

Monocle Weekend Edition: Saturday



OUTPOST NEWS / WOODSTOCK, VERMONT

Setting the standard

Don't expect the *Vermont Standard* to be stymied by coronavirus (*writes Will Kitchens*). Despite floods, fires and tropical Storm Irene, which in 2011 swept the Woodstock-based newspaper's offices into a nearby river, the *Standard* has reportedly never missed publishing a single edition since its founding in 1853. While the ongoing pandemic has forced the state's oldest weekly newspaper to adjust – its latest issue is the first produced entirely remotely – it continues to pump out the type of reporting that has netted it multiple awards from the New England Newspaper and Press Association. Editor Neil Allen, a 22-year veteran of the newspaper business, tells us how the *Vermont Standard* is serving Windsor County during an uncertain time.

What's the big story making news this week?

The school board is making lots of news. It was discovered that some audits hadn't been done for a couple of years and it now has a deficit of \$175,000 (€161,000). Then there was a relatively small accident that ended up having a larger impact. Two tractor-trailers crashed and took out the front of a convenience store in one of our little towns. If it's not able to open then that takes away a source to buy toilet paper and things like that [during the pandemic].

Your favourite headline?

There weren't any interesting ones this week but a couple of weeks ago we had a crested caracara visit our area. It's a falcon that's native to Mexico but it managed to find its way to southern Vermont. So we had the headline "Bird is the word" because it was the talk of the town.

Best picture?

Because we can't get into some places to get interesting pictures, we have depended more on people sending us pictures. The Woodstock Inn and Resort, which is the biggest employer in town, closed for the first time in a very, very long time. On Saturday morning, it took all of the fresh food that it had and had its staff come in to pick it up. Whatever was left over was donated. The picture with that was nice. It showed a business doing something for its staff when it can't do very much at all for them.

What's your latest down-page treat?

I wrote a story about one of our seniors' centres. Before now, all the people delivering meals on wheels were 75 years or older and so they had to be told to stay at home because it's not safe to be out. Apparently, it was really difficult to convince these folks not to do this for a little while. But 25 [younger] community members have stepped up to take their places temporarily. It's been nice to see more community members stepping up.