THE HAWKS' NEST

Volume I, Issue 4 FEBRUARY 2025

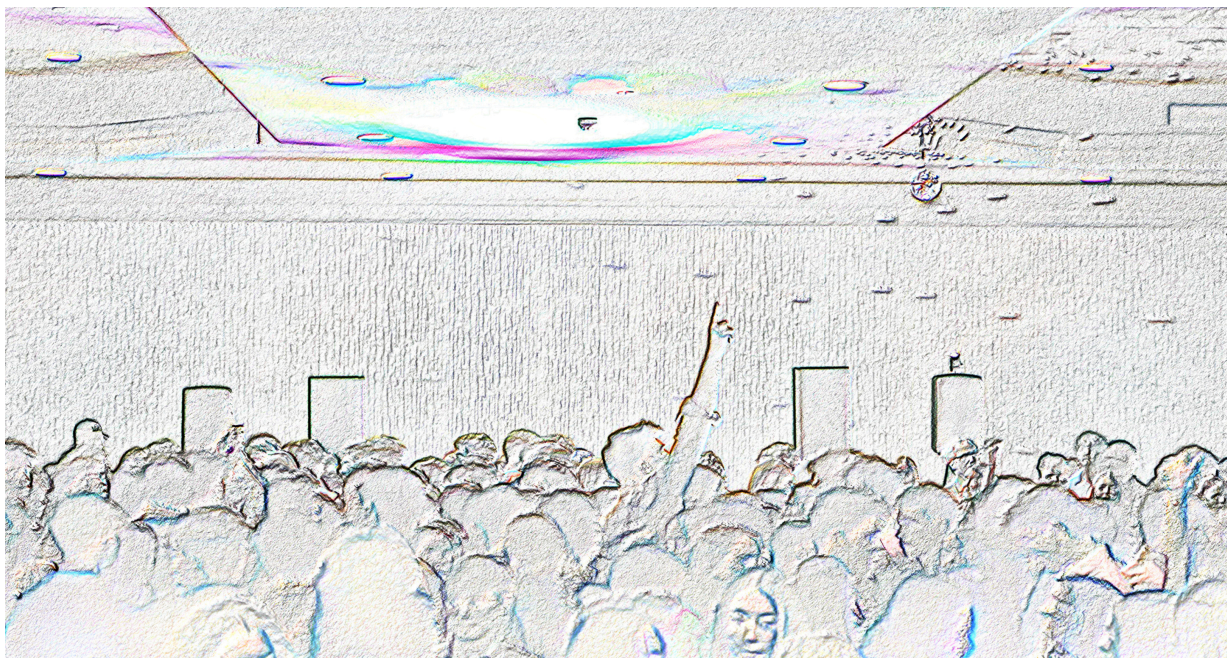


Photo illustration derived from photography by Theo Novak '28
CVU held its Winter Ball on February 8th at the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton Burlington.

CVU participates in 30th Annual Penguin Plunge

Cecilia Marino
Staff Writer

This year, hundreds of community members from across the state gathered to celebrate the 30th annual Penguin Plunge.

The event, created for the increased awareness and resources of Vermont Special Olympics, has been touching the hearts of Vermonters for three decades.

On February 8th, Plunge-goers saw participants ranging across all age groups, with representatives from Williston's very own Allen Brook School all the way to their grandparents taking the Plunge into the frozen Lake Champlain.

This, if nothing else, serves as a reminder that we can all find common ground in this work for equity and accessibility, no matter school, age, or location.

First established in 1995, the Penguin Plunge was made to encourage the "inclusion and acceptance of individuals with intellectual disabilities and help create life changing experiences for a community of over 5,000 Vermonters," according to Vermont Special Olympics, and has done just that.

In an article from WCAX on the impact the Special Olympics has had in Vermont communities, it was noted that this event raises nearly 50% of all funds for this organization to operate on a yearly basis; a tremendous contribution to such a crucial organization.

With participating athletes across the state, Vermont Special Olympics works to create

Continued on page 4

Winter Ball 2025

Karmen Wilbur
Managing Editor

CVU hosted the Winter Ball on February 8th at the DoubleTree Hotel by Hilton Burlington in South Burlington, Vermont. Students jumped up and down to Cotton Eye Joe, Don't Stop Believin', and HOT TO GO!, relishing the chance to interact outside of school.

The hotel had a large room with a dance floor where people spent most of the night. Friends and couples were seen dancing together. The photo booth was a hit, as always. Students could get six pictures taken and choose between color photos or black and white. The line stretched far back with groups of friends planning how to pose.

As a teacher who supported the event this year, **Peter Booth** reflected on his experience over prior years, "I've chaperoned dances at CVU for 25 years and the part I really like the most is seeing kids come in at the start of the dance. Seeing everyone dressed up and looking so adult is always fun for me. Boys often seem kind of uncomfortable in their fancy clothes which is cute."

The Winter Ball has become a part of the CVU community. Booth added, "I'm a big proponent of inclusion and helping kids with vastly different backgrounds and abilities come together to do things as a group. Winter Ball is a time that can happen. If you look around the dance floor at the Winter Ball you see a real cross section of the CVU community all existing together and having fun. I love that. I think it's good for our community." This year's Winter Ball ended one hour earlier than planned.



Sports

Find out about more about sports on page 6-7.



Penguin Plunge

Read more about the Penguin Plunge above and on pages 4 and 6.



Winter Ball

Check out article above.

RoboHawks Qualify for World Championship

RedHawk Robotics Team

On February 8th, the three teams that represent RedHawk Robotics competed in the Robotics First Tech Challenge (FTC) Vermont State Championships at South Burlington High School.

As RoboHawks White (#22683) team member **Griffin Hengelsberg '26** shared, “It was a great learning experience for me, and I was able to test my critical thinking skills in a team environment.”

This year, RoboHawks Red (#5741) made a comeback during the Championship to win the competition and a close second for the Inspire Award, earning them $1500 from Comcast to support them in attending the World’s Competition in Houston, TX.

CVU’s other Varsity robotics team, RoboHawks White (#22683) won the Connect Award and are awaiting an invite to the New England Regional Competition in Springfield, MA. As one team member, **Nick Gordon '27**, shared, "The team worked well together, and we managed to score some points."

All three teams have been working hard since the beginning of the school year, building the robots and doing outreach to the community.

This year, the RoboHawks have participated in numerous events and outreach opportunities. Some highlights include the Tech Jam, Charlotte Central School Stem Night, attending the Vermont Superintendents meeting, as well as mentoring every week for the fifteen district middle school First Lego League teams, representing 115 students at Hinesburg Community School, Shelburne Community School, and Williston Central School.

Most participants agreed that this event promoted team engagement and creating a supportive learning environment. RoboHawks White #22683 team member **Owen Christman '27** said, “I was able to learn and practice really cool and practical high tech skills in a learning environment.”

This sentiment was reiterated by RoboHawks Red (#5741) team member **Gavin Blackburn '26**, “It was a great opportunity for me to talk to lots of different teams and how they interpreted the challenge and how they approached it.”



Photo credit: Courtesy of Olaf Verdonk
RoboHawks Teams (22683 Left, 5741 Middle, 27581 Right) with their robots, awards, and a $1500 check from Comcast to help 5741 go to Worlds. Front (L-R): Juniper Wildey, Miles Bergendahl, Danica Bostwick, Lydia Eshete, Gavin Blackburn, Nick Gordon; Back (L-R) Jacob Graham, Griffin Hengelsberg, Owen Christman, Spencer Adams, Clay Nicholson, James Haines, Ben Gordon, Mason Anand, Grayson Pogact, Patrick Brady

The members of the three robotics teams span all grades and are as follows:

RoboHawks Red (#5741) team:

James Haines '25, **Clay Nicholson '26**, **Leo Fluery '26**, **Jacob Graham '25**, **Gavin Blackburn '26**, and **Ben Gordon '27**.

RoboHawks White (#22683) team:

Owen Christman '27, **Griffin Henglesberg '26**, **Miles Bergendahl**, **Juniper Wildey '27**, **Spencer Adams '25**, **Danica Bostwick '25**, and **Lydia Eshete '26**.

JV RedHawks (#27581) team:

Nick Gordon '27, **Patrick Brady '28**, **Grayson Pogact '28**, **Mason Anand '28**, **Aidan Walker '28**, and **Micah Charlebois '28**, with some help throughout the season from **Asher Pelaia '28**, **Arthur Edwards '28**, **Deacon Brown '26**, **Connor Isham '28**, and **Jenny Blanshine '26**.

The Hawks' Nest

The student-run newspaper of Champlain Valley Union High School

Published monthly during the academic year

Faculty Advisor: Justin Chapman

Editor-in-chief: Grace Warrington

Managing Editors: Lily Gruber, Karmen Wilbur

Staff Writers: Fiona Carpenter, Cecilia Marino, Willow Martin

Sports Editor: Cordelia Thomas

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Photographs This Issue Courtesy of: Al Frey, Matthew Gonyea, Dwight Mazur, Theo Novak, Olaf Verdonk, Special Olympics Vermont, Karmen Wilbur, Greg Warrington

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Updates to the District's Flag Policy

Willow Martin
Staff writer

The new Champlain Valley School District (CVSD) is set to introduce a new flag policy on March 5th.

The policy, officially adopted on December 17, 2024, outlines new guidelines for displaying flags on district property - a change that can be seen as an enhancement to community expression but also a challenge in the long standing practices.

Under the new guidelines, any flag flying on CVSD property must first receive approval from the district's superintendent or a designee.

Only officially-recognized CVSD student groups are eligible to submit a request. In their application for requests, these individuals must explain how their proposed flag aligns with the District's vision and mission.

The policy change is intended to ensure that every display supports the school's commitment to equity and community growth.

Requests must describe the time and specific location for the flag. Any proposed flag must be smaller than the national and state flags.

Flags with prohibited symbols - including any religious symbols - will be denied. There is an appeals process if a group's request has not been approved.

Three flag types have automatic approval: The United States flag, the Vermont state flag and a school or district flag. Other flags, including those that support social justice causes like the Black Lives Matter flag, various Pride flags, and many others - must be reviewed.

Hailley Hem '27 shared her perspective, "I think flags are representative of both the students and the values we want to share. Having flags like the BLM flag and progressive flag shows to individuals that they're being represented and seen by the school. It encourages a safe space and connects with the social justice work initiated by the students themselves. Flags are like an extension of our voices and help us express ourselves safely in our community."

As reflected in Hem's statements, flags can be a means of solidarity and a reflection of the diverse identities within the school community.



Photo credit: Greg Warrington
The United States flag, the Vermont state flag and a Black Lives Matter flag at CVU in early February.

Grace Warrington
Editor-in-chief

Crossword

Answers page 8

Across

1. "Now!"

5. Montpelier High School's mascot, and others

9. Happen

10. Roo's pal

11. "Well, you're correct there"

13. Tempt

14. Fib

15. Act like a river in a floodplain

17. "Sorry, something came up"

20. Column partner

21. Graduates

25. "Bzzz!"

27. One of the Pac-Man ghosts

28. ____ Fe

29. Da's opposite

30. Eye affliction

Down

1. Yearn (for)

2. One of a lot?

3. Time for a fall?

4. You might want to look at it before you buy that designer jacket

5. Choose

6. Part of WWW

7. Trumpeter Armstrong

8. Vertical, as a cliff

9. Extra periods, for short

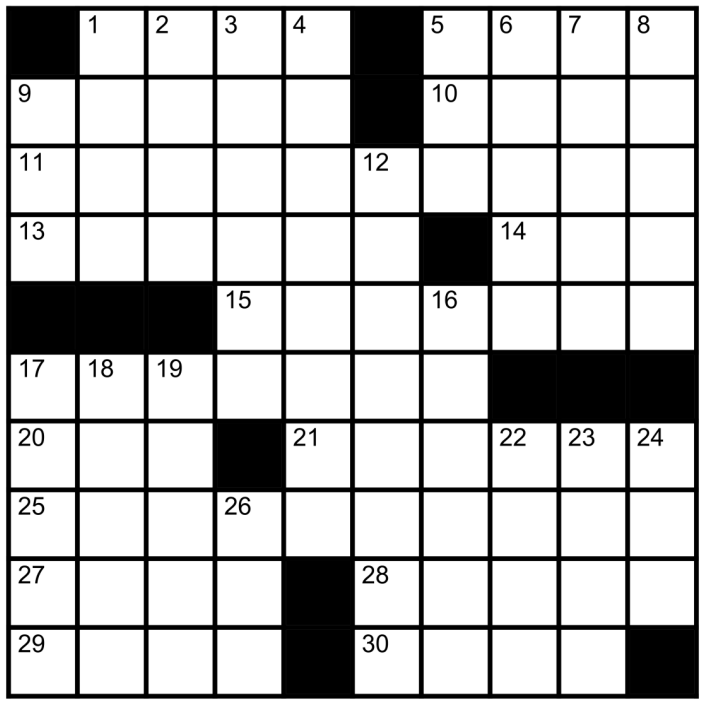
12. Beach find

16. Milky Way ingredient

17. Late Australian wildlife expert Steve

18. Like "What did the pirate say when he turned 80? Aye matey"

19. Stirred



22. More than a few

23. Evening, informally

24. "____ sec"

26. Spelling Bee publisher, for short

CVU participates in 30th Annual Penguin Plunge

Continued from page 1

spaces for the consistent training and honing of sports skills for those with intellectual disabilities. This allows for a critical path to personal growth and achievement for participants.

This endeavor has seen tremendous community involvement, with over 3,000 volunteers for the Special Olympics state-wide and hundreds of plungers this year alone. This year's event raised over $600,000 across all locations, and the donations continue to trickle in.

Aside from the incredible financial support the Plunge provides, the event also offers immense emotional gratification for participants.

Plungers could be seen laughing, smiling, and cheering as they made their way in, and out, of the water. As CVU's six waves of plungers ran for the icy lake, the crowd saw students, teachers, and parents full of enthusiasm for the cause and the event.



Photo credit: Special Olympics Vermont
Faculty and students alike plunged into the cold waters of Lake Champlain in Burlington on February 8th for the 30th annual Penguin Plunge.

The Plunge creates a unique atmosphere for this kind of enthusiasm, and allows for an incredible community effort to gain recognition in an exciting way.

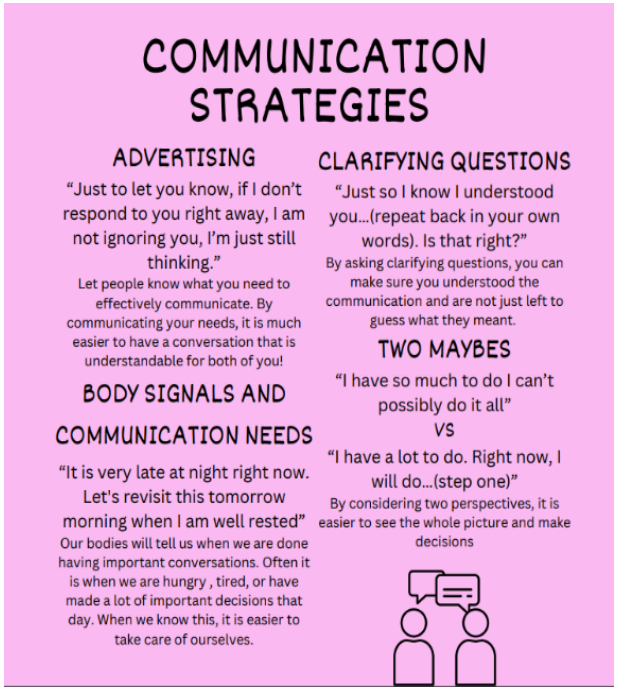
The Penguin Plunge has had a substantial legacy over the last three decades. The event continues to bring communities

Continued on page 6

Social Communication Compositions

Students from CVU's Social Communication English class (course 1075; open across all grades) have explored mechanisms of communication with a variety of infographics, poems and essays. The Nest is featuring essays from this class.

From **Anna Ulager**:



From **Jonas Tajbl**:

A couple days ago I should say, we transitioned into new groups for the class's remaining time, and henceforth I noticed a shift in my ability to blend in with my classmates and stay focused. Initially, I found it a bit rigorous to adapt to the dynamics of my new group.

Each person had different communication styles, and I felt a bit overwhelmed trying to keep up with varying ideas and perspectives.

As different discussions were well discussed, I realized that my self taught habit to zone out when I was feeling lost had made it harder to engage with my peers. However, as we explored our newfound environments together—an activity to figure out who was the murderer in a game called alibi—I gained gained some valuable insightful knowledge. It emphasized the importance of presence and asking clarifying questions, which helped me stay focused. I started practicing these techniques, and it significantly improved my ability to stay engaged.

I learned that listening is not just about hearing words; it's about understanding the intent behind them.

This experience reinforced the idea that adapting to new environments can be challenging, but it also offers opportunities for growth. In the future moving forward, I want to remember this activity with me, both in class environments and in my everyday interactions with people.

From **Summer Hoffman**:

The Heart of Communication

In the dance of words, both heard and spoken,
Emotional intelligence whispers, unbroken.
It's self-awareness that leads the way,
To understand our thoughts and feelings each day.
When we know ourselves, our triggers and moods,
We steer conversations, avoid the blues.
In meeting with people, we pause and reflect,
To make sure our words are kind and direct.
Self-regulation, the second key to find,
It calms the storm, keeps peace of mind.
In moments of stress, when tempers may flare,
It guides our responses with patience and care.
So may our hearts and minds grow little each day
To listen more and reflect the right way.

Arts

Teacher Feature: Cameron Brownell

Grace Warrington
Editor-in-chief

The Hawks' Nest interviewed chorus teacher **Cameron Brownell**. Mr. Cameron has been instrumental in musical programming since 2020.

In addition to working at CVU, Mr. Brownell also serves as a music teacher at Shelburne Community School and as the Music Director at the Charlotte Congregational Church.

***The Hawks' Nest*: What is your role at CVU?**

Cameron Brownell: I've been the Vocal Music Teacher at CVU since Fall 2020. This year, I'm teaching Chorus and Piano 101, but in the past I've also taught Musical Theater and Songwriting.

HN: What is your favorite part of CVU?

CB: My favorite part of CVU is the people! I really enjoy working with all of the wonderful students in my classes and the amazingly talented colleagues I have here at CVU.

HN: What made you choose this job?

CB: Before teaching at CVU, I taught at Juan Diego Catholic High School in Draper, UT for 3 years. This was my first teaching job after graduating with a Masters in Sacred Music from the University of Notre Dame.

I wasn't sure about moving so far from home, but going to Utah was meant to be, because that's where I met my husband, however Vermont is where I grew up and where all my family is, so we decided to move back when I got the job here at CVU.

HN: **What do you do during the summer?**

CB: I keep myself pretty busy during the school year with teaching at CVU, serving as Music Director at Charlotte Congregational Church, acting as Assistant Conductor of the Solaris Vocal Ensemble, and teaching voice lessons at UVM, so I like to take a break during the summer.

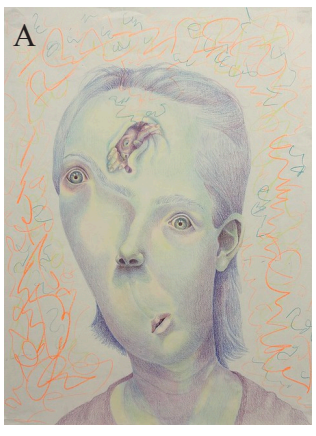
However, this summer I will be in a new musical called Kin, directed by Benjamin Recchia, at Main Street Street Landing in July.



Courtesy of Cameron Brownell
CVU's Vocal Music Teacher Mr. Brownell shares about his background and his upcoming summer plans.

The Hawks' Nest 'Teacher Feature' highlights activity of faculty and staff across CVU.

Scholastic Art and Writing Awards





The 2024-25 Vermont Scholastic Art & Writing Award Winners are on exhibit at the Brattleboro Museum and Art Center from February 14 to March 8. CVU winners include: **Myrrh Pitkin '26** (B and C), who won Gold Keys in novel writing, painting, and science fiction/fantasy writing, and **Clark Clark '25** (A and D), who won a Gold Key and a Silver Key for individual drawing and illustration pieces and awards for drawing and illustration.





Students selected for All-State Musical Festival

Vermont All-State Music Festival hosts annual performances by selected students. Auditions transpired on January 11. The Vermont All-State Music Festival is supported by the Vermont Music Educators Association (VMEA). CVU students selected to participate are below:

Vermont All-State Chorus:
Nate McNabb '25, **Hannah Stein '25**, **Vivian Volzer '26**, **Jennifer Mumley '25**, **Calvin Karlhuber '25**, and **Abigail Usher '25**

Vermont All-State Band:
Anna Dauerman '26, **Yvonne Miceler '26**, **Gwen Irwin '26**, and **Nick Gordon '27**

Vermont All State Orchestra:
Joshua Lu '25, **Maya Girard '26**, **Quinn Tyler '28**, **Leo Koenig '25**, **Luci Simmons '28**, **Cecelia Scriver '26**, **Ariel Toohey '25**, **Nadia Kono '28**, **Abby Girard '28**, **Sam Kafferlin '26**, **Saffron Chang '27**, and **Izzy Schwendler '26**

The festival will take place May 7th-10th 2025 at Essex High School.

Sports

CVU's first Junior Varsity Dance Team

Grace Warrington
Editor-in-chief

This semester marks the start of the first official dance team at CVU. Though dance has always existed in a non-official club capacity, starting December 1st, it has become a Junior Varsity sport. The team is led by coach **Alyssa Jones**, who also works as a speech and language pathologist at Charlotte Central School, and began coaching for the first time this year.

Ms. Jones said of the dance team: “I think it's really a great group of people. It's really, really fun and I've been really impressed this year with the people who aren't as experienced with dance. Just kind of like diving in and being really open to trying new things.”

The idea of a dance team at the school began during the COVID pandemic, and, over the past several years, the dance program has expanded.

Along with performing at games for other school sports, the team also participates in several local dance competitions throughout the year. They have traveled to four different competitions to date, at local high schools with Varsity dance teams. As a Junior Varsity team, they can only participate in Junior Varsity matches, and hope in the coming years to gain more interest within the community.



Photo credit: Alyssa Jones

CVU's first Junior Varsity Dance Team (in alphabetical order): Emma Jean Armstrong '26, Lilly Berntsson '25, Maya Daniels '27, Maria De La Iglesia '26, Amina Kanaan '27, Addison Kuhlmeier '28, Stephanie Miskavage '26, Isabelle Raby '25, Isabella Rauch '28, Miranda Stewart '26, Briar Walsh '26. Team captains are: Armstrong, Miskavage, and Raby.

There are three subcategories of dance that are judged on for the competitions: Jazz, Hip-hop, and Pom. Pom is described by Ms. Jones as “a combination of cheer and dance,” and involves the namesake pom-poms.

This year, the team is only entering in the Jazz category, but hopes to expand to do Hip-hop next year.

Emma Jean Armstrong '26, one of the co-captains, spoke warmly of the school’s reaction to the new team.

Armstrong said, “Being a relatively new sports team, especially in the dance community, I was unsure as to how we would be approached, but whether it was the CVU-decorated rooms we were given for warm-up spaces, the loud cheers from the stands, or the one-on-one compliments and high fives. It was incredible to be met with such enthusiasm!”

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CVU Participates in Penguin Plunge

Continued from page 4

together for a great cause.

Among the seasoned veterans of this year’s event, plunging waves were full of first-timers and young students, individuals who will help to carry this tradition forward and continue to support the work of Vermont Special Olympics.

Those interested in donating to these teams are still able to contribute and support the future of this event at the time of publication. Individuals can go to specialolympicsvermont.org/penguin-plunge to give to a friend or CVU!



Photo credit: Special Olympics Vermont
One of six waves of CVU students and faculty taking the plunge on February 8th.

Sports

Cordelia Thomas
Sports Editor

Select Sports Updates

Boys' Ice Hockey

The CVU boys' hockey team had a rough start to the season, going 1-6 in their first 7 games. However, they have turned things around with a 5-1 record at the time of publication. They are currently tied for 4th in the D1 standings. When Coach **J.P. Benoit** was asked if he was optimistic about their season he replied, "Very. Playing good hockey and very capable of beating any team."

Some season highlights so far include: Raising around $700 for *Project Hoeppner*; **Jameson Yandow '26** scoring in his first game back from injury against Bellows Free Academy; **Zavier Barnes '27** scoring an overtime goal in a 4-2 comeback win against Milton; and **Jack Bryan's '26** game-winning goal with 20 seconds left against Essex for the first win of the year.

Girls' Ice Hockey

The CVU girls' hockey team, combined with Mount Mansfield Union High School, has been making significant strides this season. While their current record stands at the time of publication, at 5-10, the team has demonstrated a strong work ethic and competitive spirit that promises an exciting future.

Though the CougarHawks have been in nearly every game, they acknowledge the desire for a few more wins. "Yes, we would love to have a couple more wins, and we should have a couple more wins," said Coach **Matthew Bunting**.



Photo credit: Dwight Mazur
The Cougarhawks take on the Kingdom Blades on January 18th.



Photo credit: Matthew Gonyea
Redhawks competing against Rice Memorial Green Knights on February 8th.

"We're improving bit by bit every day, and we're excited about the playoffs," Coach Bunting continued. As the team heads into the final stretch of the season, they're poised to be a tough opponent for any team that faces them in the postseason.

Nordic Skiing

The Nordic Ski Team has come out strong this season. Despite having a smaller team this year, the boys' team features key standouts in **Will Wallace '26**, **Luke Buehler '26**, **Brian Simkins '25**, **Charlie Schramm '26**, and **Dylan Elder '25**.

The girls' team is returning almost all members of last year's state championship squad, with **Kate Sayre '26** and captain **Alexa Davis '25** added.

Coach **Sarah Strack** commented that, "The biggest change this season is that we have natural snow to ski on, making the season much more enjoyable! We have been able to practice on snow on a regular basis and no races have been cancelled".

The team's costume relay race at Sleepy Hollow occurred on February 11th. As one highlight, seniors Simkins and Elder created a canoe out of cardboard and skied in tandem.

State meets are scheduled for February 20th with a skate technique at Craftsbury and February 25th with classic technique at Prospect Mountain.

CVU's Dance Team

Continued from page 6

Ms. Jones shared: "I would recommend the dance team specifically even if you've never danced before. It's a really supportive and positive environment. Everybody you know we're kind of all doing it together like there's lots of team input … it just feels like a really wonderful collaborative way to try something new or to explore dance in a different way if you've done it before."

The team is open to prospective dancers of all skill-levels, as co-captain **Isabelle Raby '25** said, "there is no expectation that you know lots of things about dance."



Photo credit: Al Frey
CVU boys' basketball playing at Mount Mansfield on January 30th.



Dear Amber

Dear Amber receives and responds to questions as submitted in advance of publication. If you have questions for Amber, please email them to cvuhawksnest@cvsdvt.org or submit them via the QR code below. The questions (Q) and answers (A) are posed anonymously.

Q: I'm driving but my friends aren't. They all want me to take them out to parties or just to get snacks but I'm not supposed to. I can drive my little sister but that's it. How do I tell them that I feel uncomfortable with it? I feel like I'm the one that stands to lose, not them.

A: Tell them that you risk losing your license and that it's a matter of safety. If something were to happen, you'd be the one facing the consequences, not them. You are the one who holds all the power in this situation. Driving is inherently dangerous and you are just being cautious of your friends safety and the laws in the state. Tell them you won't drive them, wait patiently for your 6 months to be up, and then do whatever you want. Peer pressure is no reason to lose a privilege you've worked to gain.

PS - Can you drive me when your 6 months are up :)?

Q: There is this girl in class who keeps telling everyone how well she is doing on each test or assignment. Yes, we get it, you know it all. Most of us are still learning and trying our best. Could she just stop gloating?

A: That sounds really annoying. Obviously the first thing is to ignore her, but I find it so annoying when people say that, like that everything will work itself out on its own, when that isn't always the case. Don't be mean, but you can tell her that her success is nice for her, but most of the class is trying their best. She may not realize she's bragging. She just might be genuinely interested in the content you are learning. No matter what, her gloating doesn't change your progress. You are still learning and there isn't any shame in that - that you're trying and improving, that's all that matters, regardless of her own scores.

For future submissions to Dear Amber, please either submit them directly to cvuhawksnest@cvsdvt.org or scan the QR code below.

The field of lies saying, "I am the sea"

Fiona Carpenter
Staff writer

We are much like a strawberry,
A gamble,
In its most Innocent form
A chance of sweet and overwhelming flavor,
I often wonder if you dream and prepare
For the rotten fruit that's sure to come,
As it always does,
But you seem to be trapped
In the blossom of truth's flower,
Soon to burst with a green and spiked beginning
that if I might add
many have eaten too hurriedly
And are for met with bitterness
Stifling many a strong man's
Hope for the future
Of the plant,
Idiots,
Just like you,
I worry

Community Call Outs

For the February issue, the Editorial Board solicited Community Call Outs to acknowledge the support and kindnesses across our community. The submitted entries are below.

- **Maureen Carpenter**, is an amazing person and always makes my day. She is an inspiration and an incredible human being!!
- You're the best **Martha**!
- Hi **Leah** Happy Valentine's Day and may the wind always be on your back
- Hi **Meridith**
- **Reed**, you are a very manly man thing. Merry Birthday!!
- Salve **Magistra Morton**.
- Nice job at the Brain Bee, **Elle McAvey**.
- **Liam Gallagher** and **Ryan Buritt**
- **Ryan Burrit**, **Liam Gallagher** and **Leo Dooley** are too cool dudes
- Love the student newspaper! Keep up the good work
- **Carly Brown** for always having my back and being my sounding board
- Thank you to **Jacqui** for always helping out at the front desk
- Shout out to the **CVU Class Councils** for organizing the Winter Carnival
- Congrats for All-States, **Quinn**
- **Clark** and **Myrrh**, you are rocking it!
- Way to go **RoboHawks**!
- **Tiegan Holmes** he is a certified beauty.
- Good luck to the actors of the upcoming **Senior OneAct plays**
- We'll miss you on the football field **Rahn**!
- Thanks for all that you do for the library, **Katie**.

Answers from Crossword

From page 3

	E	Y	T	S		T	E	Y	N
A	T	N	A	S		Y	K	N	I
N	I	A	G	A	G	N	O	R	W
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