obviously, we don’t get rewarded for second so I definitely let them have their time to themselves,” Ruiz said. “When the girls have been coming in for their meetings or seeing them in the hallway, I’ve been congratulating whoever won their accolades and letting them know that we have time for next year. And obviously for the captains just telling them that they did everything they can,” Ruiz added.

Throughout the season, Ruiz was appreciative of the trust built within the coaching staff. Being a former player, Ruiz recognizes how things vary over the course of a season. Having the ability to make adjustments and putting trust in both the coaching staff and players was notable.

“Trust as a whole from both the coaching staff and the girls was valuable with us working together and developing that trust coming into the season till the end of the season,” Ruiz said. “Whether it’s film or how they played, anything in that realm, I think trust was definitely built so that really helped within the season within the coaching staff and the players.”

As the team steps into the offseason, they believe they have the talent to put themselves back in contention for another shot at the LEC title next season. Lassen, who is an intense but compassionate leader, saw how mature this group of underclassmen handled themselves this season. She sees a bright future for the team as they look to continue pushing a well-established culture.

“Moving forward, I wanna see more championships. I came into a rebuilding year as a first-year player and I think we’ve instilled the core values of honesty, trust, and respect for one another which has helped us be successful,” Lassen said. “The underclassmen this season stepped into leadership roles immediately and held each other accountable from day one. Most young players don’t feel comfortable taking on that responsibility but this class has shown the ability to drive their teammates.”

Douglas believes the team will be hungry and driven this offseason as the team looks to avenge a disappointing end to the 2024 season.

“I definitely think we’re gonna focus a lot on improving our culture, especially as the season goes on. I think the culture kind of changes a little bit as the pressure gets put on,” Douglas said. “There’s a lot happening but being able to keep the culture that we emphasize and push in August all the way through November, I think we could work on that but I think just the fundamentals and our fitness is something we always focus on in the spring. A lot of us are going to really wanna put in additional work because we were right there this season and we know we could be right back in this position next fall so it’s important that we are consistent with our training and focus to help us have a better outcome next season.”



Jess Smithson, left, celebrates after one of the Spartans goals against Keene State. the Spartans gather together to celebrate after bringing the game to within one, right.



KATIE STAGER

Women’s hockey off to solid start



CASTLETONSPORTS
Junior forward Meg Aiken getting set to take a faceoff against Albertus Magnus.

By Jackson Edwards
Castleton Spartan

The Castleton Women’s Ice Hockey team is underway in their season and off to a strong start of 3-1-1. Last season, the Spartans finished sixth in their conference and lost to Williams Smith in the first round of playoffs. This hasn’t sat well with the girls and they’ve made changes to ensure it. The coaching staff brought in six freshmen this off-season; forwards Brooke Noble, Madeline Corrigan, and Caris Erickson. Defensemen Olivia Carter, and Morgan Arscott. Along with Goalie Gianna McCusker. Some are making an immediate impact.

The home opener was against Plymouth State on the Nov 6. Junior Rachel McNeil faced off against her own sister for what would be the last time. The Panthers had a quick start, scoring 23 seconds into the contest. They followed that up with another goal coming from the rival sister seven minutes later to go up 2-0. The Spartans rallied after the harsh first period with netminder Victoria Bakopanos not letting up another goal the rest of the way.

In the second period, freshman defenceman Olivia Carter picked up her first NCAA goal in her first game to bring the game within one. Then in the dying minutes of the period, fifth-year Alex Johnson picked off a pass from a Panthers player for a breakaway which she slotted home five-hole. The third featured tight-checking and fast-paced play but the Spartans held the majority of possession. Yet, nobody could break the tie. Until, Alex Johnson once again gets sprung on a breakaway by a broken play and she made no mistake putting the puck up under the bar with authority. 3-2 come back completed in the home opener.

Just days later, our Spartans hosted The University of Southern Maine, an unofficial in-conference rivalry opponent. The two squads always compete in heated matches, resulting in a fun watch. These two games were no different. The first was an extremely tight 1-1 hockey game that went deep into a shootout. Moa Carlson, junior assistant captain and all-conference forward last season scored first for the Spartans. The Huskies bit back in the second to even it out and the rest of the way was scoreless. The shootout went six rounds but ultimately went the way of the Wolves. The game

Saturday evening was slightly more frustrating for our women in green. They fell 3-1 with the only goal coming from Carlson once again and too little too late.

This past weekend Albertus Magnus came to The Spartan Arena to face off. It was a blood bath on Friday with a victorious 12-3 effort from the girls. Captain Emery Bonner got in on the scoring for her first of the season and had three helpers, along with fellow assistant captain Meg Aiken who had a goal and two assists, and of course, Moa Carlson who tucked away her third of the year along with two apples. A mention should also be made to Junior forward Ellie Schliebener who had two goals and two assists and is a big part of the top line with Meg and Moa.

The girls came back the next day and came out with a 2-1 win in overtime. Freshman Brooke Noble scored first, she also had two goals and two assists the night before. Pretty good start to her career here. Albertus found a way to tie it in the second, but the girls would not go down. In overtime, Meg Aiken set up sophomore Taylor Adams for the winner. The weekend sweep bodes well for the girls moving forward.

Early season struggles for the Spartans

By Lauren Fotter
Castleton Spartan

The 2024–2025 season for the Spartans men’s hockey team has begun. It has been hard for the Spartans to get going this season since some of their key players have been unavailable.

Senior Bryce Irwin, will miss the remainder of the season due to a leg injury. Other guys have also had dislocated shoulders and ankle injuries, which are hopefully expected to heal shortly.

The first game was against Plattsburg and the second was against a new team, Keene State. Plattsburg was a tough game, as expected because they are the number 9 team in the nation. Despite goals from Dylan Roebuck, Justin Stairs, and Josef Vyvial, the Spartans struggled against the Cardinals, who outshot them 44-14. Plattsburgh scored twice, and the Cardinals capitalized on a

power-play and shorthanded goal, ultimately securing their victory with late goals in the second and third periods. The boys ultimately lost 6-3, but with an outstanding effort.

The next day they went on to play Keene State, a new hockey program that had just been started this year. The boys ended up tying Keene State 1-1 in regulation but lost 2-1 in a shootout. Castleton took the lead early in the game with a goal from Andrew Stefura, assisted by Emmett McHardy and Bryce Irwin. Keene equalized midway through the first period, and despite strong goaltending from Josh Ward, the game went to overtime and then a shootout. After a tied shootout round, Keene scored the game-winning goal giving them their first win in program history.

Due to a change in the scheduling, all conference teams will now face each other back-to-back this sea-

son. The Spartans faced the top-ranked Hobart College in their first back-to-back conference matchup. They lost 3-1 despite strong goaltending from Josh Ward, who made 33 saves, Hobart took a 2-0 lead in the second period. Castleton responded with a goal from Jackson Edwards in the third, but Hobart sealed the win with a third goal, handing the Spartans their first conference loss.

The next day the boys were very ready for another strong performance in hopes of securing their first conference win, but they fell short again, this time 3-0. Despite another strong performance from goaltender Josh Ward, who made 38 saves, it wasn’t enough. Josh Ward had some thoughts after the game, “I thought the team played hard, we showed what were capable of against one of the top teams in this country and we need to carry that out in the coming weeks.” Hobart scored the only goal

in the second period, and two more goals in the third sealed the victory. Hobart extended their unbeaten streak to 29 games and left the Spartans with another loss.

The Vermont State University Castleton men’s hockey team was defeated 3-2 by Albertus Magnus on the road Friday night in a New England Hockey Conference game. The match started fast, with Albertus taking a 1-0 lead early, followed by a quick equalizer from Dylan Roebuck for Castleton. After a solid performance by both goalies—Josh Ward making 28 saves for Castleton and Chance Hale stopping 32 shots for Albertus—the Falcons capitalized on a powerplay in the second period to regain the lead. They extended it further with another goal late in the period. Castleton made a strong push in the third, outshooting Albertus 13-3, but couldn’t find the equalizer. The loss marked Al-

bertus’ first conference win of the season.

The following day they were back but fell short in overtime. After Albertus took an early 1-0 lead, Castleton responded with a strong second period, including Luke Chakrabarti’s first collegiate goal and Cam Reid’s first of the season, giving the Spartans a 2-1 lead. Josef Vyvial added a powerplay goal to extend Castleton’s advantage to 3-1. Dominic Rodrigue had an impressive performance in net with 47 saves, but Albertus fought back in the third period, tying the game at 3-3. In overtime, Albertus capitalized on a rebound off a missed shot to secure the game-winner.

The boys are back at Spartan Arena, Nov. 22-23 playing Skidmore where they look to secure their first win of the season.



LUKAS DALFONSO Cedrick Theodore, 24 and Josh Ward celebrate.

The big jump from H.S. to D3

By Isiah Hughes
Castleton Spartan

Sam Steinman was shocked coming into his freshman year of baseball at VTSU Castleton. After thinking he was a D1 talent after coming off an all-state final season in high school, he instead settled to play for Castleton’s D3 program.

But even D3 provided him with a huge reality check.

“Seeing how much bigger, stronger and faster everyone was, was eye opening,” Steinman said.

He had gone from on top of the world in high school to coming to the realization that, “No one in college is ass,” said friend Tyler Dubreuil, seated nearby during a recent interview.

High school sports were “more of a side quest,” for Emma Caskey, who plays on VTSU Castleton’s women’s lacrosse team. She was the best on her team in high school, and even “taught them how to play defense.” But when she got to college, she was on the bench with an injury and had a hard time transitioning due to the mental pressures of her college sport. Caskey soon came to realize sports in college were much more serious.

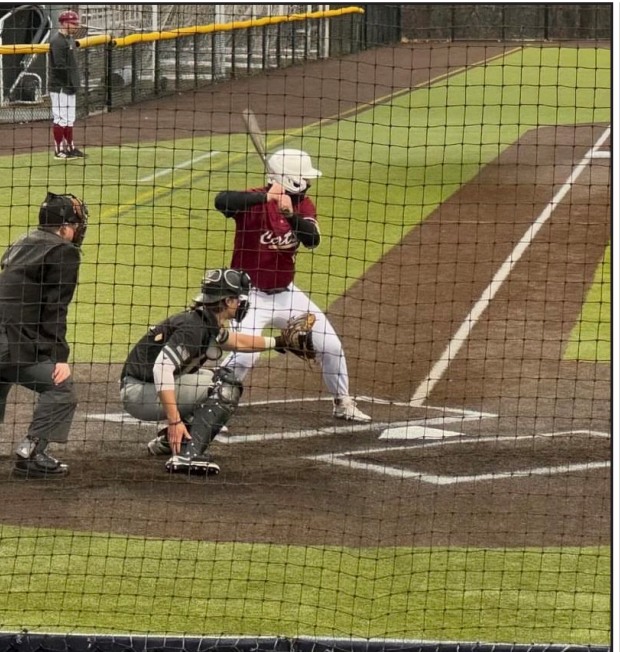
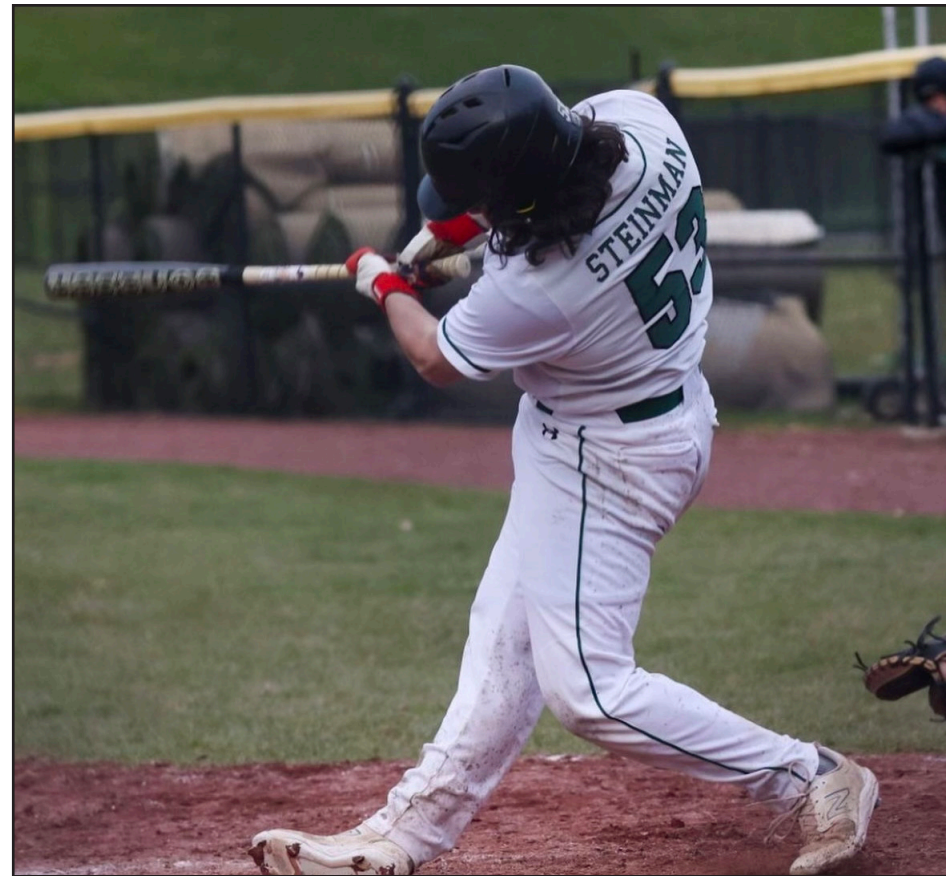
After interviewing 18 VTSU Castleton athletes, there was one thing that they all had in common: they all said the level of competition and intensity of practice and competition is so much greater in college.

The wrestling team is one of the most successful programs at VTSU Castleton and it all makes sense, because “the amount of intensity in that room is crazy,” said VTSU Castleton wrestler Desmond McLaughlin.

The wrestling team has managed to become a top 10 ranked program in the nation for D3 and it is directly related to that level of intensity they practice with, team members said.

Andrew Marchese, also known as the “Cheeseman,” said the transition from high school to wrestling for one of the top D3 wrestling teams in the country “was hard and my teammates pushed the pace but even the intensity of the wrestling room could not prepare the Cheeseman for the level of competition ahead of him as his welcome-to-college-wrestling moment came in his first ever college match. Marchese was seeded 5th and his opponent was not even seeded. Marchese said he thought he had an easy win and underestimated his opponent and got “walked.”

But the intensity of college



Baseball player Sammy Steinman top left, Jordan Hill and friend top right, basketball player Dyvan Hevey middle right, Emma-Claire Caskey lacross sophomore bottom right, catcher Micheal Lodge bottom middle, and wrestler Andrew Marchese bottom left.

sports is still prevalent regardless of the success of the program.

Dyvan Hevey is a first-year international student from Singapore who came to VTSU

Castleton to play on the basketball team that has struggled for years. Despite the team’s lack of success, he said the adjustment was huge.

“I’m still making adjustments. It’s hard” said Hevey, who comes from an Asian country where the average height is 5’6.”

He said he was a star on his team there and did not work as

hard and treated basketball like a hobby, because he focused on other things like girls and being popular.

“No one back home could play basketball out here,” he said, his voice rising.

The intensity change is not the only thing freshman athletes go through when they get to college. They say there is also a mental aspect to it that comes with the transition as well.

Jordan Hill, a junior on the VTSU Castleton softball team, felt looked down upon because she was a walk-on for the team

and felt like she was not on the same level as the upper-class students. The transition was very stressful for her.

Hill’s welcome-to-college moment came during her first game. She was playing first base and a ball was hit her way and she dropped it, leading to her getting yelled at by the coach making her even more stressed. But she brushed that off and quickly adjusted and became a starter the next season.

One of the biggest things high school athletes need to know about college sports is

the level of commitment that comes with it.

Tien Connor is an assistant coach for the VTSU Castleton women’s lacrosse team, who talked about how everyone is good in college and in order to keep up with the competition you must be committed to succeed.

“You need to commit to your sport like it was your career,” Mike Lodge said.

VTSU Castleton baseball player Mike Lodge went through a lot of struggles to the point where baseball did become like a job for him.

“But I love it” said Lodge.

Having to balance schoolwork, lifts and baseball was hard for him but he stayed with it and committed himself to the game, eventually earning a starting spot.

Regardless of sport or level, the transition from high school to college sports is never easy and athletes say it will come with many trials and tribulations, but everyone is there for a reason and that is to continue to grow and get better.

“It becomes your life when you get to college,” said VTSU Castleton player Mike Malloy.

Spartans end disappointing season at 3-7



Mike Morrissey, 8, helps out on a tackle against Western Connecticut in their last game, and the team celebrates a defensive stop, right.

AVERY BOUCHARD