SECTION B

Community: 2B

Sunday, April 27, 1997 Metro Editor



Hemingway

Late action on access not unusual

here had been complaints — from the very people the Multiple Sclerosis Society of Vermont was supposed to be serving.

Jack Benoze of Stowe, a wheelchair user and former board member for the group's state chapter, recalled saying years ago if the Champlain Mill weren't made more accessible to the disabled, the organization shouldn't have its office

"You owe it to the legitimacy of the organization not to be in that building," Benoze said he told his fellow board members.

Kristina Borowski of Williston, who uses crutches to help her get around, said she started making the same noises back in 1994. "It is truly ironic ... since many of the society's clients cannot manage to get in the door," she said.

But for years, no one seemed to be listening to their complaints, or those made by others among the 1,300 Vermonters, mostly women, who struggle with this disease that slowly hardens their body tissue.

Instead, life went on for the organization. It might have had to stage its programs and board meetings elsewhere, but the office itself remained firmly ensconced at its fifth-floor location in the refurbished Winooski textile mill.

Last month, the logjam finally broke. Society director Leslie Dunn said the board, after hearing tales from two board members about the fatigue they felt just trying to get up to the group's office, finally agreed to look for a new home.

"The light bulb went on," Dunn said. "All of the sudden the fatigue issue had a meaning it did not have to us before. That made it all a nonissue. Of course, we had to move."

The belated enlightening of Dunn's organization about what truly defines building accessibility is disturbing, considering the charity's reason for existing. But it is by no means unusual.

A close look at even new or renovated structures, such as Barnes & Noble Booksellers in South Burlington or City Hall in Burlington, suggests what looks accessible to the average person might not be to those who depend on such amenities.

In the case of Barnes & Noble, for example, Benoze said the problem is a set of double doors without enough space between for wheelchair maneuverability. At the fixed-up City Hall, it's the heavy glass doors to the clerk's office that will be a barrier for wheelchair users, said David Carlough, Mayor Peter Clavelle's own acccessibility adviser.

In that light, one can begin to understand why the MS Society took so long to confront its in-house critics. After all, the rent was reasonable and Dunn said she had thought it made more sense to work with Champlain Mill managers on problems than walk out on them.

The problems, some now resolved, were many: handicapped-parking spots that were too narrow, a long ramp to the front entrance too difficult to traverse, bathrooms too confining, double doors too heavy for some to pull open.

"The mill manager has worked to improve access," she said. "It's only now that we realize that even if Champlain Mill made all the modifications we asked for, our office location is still a difficult place to get to."

Benoze was less charitable. "I found them to be very uncooperative, very indifferent," he said of the mill officials. Mill manager Dale Arango disagreed. "We've made a sincere effort to improve the situation," she said.

But, to be fair, there's one more reason progress on accessibility problems sometimes seem to move at glacial speed: There just aren't that many Benozes and Borowskis willing to stick their necks out to make a point.

"We feel guilty, drawing too much attention to ourselves," Borowski said. There is the fear of being rejected, the constant reminders of times when a door too difficult to open was all it took to feel excluded.

In the end, maybe you really can't know what it's like until you've walked

- or wheeled - a mile in their shoes. Sam Hemingway is the Free Press state news columnist. His columns appear Wednesday, Friday and Sunday. If you have a comment, phone **66**0-1850.

Vermont

Rob Eley, 660-1862 or (800) 427-3124 ...

City's revitalization honored

Downtown efforts win national praise

By Sona Iyengar Free Press Staff Writer

In the mid-1970s, downtown Burlington was a busy shopping district with four department stores, specialty shops and restaurants. But city leaders feared the onset of suburban development that was draining the life from downtowns in other states.

To fight the problem, architects, business leaders and politicians pushed for an outdoor pedestrian mall on Church Street — the main shopping area in town. In 1981, the fourblock Church Street Marketplace district was born.

■ Other city achievements, 4B

Monday, the city will be honored for that effort and other work to preserve and revitalize downtown Burlington. The city was chosen as one of five communities nationwide to receive a "Great American Main Street Award" from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

The award, which includes a \$5,000 check, honors efforts to revitalize downtowns and fight suburban sprawl. A jury of government officials, planners and economic development experts chose the top five after review-

ing applications submitted by the cities. The contest is for communities of any size, including downtowns and neighborhood commercial districts.

This year's winners included DeLand, Fla.; Georgetown, Texas; Holland, Mich.; and Libertyville, Ill.

Kennedy Lawson Smith, director of the National Main Street Center at the National Trust for Historic Preservation, said the jury was impressed at the length of time Burlington had been working on downtown revitalization.

Smith also said jury mem-

See CITY, 4B



ROB SWANSON, Free Press

Burlington's Church Street Marketplace was bustling with activity Saturday afternoon. Burlington's Marketplace was one of five national winners of the Great American Main Street Award from the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

"I think it's going to be probably the best weekend ... we've ever had."

> J. Douglas Webb, festival chairman



ROB SWANSON, Free Press

Kathleen Langlais of St. Albans (left), Joan **Burnor of Fairfield and Lorraine Nichols of** Highgate spread maple cream on donuts Saturday at the American Legion Hall during the **30th annual Vermont** Maple Festival in St. Albans. The festival continues today.

TODAY

Vermont Antiquarian Spring Book Fair: More than 45 book dealers from Vermont, New England and Canada. 9:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Ramada Inn in South Burlington. Adults \$2. 878-8737.

Sketching: Learn to free the artists from 2 to 4 p.m. at the Birds of Vermont Museum in Huntington. \$25. 434-2167.

Adoption Lifebook Workshop: Learn techniques to document your adoption process in a lifebook for your child from 2 to 5 p.m. at the Vermont Children's Aid Society in Winooski. Registration. 879-3670.

Wildlife Activities Day for Families: Let your imagination run wild as you leap, run, balance and roll to find out about the lives of creatures in the wild 1 to 3 p.m. at Shelburne Farms. For ages 5 and older, accompanied by an adult. \$4, \$5. Regis-

Sunday Morning Bird Walk: 7 a.m. off River Road in Woodstock. Presented by Vermont Institute of Natural Science. Registration. 457-2779.

tration. 985-8686.

Road Walk in East Montpelier: Bring water, lunch, snacks, bug spray, wildflower guide. Meet at p.m. at Montpelier High School. Presented by Green Mountain Club, Montpelier Section. 223-0918.

Seeking Reptiles and Amphibians: Look at the lives and habits of Vermont's 41 species of reptiles and amphibians 1 to 5 p.m. today at the Vermont Institute of Natural Science in Woodstock. \$7, \$5, children \$4. Registration. 457-2779.

Weather at fest sweet as sugar

By Richard Cowperthwait Free Press Correspondent

ST. ALBANS — Reveling in sunny, mild weather that's been anything but a Vermont Maple Festival trademark, thousands of festivalgoers had a sweet time of it Saturday.

As good and prevalent as Vermont's "liquid gold" was at the 30th annual event, the uncharacteristically pleasant weather was the big story.

"This is the best one," Flossy Vernal of St. Albans said.

With a favorable forecast for today, festival chairman and Fairfax sugarmaker J. Douglas Webb said, "I think it's going to be probably the best weekend, throughout the whole thing, we've ever had."

If the festival had been held last weekend, there would have been "total chaos" because of the record April snowfall in northwestern Vermont, Webb said. In the future, the festival date will be permanently fixed on the last weekend of April in hopes of better weather, he said.

Festival director Ron Bartemy said in reference to the history of bad weather, "We've had it all."

Bad weather, including snowstorms, rainstorms and icestorms, not to mention many windy days, has made past festival operations difficult, Bartemy said. A longtime advocate of the maple industry and former festival chairman, he was named marshal of today's parade at Saturday's festival

awards banquet. Bartemy noted an addition to this year's festival: a Vermont Specialty Foods Show in the National Guard Armory, which continues today.

While final figures aren't in, maple industry officials said mand for new equipment."

Schedule

PANCAKE BREAKFAST: 7 a.m. to noon at St. Albans City Elementary School. 8.5-MILE "SAP RUN": Road race, begins 10:30 a.m. in Swanton and finishes in front of Taylor Park in downtown St. Albans. ■ PARADE: 1:30 p.m. OTHER ACTIVITIES: Maple exhibits, demonstrations and the Vermont Maple Store at the American Legion; craft show and sale at City Hall auditorium; Vermont Specialty Foods Show at the National Guard Armory; antique show and sale at the St. Albans Town Educational Center; St. Al-

bans Hisorical Museum; concessions along Taylor Park; and carnival rides off Federal Street.

INFORMATION: 527-0309 or 524-5800.

this year's crop won't approach last year's bumper crop of 550,000 gallons. Projections for the 1997 crop range between 300,000 and 400,000 gallons.

The maple industry contributes about \$100 million to the Vermont economy, said state Agriculture Commissioner Leon Graves.

The industry is growing, with about 2,400 sugarmakers in Vermont, said Larry Myott, a festival director and maple specialist with the University of Vermont Extension System.

"We have a lot of folks that are calling, trying to get into it," he said. "The equipment manufacturers in the state, which are headquartered, of course, right here in St. Albans, are having a booming year trying to keep up with all the de-



ROB SWANSON, Free Press

Cleon Gillilan of Fletcher prepares sugar on snow Saturday at the Vermont Maple Sugarmakers Association sugarhouse at the 30th annual Vermont Maple Festival in St. Albans. "I've been sugaring all my life — at least since I was old enough to get up and get to the sugarhouse," Gillilan said. The festival continues today with a variety of events celebrating maple sugaring time of year.

Weather almanac



SATURDAY: High: 60 Low: 41 NORMAL: High: 59 Low: 38 RECORD: High: 84, 1913 Low: 20, 1919

FORECAST TODAY: Sunshine fading behind

High: 51-55 Low: 38-42

increasing clouds. High: 60-64 Low: 38-42 MONDAY: Cooler with clouds and a few showers.

Scientists connect deformed frogs to pesticides, parasites

By David Reed The Associated Press

STONY MAN MOUN-TAIN, Va. — In an isolated mountaintop lodge with the lights turned down, 80 scientists from the United States and Canada clustered around a projector to view slides of misshapen, mutant frogs.

What, they wanted to know, is causing the gross deformities turning up with alarming frequency in North America's frogs? If they are the victims of a tainted environment, they wondered, can humans be far behind?

They looked at frogs with



Associated Press file Deformed frogs, like this one with two extra hind legs, are baffling scientists.

legs protruding from their abdomens and frogs with no legs at all. They heard about frogs with eyes staring disconcertingly from their backs and suction-cup fingers growing from

their sides.

The cellular development of frogs and humans are similar, said David Gardiner, a molecular biologist from the University of California at Irvine.

"Maybe these frogs are pointing out that there is a more widespread problem," said Kathy Converse of the National Wildlife Health Center.

There have been reports of unusually high numbers of deformed frogs in Minnesota, Vermont, Wisconsin and Quebec. Clusters of deformed frogs also were found in California, Colorado, Idaho, Mississippi, Montana and Ohio.

In Vermont, the frogs with missing or deformed limbs were found last fall along the northern shores of Lake Champlain.

At the Shenandoah National Park this month, scientists ranging from molecular biologists to herpetologists examined theories that link the frog deformities to chemicals or para-

"My best guess is that it has more to do with pesticides," Martin Ouellet of McGill University in Montreal said.

Ouellet and four other scientists have been studying deformed and normal frogs found in more than 100 ponds in the St. Lawrence River Valley in the past four years.

Normally, fewer than 1 percent of frogs are deformed, and that's about what Ouellet found in frogs taken from pristine ponds. But in ponds where pesticides are used on surrounding land, as many as 69 percent of the frogs were deformed, he

If a pesticide is causing deformities, it's probably a new brand because large numbers of frog deformities have not been noticed before, Converse said.

See FROG, 4B

VERMONT

CITY: Efforts downtown honored

Continued from Page 1B bers liked the mix of development downtown - which includes housing, shopping and

offices along with cultural activities, restaurants and entertainment.

Another asset was Burlington's joint effort with a coalition of public and private groups working to preserve downtown, Smith said.

In announcing the award, the national organization also mentioned development on Burlington's waterfront, including Waterfront Park and the Lake Champlain Basin Science Center, a museum/research laboratory at the foot of College Street.

"What we're trying to recognize in the award is that downtown revitalization doesn't happen overnight," said Smith, who was recruited last year to help Burlington with downtown preservation. "It involves a tremendous amount of commitment ... It involves real respect for the community's history."

Molly Lambert, director of the Church Street Marketplace, and Ed Moore, director of the Downtown Burlington Development Association, are traveling to Portland, Ore., to receive the award at a conference Monday.

Frank Bouchett, co-owner of Pier 1 Imports on the Church Marketplace, was delighted to learn of the award. "We've got a great downtown, and we've got a great street," Bouchett said. "You walk out there today, and the street is busy and it's active and it's

Achievements

JULY 1968: Cited in Harpers Magazine as a working model for the ideal American city.

JUNE 1983: Tied for first

place in Annual Livability Award Contest sponsored by U.S. Conference of Mayors. MAY 1984: Selected as one of eight finalists in the Annual City Livability Award contest sponsored by the U.S. Conference of Mayors. JULY 1987: Ranked 18th

in Money Magazine survey of nation's best places to live. JUNE 1991: Voted "best in the Northeast" by Inc. magazine in its top 10 list for "Best Cities for a Growing

Business. ■ 1993: Ranked 48th in a book "50 Fabulous Places to Raise Your Family" by Lee and Saralee Rosenberg. JUNE 1993: Rated best

place in the nation for raising children by Zero Population Growth organization, Washington, D.C.

■ NOVEMBER 1993: Ranked eighth in a survey titled "Top 10 Best Cities for Running a Home Based Business" in Home Office Computing magazine. JUNE 1995: Ranked second by Zero Population Growth of the 10 best places in the nation to raise chil-

■ JUNE 1995: Tops list of seven "Dream Towns" by Outside Magazine. FEBRUARY 1996: Cited as one of seven best retirement areas by "New Choices; Living Even Better

After 50" magazine. JUNE 1996: Ranked as the seventh hippest arts town in "100 Best Small Art Towns in America" by John Villani (1996, John Muir Publications)

APRIL 1997: Ranked sixth best "family-friendly" place in the nation by Reader's Digest. **MAY/JUNE 1997:**

Ranked No. 4 of "America's 10 Most Enlightened Towns," by the Utne Reader magazine.

Wheel Alignment

Oil/Fluid Changes

Tire Services

✓ Air Conditioning

✓ VT State Inspection

/ Tune Up

AUTO SYSTEMS EXPERTS

FROG: Pesticides may cause problems

Continued from Page 1B

"It's less likely to be one of the older chemicals, like DDT or PCBs," she said.

Gardiner believes the deformities might be linked to a new generation of chemicals that mimic growth hormones.

Gardiner said the same kind of frog deformities that have been found in marshes and ponds including extra legs and eyes have been replicated in laboratory experiments.

"I can make a frog that looks like any frog you've seen at this meeting," said Gardiner, who specializes in cell regeneration.

Scientists have induced the deformities with retinoic acid, a byproduct of a chemical called retinoid that is found in acne medicine and skin rejuvenation creams.

Retinoids powerfully affect development, and if they are inside a growing animal at the wrong place at the wrong time, they can cause deformities, he said. That's why pregnant women are warned not to use skin medicines that contain retinoids.

Recent laboratory experiments have determined that a pesticide can mimic a retinoid and, conceivably, cause defects in frog development, he said.

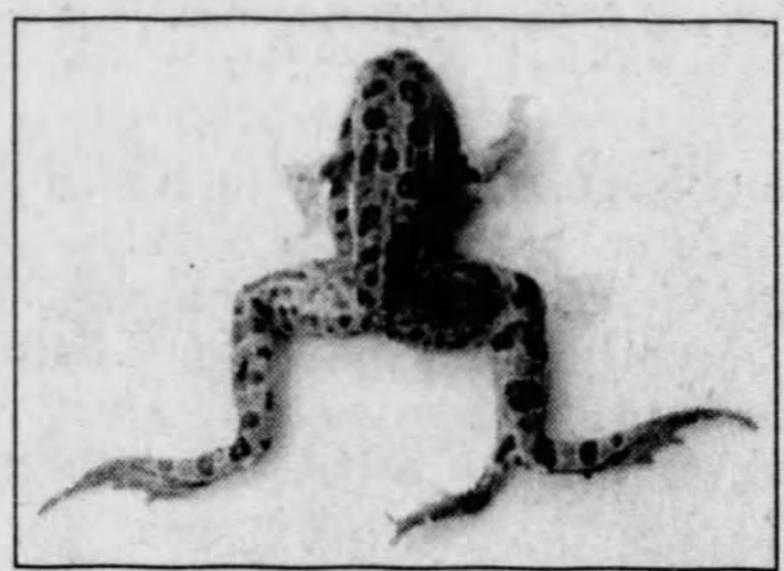
"We should start screening chemicals, and we should start with pesticides, to see if they mimic naturally occurring retinoids in the body," Gardiner said.

Stan Sessions, a developmental biologist, questioned whether a chemical could be the culprit because there were no deformed fish or other animals found in the ponds where the deformed frogs were captured.

He believes parasites cause the deformities.

✓ Brakes

✓ Shocks



Associated Press file

Deformed frogs, like this one with an extra leg, are appearing in Vermont, Minnesota, Wisconsin, South Dakota and Quebec.

Sessions put a three-legged frog recently found in Vermont under a microscope and invited his colleagues to share in his discovery.

In his partially dissected speci-

men, tiny parasitic flat worms were packed into the joint where the frog was missing a leg. The Hartwick College professor told of a lab experiment in which he mimicked the invasion of parasites in a tadpole and caused it to sprout an extra leg as it developed into a frog.

"The mystery is beginning to resolve itself," Sessions said.

Some of his colleagues were intrigued and some said he was on to something. Others were skepti-

Finding the answer to the deformed frog mystery will probably take three to five years of re-

search, said Joe Tietge, conference organizer and research biologist for the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency laboratory in Duluth, Minn.

One of the goals of the meeting was to determine where research should be directed, Tietge, the conference organizer, said. At the end of May, the EPA and other federal agencies will award grants to scientists studying the phe-

nomenon. The scientists at the meeting also determined what kind of data will be included in a national reporting system that the U.S. Geological Survey is devel-

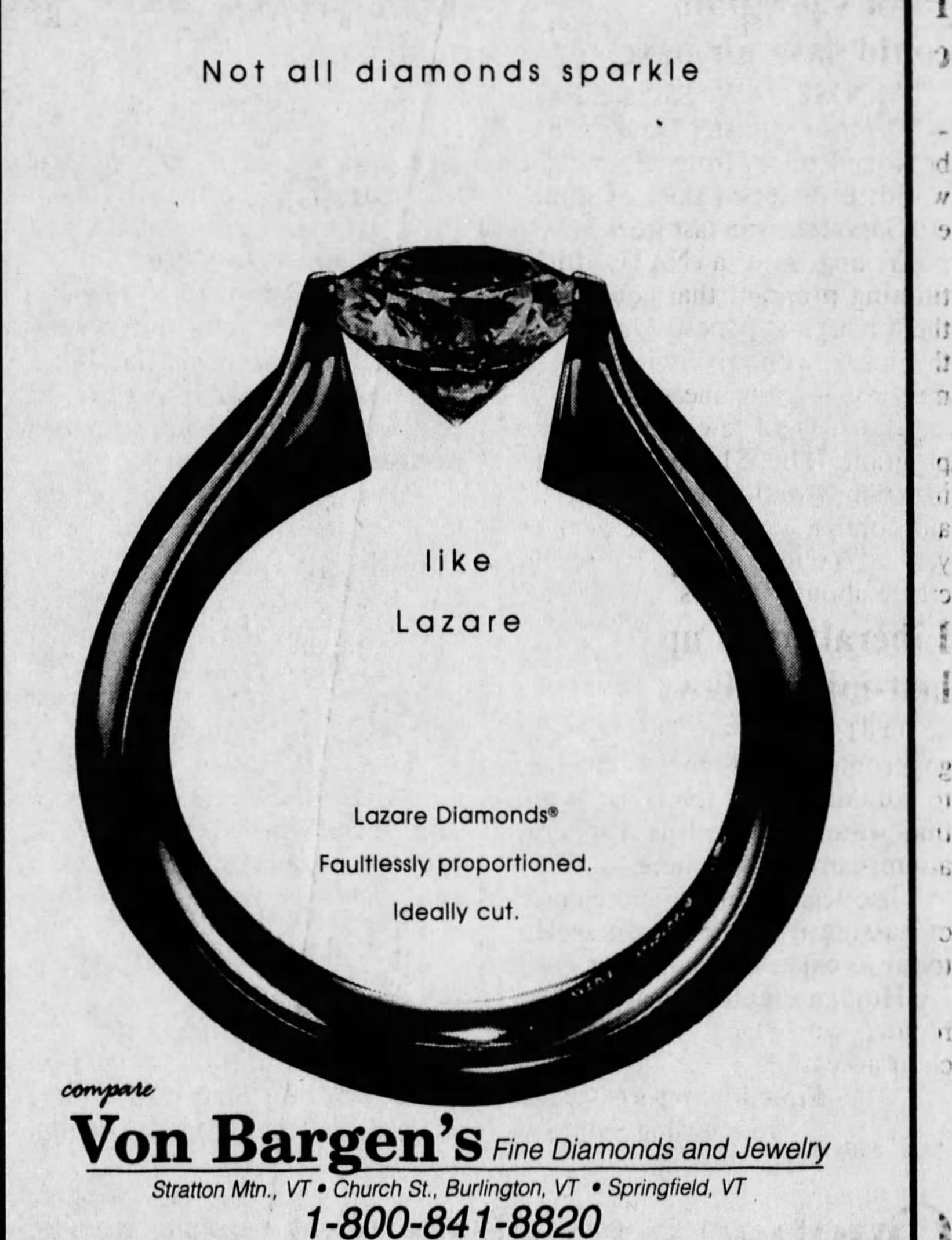


May 10 at 8pm - Flynn Theatre

Vermont Symphony Orchestra Kate Tamarkin, Conductor Benjamin Pasternack, Pianist **Emory Fanning, Organist**

Nicholas Maw Spring Music (VT Premiere) Beethoven "Emperor" Concerto Saint-Saëns Symphony No. 3, _ "Organ Symphony"

TO CALL FOR TICKETS 864-5741 x12 "Musically Speaking" pre-concert discussion in the hall at 6:30, free to ticket holders.



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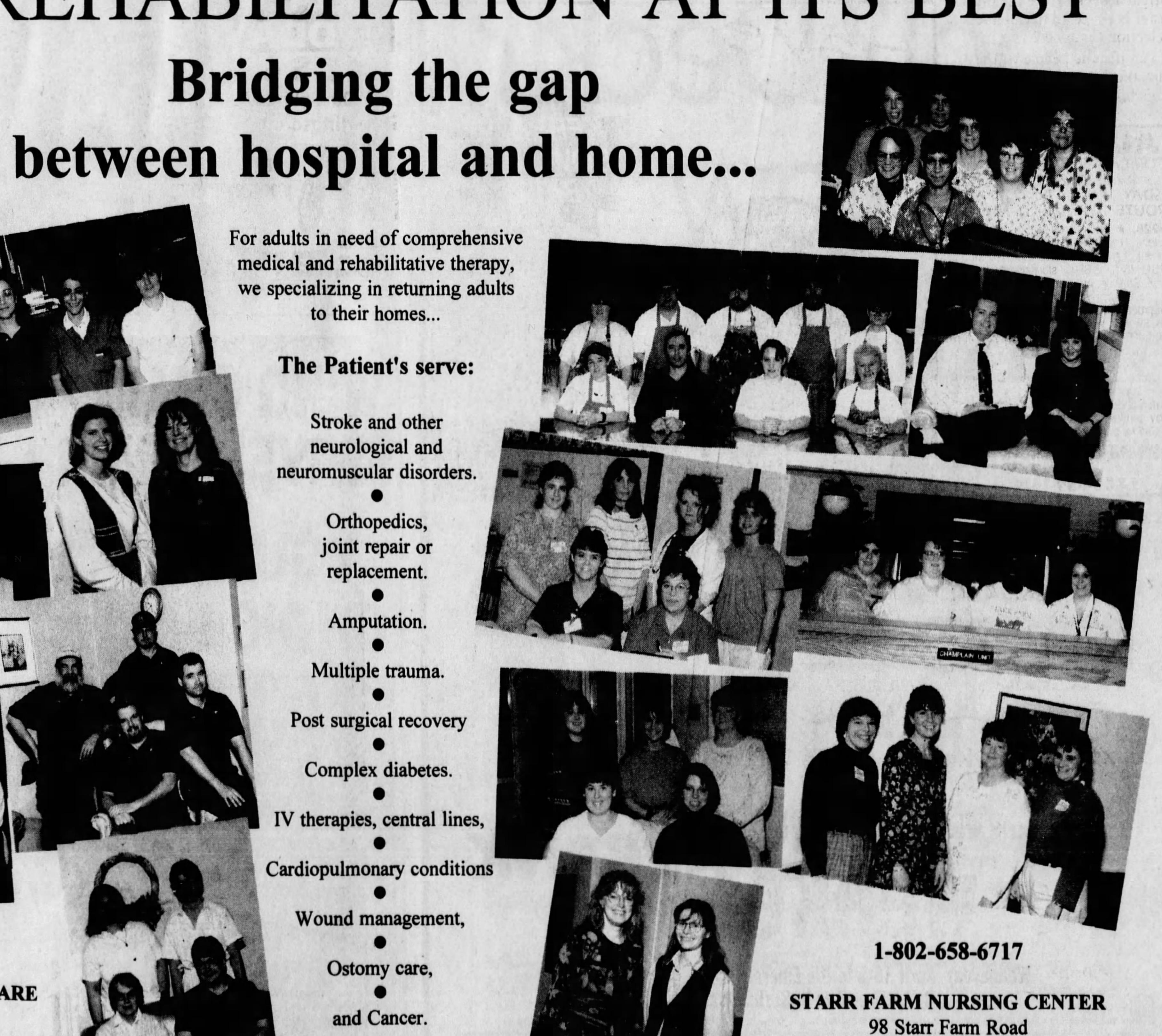
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