

Leading the way

Yep, we did it. Went right off the deep end and into the great unknown. Will it be worth it? Are we foolish? Only time will tell.

After intense discussions with staff, advertisers, investors, and readers, we have concluded that it makes good business, and environmental, sense to move away from printing a newspaper and becoming a completely online news organization.

Since its founding, the *Vermont Guardian* has been at the forefront in Vermont of what newspapers could, and should, do on the Internet. We were the first newspaper to offer breaking news and web exclusive content, and have been evolving to add special features to help other small Vermont businesses connect to each other, and to our readers.

The community we sought to write about and connect with more than two years ago — you — has been incredibly encouraging whether through criticism or praise.

We have built a strong reputation in the past two-and-a-half years as a credible, award-winning publication with the ability to break news ahead of much larger, and well-financed and staffed, competitors.

We blended the best of a weekly print publication with that of a modern, online news organization. Now, we embark on a new adventure and hope you'll let us know what you think.

We had been contemplating this move for months as we struggled to figure out how to manage a statewide newspaper when newspaper advertising is on the decline and younger readers are getting their information from the Internet. In fact, discussions had been underway to transition to becoming an online-only publication late last year and into this year.

These were not easy discussions, but the reality is that independent news organizations are hard to get off the ground, and struggle financially in their early years. The *Guardian* was not immune to this standard, and we have sought new ways to keep the ship afloat.

Then, the recent blizzard knocked us out of commission for the week and we couldn't distribute the paper. (And, by the way, *The New York Times* and *Burlington Free Press* were among those who didn't deliver a paper that week either to many places in Vermont so we were in good company.) So, we had to come up with an alternate format of getting the news out, and making folks happy.

We did, it worked, and because it was a success we quickly began to talk to key advertisers about going entirely paperless. In those early talks, some advertisers and readers wondered what took us so long to make the move.

In the past six months, especially so much of our attention, and resources, were spent each week on publishing a print edition — but the demand from readers and advertisers was for us to put more time, and money, into the website.

We've seen more than 1 million readers in the past year, with more than 4 million page views.

As an organization with finite resources, and being on a planet with dwindling resources, we decided it just made good business, and ecological, sense to discontinue the weekly print edition.

Still, it was not an easy decision to make, but to keep providing you with the quality reporting you've come to rely on from the *Guardian*, we had little choice. We know that some of you will miss the print edition. We will too.

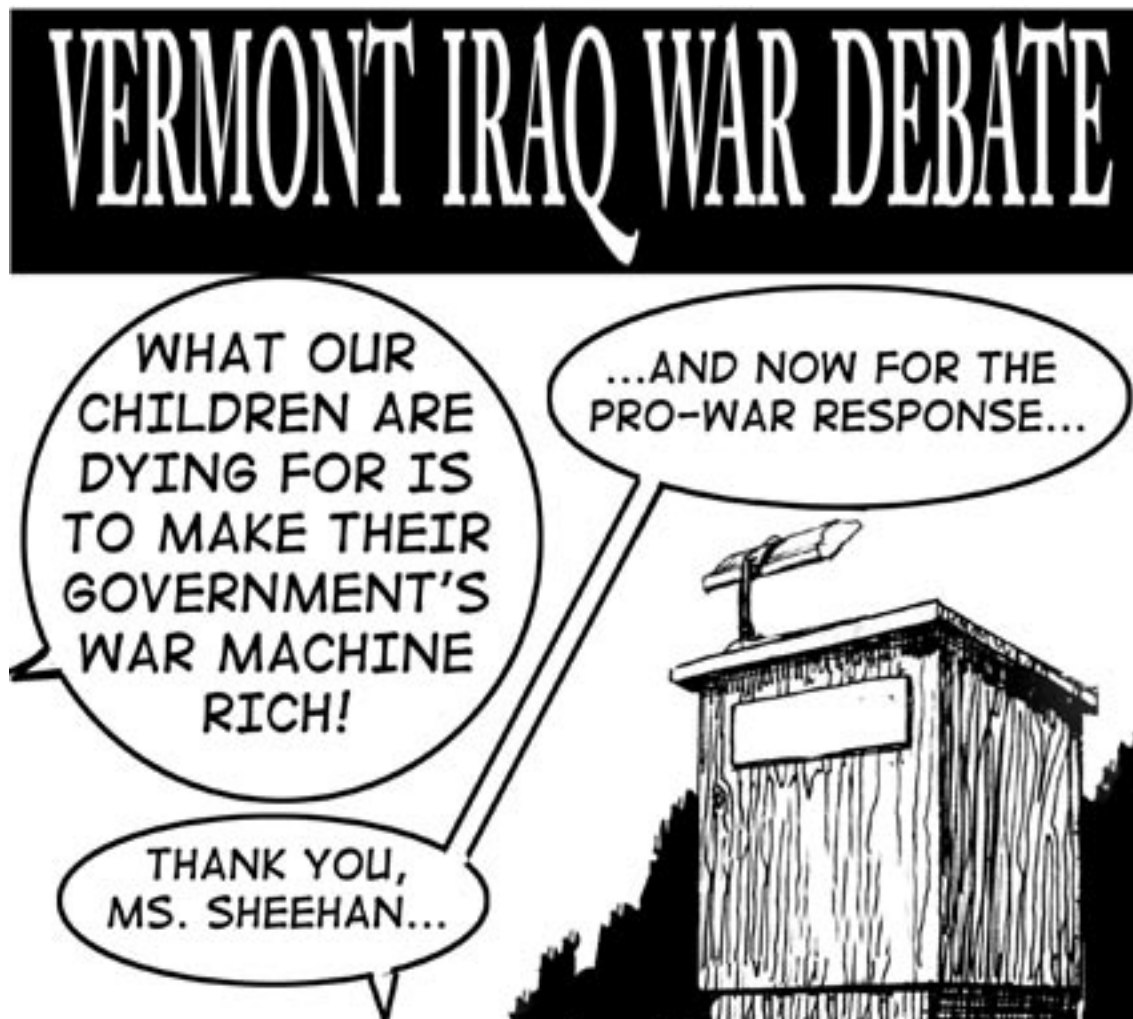
For the time being, the *Guardian* will provide a dual delivery method — HTML-based stories and downloadable PDFs — each week. And, in between our weekly offerings we will bring more news and information, along with audio and video, to our readers.

The reason for doing both versions right now is simple: Some people, and advertisers, want to see a "printed" version. So, for those with good Internet connections, they can download a PDF. Or, those who don't care, or can't download large files, we have the HTML version.

It's terrifying, and exciting, at the same time, and the response so far has been overwhelmingly positive.

We couldn't have made it this far without our dedicated readers, advertisers, contributors, and all the friends and family who helped us get off the ground and this far. We look forward to hearing from you, as we want you to help us write the new history of media in Vermont together.

Always feel free to drop us a line on what you'd like to see more, or less, of in terms of news coverage, topics, and what special features you'd like to see us provide. E-mail us at info@vermontguardian.com.



letters • • • • •

When!?

All along the election trail in Vermont — just last year — we the people told everyone running for office that the number one concern of all Vermonters was the ever-increasing property taxes. But, then something happened. We elected more Democrats and — poof! — did they take a forget pill or something?

Most legislators have chosen to ignore, and forget, the property tax issue.

Not all the legislators have ignored Vermonters' cry for property tax relief. On Feb 16, an amendment was proposed by Rep. Pattie Komline, R-Manchester, and Rep. Steve Adams, R-Hartland, and there was a vote on repealing Act 60 (*Vermont Guardian*, Feb. 16). Yes, finally a vote to repeal ACT 60, and 33 brave legislators heard our collective cry from every corner of the state, "Reduce our property taxes now."

But 93 turned a deaf ear, and voted against repealing the most flawed, complicated, unfair tax law in our state or any other. What were those 93 legislators thinking?

Find out how your legislator voted on H.88, and more info about the property tax relief effort, by going to www.revoltand-repeal.com.

Don't wait for your prebate check this year to pay your taxes. In a separate vote, 94 legislators voted down Rep. David Sunderland's, R-Rutland Town, amendment to protect our privacy and give us back our tax money. That's right, folks, 94 legislators don't think we can manage our own money, so they voted to credit our tax bills instead.

Do you know that this will let everyone who can do simple math know just how much money you make? The legislators have spent seven weeks learning about global warming, more time debating the Iraq War, and it took them less than two hours to vote down some very important issues to all Vermonters — property taxes and our privacy.

Hey! Ms. Speaker, how about seven weeks working to reduce our property taxes and protect our privacy. If seven weeks is not enough time, then why not vote to repeal Act 60/68 by Jan. 2009 and find a solution over the next two years? We voting Vermonters must stand up and tell our elected officials again, until they hear us, loud and clear, that they need to reduce our property taxes now.

Repeal Act 60/68 by 2009 and find a fair, less complicated, and less divisive way to fund education. This is not a Democratic or Republican issue, this is a Ver-

mont issue and as a voting Vermonter, I humbly request some action.

*Andrew J. Tarantino
Manchester Center*

Get the facts about physician-assisted dying

As someone who has worked long and hard to strengthen end of life choices, recent comments by those individuals opposed to the current PDD (patient directed dying) bill in the Vermont Legislature are tough to witness (*Vermont Guardian*, Feb. 16).

My request is that before you write, do your homework and try to be honest with yourself about your opinion. Does it represent your own religious beliefs or does it reflect the reality of the current legislation?

Contrary to those who misunderstand the legislation, no doctor is required to comply with a request for a prescription. The patient must initiate the process, must make three requests over a period of 15 days, and must be able to self-administer the medication.

The proposed legislation specifically states that euthanasia is illegal. The patient must be able

continued on next page

CROW BOOKSHOP

"Books give not wisdom where none was before. But where some is, there reading makes it more."

—John Harington (1561-1612)

14 CHURCH ST. BURLINGTON, VT

THIS MODERN WORLD

by TOM TOMORROW

ONCE UPON A TIME, CONSERVATIVES DECIDED THAT THE MAJORITY OF THE WORLD'S SCIENTISTS WERE SIMPLY NOT TO BE TRUSTED.

WHY SHOULD WE BELIEVE THE EARTH IS **ROUND**--JUST BECAUSE THEY SAY SO?

FEELS FLAT TO ME!

I'VE NEVER BEEN UP IN SPACE!

TALK RADIO HOSTS EAGERLY **EMBRACED** THEIR CONCERNS.

IF **AL GORE** DOESN'T BELIEVE HE'LL FALL OFF THE EARTH IF HE GETS TOO CLOSE TO THE EDGE--

--I SAY LET HIM FALL! GOOD RIDDANCE!

HAW, HAW! YOU TELL 'EM, RUSH!

SOME **MAVERICKS** OF THE SCIENTIFIC COMMUNITY LENT **THEIR** SUPPORT.

YES, THE EARTH **APPEARS** TO BE ROUND--BUT THIS IS **ONLY A THEORY!**

IT MIGHT JUST AS EASILY BE **CIRCULAR** BUT **FLAT**--LIKE A **PANCAKE!** OR A **MANHOLE COVER!**

CAN I HAVE MY CHECK NOW?

THE PRESIDENT WEIGHED IN.

WHETHER THE EARTH IS **SPHERICATED** OR **FLATICULAR**--I THINK THEY'RE BOTH INTERESTIN' **THEORETICALS!** I THINK WE OUGHTA TEACH 'EM **BOTH**--SO OUR KIDS CAN BE BETTER **INFORMATIONALIZED!**

THE MAINSTREAM MEDIA DUTIFULLY REPORTED **BOTH SIDES** OF THE CONTROVERSY.

The New York Times

"All the News That's Fit to Print"

OPINIONS DIFFER ON SHAPE OF PLANET

Spherical or Disklike?

Democrats Fail to Pass Symbolic, Nonbinding Resolution Declaring Earth Not Flat

Artist's Conception of Earth

AND THE WAR ON RATIONALITY MARCHED EVER ONWARD.

I THINK DISEASES ARE ACTUALLY CAUSED BY **EVIL SPIRITS!**

I BELIEVE THAT IF YOU STEP ON A **CRACK**, YOU'LL BREAK YOUR MOTHER'S **BACK!**

I'LL BELIEVE **ANYTHING** THAT ANNOYS A **LIBERAL!**

TM TOMORROW 2007... www.thismodernworld.com

continued from previous page

to take the oral medication, unaided.

More than 600 doctors and nurses in Vermont have told Death With Dignity Vermont that they support the proposed legislation.

Eight years of documented experience with essentially the same law in Oregon indicated no abuse of the law. During that time, Oregon has become a leader in the nation for palliative care improvement and hospice utilization. Passing the legislation is not an "either/or" proposition. In Oregon in 2005, 92 percent of those who used the law were in hospice care.

A study by the Vermont Legislative Council, the legal arm of our legislature, debunked the scare scenarios of the opposition in their 2004 study. Scare tactics of the opposition are just that: Their imagined scenarios just haven't happened in Oregon where the law has been in effect for nine years.

A poll by a nationally respected pollster has shown that 78 percent of Vermonters, regardless of religious persuasion, party affiliation, or region of residence are in favor of the legislation.

Nothing in the bill threatens disabled people. They will have the same rights as everyone else. Oregon has no record of any

chronically disabled person using the law and no surrogate or guardian may act for the patient.

I respect the rights and opinions of those who have moral or religious philosophies that cause them to oppose PDD for themselves, but I and most other individuals do not intend to allow others to limit the choices available to us at the end of our lives. Simply, decisions about death belong to the individual who is dying; this legislation is about strengthening that principle.

*Mark Furnari
South Burlington*

Time to stand for "we the people"

To all those who listened and discussed, with respect and intensity, on Feb. 22, to the panel on impeachment convened by the Northeast Kingdom Democracy Reading Group, and to all who have been informing themselves on this issue, it is now our turn to continue this conversation at our town meetings on Tuesday.

Such conversation is our right and responsibility. Armed with information and references to further reading, we can individually and collectively communicate the facts and history on why Article II of the U.S. Constitution must be exercised: It provides for con-

gressional investigation regarding issues of whether or not the current administration has perpetrated "high crimes and misdemeanors" on the people of this country. Article II provides that the House create Articles of Impeachment — the indictment and accusations. It is the Senate where the facts will be judged, and presided over by the Chief Justice of the Supreme Court.

The decision to impeach Pres. George W. Bush and Vice Pres. Dick Cheney is about their forfeiture of our trust, as our highest elected officials. Impeachment is about "We the People."

Our House of Representatives is charged with detailing accusations of Bush and Cheney's perpetration of lies and deception in order to wage pre-emptive war, their abuse of executive power, violations of the laws of this land (i.e. Geneva Convention) respecting torture, habeas corpus, and rights to privacy (warrantless wiretapping).

As panelist Joseph Gainza implored: "We are the people, the sovereigns ... of this country, and we need to know."

Article II, while it may not be "mandatory," is the single provision of our Constitution that allows the people's elected representatives to fulfill their sworn oath to our Constitution, the founding

continued on next page



17 Town Meeting TELEVISION | 862-3966 x17

LIVE

Town Meeting Day

ELECTION COVERAGE

Begins at 7:30 p.m.

Look for Exit Voices

MORE INFO ON OUR WEBSITE

TUESDAY, MARCH 6, 2007

Watch Coverage ONLINE:
www.Channel17.org

