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DECEMBER 16, 2020 | WWW.VERMONTJOURNAL.COM

VOLUME 59, ISSUE 29

Rockingham Recycling Center has new director

BY JOE MILLIKEN

The Shopper

ROCKINGHAM, Vt. – In an effort to make the Rockingham Recycling Center a more effective and efficient operation, longtime town employee Larry White has been named the new director of the center. The main recycling building, located one mile south of Bellows Falls in Westminster, has been closed and services have been limited during the Covid-19 pandemic.

It was announced at a recent Selectboard meeting by Town Manager Scott Pickup that White has been chosen and will be overseeing the recycling center moving forward as they investigate ways to improve the overall operations.

“Larry has worked for the village in our highway department for many years, and he has shown to be task-orientated, customer focused, and very reliable,” Scott Pickup said in a recent interview.

White has worked for the Rockingham Highway Department for almost 40 years and, after a brief attempt at retirement, decided to return to work with the highway crew a couple months ago. He also has previous experience working at the recycling center, filling in for the previous director when needed. Therefore, Larry was the logical choice to take over as the new director.

The current plan is to have the recycling operation reopen to full capacity when the Co-

vid-19 pandemic is under control, and the town is currently considering the possibility of adding a new compacter for the purposes of resourcing cardboard.

“Larry’s primary job at the Rockingham Recycling Center will be to help improve our revenue capture by more accurately capturing the weight of materials that are being processed, and to continue to work with our elected officials to make smart investments within the facility. We also want to determine if we can capture more material for resource recovery, such as cardboard.”

It is believed that the possibility exists for the recycling center to create more revenue by extracting cardboard from

the mixed recyclables. Additionally, space would also be needed in the main recycling building to store the retrieved cardboard.

There is also a concern about town residents not paying the proper amount when disposing of trash, requesting a flat-rate rather than having the contents weighed to determine the proper cost of disposal.

The ultimate goal is for the recycling center operation to become “self-supporting,” with the residents who utilize the facility paying for the service, rather than the operation requiring tax payer support, which is currently the case.

The center recently added a third recycling day and is now open to the public Monday,

Wednesday, and Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Services include the disposal of household trash, cardboard, lawn debris,

demolition debris, and metal recycling. Trash stickers are available for Rockingham residents at the Town Offices.



Let it snow

Do you want to build a snowman? Jack built one in our office. Find time to get festive! Build a snowman, go ice skating, drink hot cocoa, see Christmas lights. Santa is coming!

PHOTO PROVIDED

Bellows Falls considers development director as full-time position

BY BETSY THURSTON

The Shopper

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – On Tuesday, Dec. 8, the Village Trustees discussed the Bellows Falls Wastewater Department and the proposed full-time position for Development Director Gary Fox.

Municipal Manager Scott Pickup explained that the Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition, or SCADA, software system is “fairly basic” and in order to support specific alarms the wastewater department had needed to upgrade fiber. This will enable isolation of specific alarm systems, eliminating mul-

tiples alarms and saving man hours.

Pickup explained that backup alarms were related to the wearing of screws that grind grit. The added material was “wearing out the equipment more rapidly.” The screws were nearing their 10-year life, and Pickup recommended they be replaced, the three screws cost \$15,000.

James McAuliffe said, “The public [is] entitled to a complete explanation on our spending,” and reminded Pickup of the multi-million dollar cost they paid to upgrade the facility. He wanted to ensure they offer “the best service we can provide for our customers.”

Chief Operator Rob Wheeler was on vacation, but Pickup said the upgrades would result in a dramatic drop of overtime hours.

Also on the agenda, Pickup proposed the development director become a full-time position. He explained that Fox’s projects were becoming more complicated with more layers of grant applications. “Gary’s working more than part-time hours.”

Pickup explained that currently Fox was working on development grants with four to five sources for redevelopment of the island, which would generate \$3-5 million of outside money,

income, and opportunity.

He said they proposed splitting Fox’s time and salary between the town and village and said, “The timing is right.”

Village President Deborah Wright reminded Pickup that the village was not yet in budget season.

McAuliffe said, “I’m a fan of Gary Fox,” but had an issue with the village sharing the cost of Fox’s salary. He agreed anything Fox worked on would benefit the town and fully supported the Selectboard’s decision, but said this is “clearly a town function.”

Jeff Dunbar said, “Development was where [Bellows Falls] needed to be moving.”

SMCS, Springfield Hospital emerge from Chapter 11

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The U.S. Bankruptcy Court for the District of Vermont has confirmed the Chapter 11 reorganization plans of Springfield Medical Care Systems and Springfield Hospital. Confirmation of their Chapter 11 plans is the final step necessary for the two companies to exit Chapter 11 and the culmination of an 18-month debt-adjustment process. The companies’ Chapter 11 exit plans bring existing debt to a level that the companies can each support and lays the groundwork to preserve their charitable health care mission, business operations, and jobs.

“Our Chapter 11 work began with the goals of immediately stabilizing our overall health system, conducting a complete financial and situational assessment, and developing reorganization plans that enabled us to restructure long-term debt in a way that allowed for sustainability. Ensuring local access to high quality healthcare services for our region was always our core consideration,” comments George Lamb, Chairman of the Board for SMCS. “Achieving these goals, in spite of the many sudden and difficult challenges presented by Covid-19, is a

credit to our employees, medical staff, and Board members, who have worked diligently to bring us to where we are today.”

“We are pleased to share this great news with our communities, letting everyone know our team is here, and ready to provide excellent care whenever we are needed,” added Rob Cantu, M.D., Medical Staff President. “The corporate structure is different for the two organizations, since they are now separate corporations with unique governing Boards of Directors. However, patients receiving healthcare services will experience the same quality of care they have come to expect from SMCS and Springfield Hospital.”

“The two organizations will continue to work in close collaboration. Primary care will continue to be available in the communities currently served by SMCS; namely, Springfield, Bellows Falls, Ludlow, Londonderry, Vt., and Charlestown, N.H. Vision and dental services will also continue,” comments Joshua Dufresne, Acting Chief Executive Officer for Springfield Medical Care Systems. “The primary care network will work closely with Springfield Hospital, as it has in

the past, accessing a range of services including emergency care, specialty care, surgery, inpatient care and outpatient testing.”

The Chapter 11 reorganization plan was negotiated with several interested parties and includes reducing long-term debt to a sustainable level for each company. This restructuring provides needed financial stability, opportunity for growth, and a renewed commitment to serving evolving healthcare needs of patients throughout the region.

“This success is certainly an important milestone and our entire team shares great pride in this accomplishment,” commented Michael J. Halstead, Interim Chief Executive Officer for Springfield Hospital. “We must express our appreciation to our creditors for their cooperation regarding our reorganization plans; and especially the State of Vermont for their commitment to Springfield Hospital and SMCS. Ongoing success for both companies requires community support, and choosing local healthcare



Springfield Hospital entrance. PHOTO PROVIDED

services whenever appropriate. We are excited about the future and know that, working together, we can sustain key healthcare services that are conveniently accessible within the region.”

Jim Rumrill, Chairman of the Springfield Hospital Board, added, “Both organizations offer essential services to our region and we have a responsibility to continue these critical services well into the future. We are grateful to our staff, Board members, and the communities we serve for the role they’ve played in helping us reach this important goal.”

For further information, a complete list of healthcare services available at SMCS and Springfield Hospital can be found at www.springfield-med.org or www.springfield-hospital.org.

Community support for teachers, school staff during Covid-19

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The return to school for staff and students has been a mix of feelings of joy, stress, overwhelm, and unknown. While there is so much we can’t control, small tokens of appreciation can go a long way in brightening someone’s day. In response to many who have inquired about it, here are some ideas of ways that community members and organizations can show support for school staff at this time:

- Cards of Appreciation can be sent to an entire school staff or individual staff members
- Sponsor lunch from a local restaurant for staff
- Take-out or packaged snacks or goodies for the staff room
- Provide gift cards to their business that can be used in a school drawing
- Provide a gift certificate for take-out for a teacher
- Free or discounted services at your business or organization
- Organize a car parade to show apprecia-

tion for schools

- Create a video or media production sharing your appreciation
 - Make or purchase tokens of appreciation to help relieve stress – eye pillows, heating pads, bath bombs, lotion, tea, etc.
 - Reach out the school nurses or organizations like the Santa Claus Club about donations of winter gear for students
 - Organize a community-wide display of snowmen or winter displays that families could drive around and see
 - Display lawn signs that say “We love/support our teachers” or something similar
 - Homemade baked goods – must be individually wrapped
- Please contact your school building before making deliveries to make proper arrangements.

Developed by the Springfield School District Wellness Committee.



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DEADLINES

The deadline for all content is **Wed, Dec. 23** for the **December 30** publication.

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EMAIL YOUR BOX / DISPLAY ADS AND CLASSIFIED LISTINGS ads@vermontjournal.com

EMAIL YOUR PRESS RELEASES, ARTICLES, AND PHOTOS editor@vermontjournal.com

Voters to consider withdrawal from Unified School District

WESTMINSTER, Vt. – A special election of the voters of Westminister has been scheduled for Jan. 5, 2021 to consider whether or not to take steps to withdraw from the forcibly merged school district of the towns of Athens, Grafton, and Westminister. This Windham Northeast Union Elementary School District was created by the Vermont State Board of Education in November 2018. Current law makes it possible for a town's voters, after more than one year within a school district, to vote to withdraw. Voters should know that all three towns' schools would remain part of the Windham Northeast Supervisory Union. This change would allow deliberation of school matters, including budgets, to return to town meeting

within the town of Westminister, rather than in a special meeting of the voters of the three towns.

The vote will be by Australian ballot. In-person voting will be held Jan. 5, 2021. All voters may request that an absentee ballot be mailed to them by contacting the town clerk at 802-722-4091. The ballot will include two articles that read as follows:

"Article I: Shall the voters of Westminister approve the withdrawal of the Town of Westminister from the Windham Northeast Union Elementary School District?"

"Article II: In the event Article I is approved, shall the voters of Westminister authorize and instruct the Westminister Selectboard to undertake all steps necessary to do the following:

"1) Form a Westminister Town

School District to be responsible for the operation of schools and educational programs for Westminister students;

"2) Obtain the return to the Westminister Town School District of all school buildings and property owned by the Town School District prior to the forced merger;

"3) Appoint five town residents to an interim Town School District Board to effect the trans-

sition and return of the operation of schools and educational programs to the Town School District; and

"4) Schedule a Town election at the next annual Town meeting of 2021 to elect five town residents to the Town School District Board with staggered terms as existed prior to the forced merger."

If the vote to withdraw is successful in Westminister, then

within 90 days, voters in both Athens and Grafton would vote whether or not to ratify Westminister's withdrawal. If all three towns vote to approve, then the request would go to the Vermont State Board of Education. Current law requires the board to approve the request, as long as the State Board determines that the town students can attend a school that is in compliance with the rules pertaining to

educational programs, and, that it is in the best interest of the state that Athens and Grafton remain as one district.

The town of Westminister will host an informational meeting regarding the vote to withdraw Tuesday, Dec. 29 at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held via Zoom. Look for more details and a link to the meeting at the town's website in the coming days.

Springfield Elks Lodge 1560 supports Santa Claus Club

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Springfield Elks Lodge 1560 recently participated in their third Annual Drive for the Springfield Santa Claus Club. The Elks members donated unwrapped Christmas gifts to the Santa Claus Club. The Elks Lodge chose to participate with 30 gift requests for needy recipients – half for elders and half for chil-

dren. Gifts ranged from warm clothes, books, stationary and postage stamps, video games, gift cards, and favorite toys. The total gifts valued at nearly \$900.

The Elks Lodge would like to thank their loyal members who gave to this charitable organization and supporting their work in our local community.



Springfield Elks member Gloria Gunn (left) with Jeanne Patoine, organizer and co-director of the Santa Claus Club (right), with the gifts the Elks members donated.

PHOTO PROVIDED

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Nominations for 2020 Citizen, Organization of the Year open

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Every year the Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce honors a Citizen of the Year and an Organization of the Year for their outstanding leadership, civic pride, and commitment to the betterment of Springfield and the surrounding area. We invite you to join us in recognizing those who are fostering growth and prosperity in our region.

Do you know a person who has been making a difference in the neighborhood? Maybe

someone who is always immersed in important community activities, or someone who has been devotedly involved with our local government? Are you thinking of a business or organization that always goes above and beyond? A company that supports worthwhile causes and is committed to giving back to the community? Nominate them for an Award of the Year.

Winners of the 2020 Citizen

of the Year and 2020 Organization of the Year will be announced at the Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce's virtual Annual Meeting event in 2021. Help us give thanks to folks who matter. Nomination forms are available on our website: www.springfieldvt.com. Deadline for submissions is Tuesday, Dec. 31, 2020.

For more information, contact the Chamber at 802-885-2779 or alice@springfieldvt.com.

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LOCAL HISTORY

BY RON PATCH

Ron Patch is a Chester native, Chester Historical Society president, and a lifelong antiques dealer.

He can be reached at 802-374-0119 or email knotz69@gmail.com

A historic photo

The photo with this article was a gift of Ted Spaulding to Chester Historical Society. This photo answers questions I have had for years. It dates to the mid-1880s.

The photographer was standing on Main Street looking toward the current Fullerton Inn when he took the photo. The buildings on the left, middle, and right are gone today.

The building on the left was the Ingraham Hotel. By 1883 or so, the name was changed to the Central Hotel. H.R. Barney, "Hub" as he was known, was proprietor.

The unattractive building on the right was Chester Drug Store. F.W. Pierce was the druggist. You'll notice it's almost a flat roof. The beautiful barn between the two buildings was a livery stable.

What makes this photo historical you might wonder? From a June 1888 newspaper we have a report of the businesses lost in this fire. While they are referenced in the article, we had no idea what the buildings looked like 'til now.

The Central Hotel
The Central Hotel had been known as the Ingraham until the early 1880s. Built as the Ingraham Hotel about 1860-1861, new owners changed the name to the Central Hotel in the early 1880s. Today the Fullerton occupies this location. The Ingraham had the same footprint as the hotel today.

Chester Drug Store
The building on the right was the Chester Drug Store. While the image is rather light, I can read the sign over the door: "Chester Drug Store." The roof has a very low pitch being almost flat. F.W. Pierce was a director of The National Bank of Chester.

The livery
The livery stable in the rear between the two buildings was run by Orrick Ball. Look at the rooflines. It's a beautiful building of classic New England design.

The park
On the left you can see the upper end of the green - or park as it was known. Recently I have written about restoring the park to resemble the old days. This is our historic district. I mentioned in that article how the trees were planted around the perimeter of the park, not down



Central Hotel, Livery Stable and Chester Drug Store. PHOTO PROVIDED BY TED SPAULDING

ing to A.D. Fletcher was repeatedly on fire, but by the timely arrival of the fire engine from the depot was saved in a damaged condition.

"It is supposed that the fire originated from a burning chimney in the ell part."

This is just a small portion of the article. The A.D. Fletcher building is Blair Books & More today. The damage this building suffered resulted in the ell of the bookstore being rebuilt longer than before. The other buildings were lost to the fire.

The two-story brick building run by Henry Arms sat where the Masonic Lodge is today. We have one poor quality photo of this brick building.

Included in our upcoming book, "History of Chester's Fire Departments" will be the entire newspaper article, along with the record from our Yo-Semite ledger. We also have the Central Hotel ledger that was saved from the fire. The last entry is of interest.

We have a number of photos of the Ingraham/Central Hotel. Now we can add this photo to our book so readers will have a better understanding of the severity of this fire.

In my opinion the current drug store that replaced Pierce's drug store is much more attractive.

This week's old saying is from Napoleon: "Never interrupt your enemy when he is making a mistake."

the middle as today. You can see a young maple on the perimeter.

I also suggested having an iron railing around the perimeter as Weston has. In this photo you can see a white wooden fence. The fence posts are granite. In my opinion, a park without a railing or fence is like a painting without a frame.

Below are excerpts from a June 1888 newspaper:

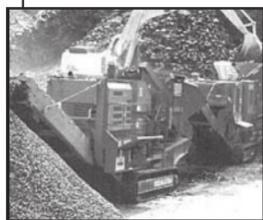
"The most disastrous fire that ever visited Chester occurred early Tuesday morning, destroying the Central Hotel, F. Pierce's building, occupied as a drug and book store and tenement, Henry Arms' brick block, with E.B. Lee, dry goods and groceries, and A. N. Chandler, printing office and barber shop, as tenants.

"The hotel belonged to N.O. Johnson at Colorado Springs, Col., and was occupied by H.R. Barney, hotel, Ernest Buswell, fruit and groceries, J.E. Pollard, clothing, boots and shoes, Walter Hadley, jewelry and stationary and Geo. L. Fletcher for Chester Postoffice. The buildings were entirely consumed, together with the large hotel barns, occupied by Orrick Ball for livery stables.

"The large, fine block belong-

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Gov. Scott encourages registration for VT-Alert

MONTPELIER, Vt. - To help Vermonters stay up to date on the latest Covid-19 guidance and information, Gov. Phil Scott encourages Vermonters to register for Vermont Alert, the state's emergency notification system.

"As Covid-19 continues to be prevalent in the state, Vermonters need convenient access to the information that will help keep themselves and their neighbors safe, and VT-ALERT is a great way to use existing infrastructure to get it out there," said Scott. "With vaccines on the horizon, we also want to communicate directly with the public as information on access-

ing vaccines becomes available." Vermonters can use the system to receive important Covid-related updates, though VT-ALERT will not replace more comprehensive resources like www.healthvermont.gov or www.accd.vermont.gov.

"As we move forward, there is much you need to know to keep yourself, your family, and your community safe. Vermont Alert will help you know how you can do that," said Vermont Emergency Management Director Erica Bornemann. "The system will send important updates to the governor's executive order and other announcements that

will directly impact Vermonters."

Vermonters can register for VT-ALERT by visiting www.vtalert.gov and selecting the alerts they would like to receive. Current subscribers may update their notifications by visiting www.vtalert.gov. Notifications are available via email, text, phone, and the Everbridge mobile app. Users may specify geographic areas for which they want to receive alerts - i.e. the town or county where they live or work.

Vermonters can also follow VT-ALERT on Facebook and Twitter at @VermontAlert.

Featured Pet: Chance



Chance. PHOTO PROVIDED

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. - Are you an experienced dog owner that loves obedience training? Chance is a 2-year-old mixed breed. He is doing very well with obedience training and, with his love of food, is easy to work with. Chance needs a pet-free home and with an owner that is home most of the time. If this handsome boy sounds like the dog for you, call Springfield Humane Society at 802-885-3997 or visit www.spfldhumane.org to fill out an application. We are currently only adopting to Vermont residents.

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opinion

COMMUNITY NEWS

Dear Editor,

I saw some good news this week-end that lifted my spirits and want to share it.

I saw my wife Ashley Hensel-Browning direct "The Nutcracker" with a cast of such hopeful, hard-working Dance Factory dancers, parents, and costumers and snowmakers – things we expect in normal times, right? A little Tchaikovsky, a little snow, some feathers – normal activity in Springfield, Vt., on the second weekend of December. But to see it come alive in Covid times, against the wind – even my own hard heart was touched by that. I know what went into it. Ashley and her students taught and learned outside through Thanksgiving; there were no live audiences, no ticket sales, no certainty about whether the latest guidance from the governor would even allow "The Nutcracker" to go forward at all, right up to the last day!

My point is not to promote the Dance Factory or Ashley, but just to testify to the beautiful things I saw this Saturday. These good people are a light in this world, because of what they do for each other and the community. And really I am so proud of my wife for bringing this "Nutcracker" safely into the barn, against all the storms. It means the world to many families.

I didn't used to know anything

about "The Nutcracker" or what it means. But now I have seen it, both in normal times and what I saw this weekend, and I have come to understand that "The Nutcracker" is an important, character-building project for kids who dance ballet. They work for it, sometimes all their lives. They start out as goslings and mice; and as they grow, their skill grows. Their roles grow. A person can become a Snow Queen, a Prince, an Arabian. They can become the things that they dream about. It's not nothing. I'm no dancer; I'm just telling you what I have seen.

And to see it this weekend in 2020, being filmed at the Bellows Falls Opera House without a set – because Covid didn't allow us into Springfield High School where the show's usual audiences and props are gathered. One scene at a time allowed in the theater, some filmed in single takes by SAPA TV; with Russian Cossack dancers waiting on the sidewalk outside the Opera House in masks for their turn to get their temperatures checked. Mark Derosia climbing way, way higher than a man with a gray beard and a bag of snow should legally climb, let alone in a mask at all times, to make sure that the Snow Queen's magical spell could be cast. The total delight in the eyes of the goslings as they scooted back under Mother Goose's

skirt.

I'm saying these are things money can't buy. Only love can pull them off. I saw tremendous love, hope, and joy at "The Nutcracker" this weekend. What truly shines a light of hope for me is that it wasn't just this weekend. These dancers move all year every year. They'll be back at the Dance Factory on Monday.

It's not for nothing that this Nutcracker is made by The Dance Factory. Susan Hagan started it 35 years ago on the factory floor of the Fellows building – long, long before the renovation. Ashley was among the early students there. What I saw this weekend makes me look back on all the changes, everything that has been done and made. It gives hope, this thing they've built on that factory floor in Springfield – and this year in Bellows Falls. It gives a lot of hope, that we are people who make things.

Thank you Ashley, Kate, and Mark Derosia, and everyone at The Dance Factory, for making this magic happen. I believe. And for folks who want to see for themselves: look on SAPA TV and Okemo Valley TV!

Sincerely,
Sean Whalen
Weathersfield, Vt.

Dear Editor,

Due to the rising number of Covid-19 cases in the area, it has been decided that the Cavendish Fletcher Community Library will return to curbside service as of Dec. 15, 2020.

The library will continue to provide a wide range of services during this time. The library has expanded its range of broadcast to up to 400 feet from the library. There is no password.

Donna and I will continue to serve you in person Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday, from 9 a.m.-6:30 p.m., and Saturday, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. To access services, patrons may come to the lobby and ring the bell for

service. We ask that patrons sanitize their hands and wear a mask.

We will circulate books and movies and offer printing, scanning, and faxing services free of charge. All books and movies are sanitized at the library.

The library will continue to be an Everyone Eats Meal distribution spot. Simply ring the bell for take out.

We continue our virtual programming such as story time on Facebook live and other programming for your entertainment and education. Please follow us on Facebook to enjoy these programs.

We continue to offer our enhanced digital offerings so that pa-

trons may borrow eBooks, movies, TV series, audiobooks, and music online via Hoopla and Libby.

If you would like support accessing these or any other services, call the library at 802-226-7503 and we will help you.

The Cavendish Fletcher Community Library is here for you. We may be behind a door, but it is our mission to continue to serve you however and whenever we can.

We are in this together. We are a community. We are Cavendish.

Sincerely,
Kata Welch, director
Cavendish Fletcher Community Library

The Grinch did not steal Christmas Eve

REGION – For many churches, attendance at their Christmas Eve service is historically one of the highest of the year. This year many houses of worship are not able to have their usual Christmas Eve services due to the Covid-19 restrictions. The Pandemic Grinch, however, has not stolen the Christmas Eve service entirely.

A virtual Christmas Eve service is the result of collaboration of members of five area churches. They all belong to a loosely formed group called ECCO, Experimental Covenantal Community Outreach. Members

from the United Church of Ludlow, the First Congregational Church UCC of Springfield, the United Church of Bellows Falls UCC, the Grafton Community Church, and the Acworth Congregational Church in New Hampshire are all contributing to this unique virtual service. Each group is responsible for a segment of the worship service, which includes scripture readings and music. There is traditional Christmas music that you can sing to and special music that you can listen to. Patrick Cody of Okemo Valley TV has generously overseen the production of this virtual service.

There are many options for attending this Christmas Eve service safely from the comfort of your own home. It will be broadcast on three public access television stations serving the area at 7 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

Okemo Valley TV (Comcast 1076 and VTel 166), SAPA TV (Comcast 1077 and VTel 160), and the Falls Area Community Television FACT TV (Comcast 1076 and VTel 172) have all agreed to broadcast it simultaneously, for which the participants are grateful.

If more flexibility in time is needed or if viewers do not have access to cable, it will also be available for viewing anytime on Christmas Eve from the websites of each of the stations, on Facebook, YouTube, and from each of the church's websites.

While it will not be the same as an in-person Christmas Eve service, the members of ECCO wish you a safe and happy Christmas and hope this option will be uplifting during this unprecedented year of the Pandemic Grinch.

OLLI Distinguished Speakers Series

REGION – The University of Vermont is once again offering an online Distinguished Speakers Series in the spring of 2021. Since we still cannot meet in person for our local popular OLLI programs, the statewide OLLI director and staff have put together an exciting lineup of speakers on current topics.

Their first semester last fall was very successful and popular. Several hundred people participated throughout the state, expressing many positive comments about the experience.

See the OLLI ad in this newspaper for more information. To register, go to www.learn.uvm.edu.

www.learn.uvm.edu/olli.

There is a savings of over 50% when you sign up early for all seven lectures by Jan. 22, 2021.

You do need to have a device with Internet connection to participate. The format they will be using is Adobe Connect – not Zoom. No download is required, and it is very simple to access via a link provided after registering.

The lectures will be from Jan. 27 to April 21 and will be every other Wednesday from 1-2:30 p.m.

This is a creative way to add enrichment to your lives during these challenging times.



Join OLLI's Online Distinguished Speaker Series (via Adobe Connect; no download needed; access to internet required)

Wednesdays, January – April 2021 (see dates below)
Historical. Timely. Relevant.

Save Over 50% when you sign up early for all seven lectures!
All seven online lectures: \$30; Register by 1/22/21 for this special price.
Individual lectures: \$10.

- 1/27: The Climate Crisis: Where Do We Stand? w/ Bill McKibben, founder and senior advisor emeritus of 350.org; Schumann Distinguished Scholar in Environmental Studies at Middlebury College, and a fellow of the American Academy of Art and Sciences
- 2/10: The Abenaki World: Animacy, Identity, and Personhood w/ Melody Walker, Citizen of the Elnu Abenaki Band; Abenaki educator, activist, and artist
- 2/24: The Happiest People w/ Dr. Jonathan Biggane, Associate Professor, California State University, Fresno
- 3/10: Racial Disparities in VT: From Real Data to Radical Empathy w/ Dr. Stephanie Seguino, UVM Professor of Economics
- 3/24: Current Controversies in Public Health and Health Policy w/ Dr. Jan Carney, Associate Dean for Public Health and Health Policy, UVM Larner College of Medicine
- 4/7: Two Decades of Vladimir Putin's Kremlin Rule, 2000-2020: An Assessment and Analysis of What is to Come w/ Dr. Kevin McKenna, UVM Professor Emeritus
- 4/21: Paris 1914 w/ the Merz Trio

Registration and lecture information: www.learn.uvm.edu/olli Call: 802-656-5817

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Weekly SUDOKU

by Linda Thistle

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Place a number in the empty boxes in such a way that each row across, each column down and each small 9-box square contains all of the numbers from one to nine.

DIFFICULTY THIS WEEK: ◆◆◆

◆ Moderate ◆◆ Challenging
◆◆◆ HOO BOY!

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King Crossword

ACROSS

- Porter's burdens
- Before
- Dull sound of impact
- Enticement
- Blend
- Abundant
- Opera show-stopper
- U.K. broadcaster
- Black, in verse
- Like a lot
- Solid ground
- Entire
- Smack
- Zilch
- Bees' home
- Parsons or Gaffigan
- Slangy negative
- out a living
- One of the Brady Bunch
- Grown-up bug
- Brownish orange
- Warmonger
- Barbershop tools
- First victim
- Luau bowlful
- "American —"
- Ring out

DOWN

- Spill the beans
- Emanation
- Determination
- Birthplace of Starbucks
- Fireplace bit
- Cage component
- Barn bird
- Alaskan metropolis
- Vortex
- Aviv
- Get larger
- Cry out
- Italian fountain site
- Ireland
- Venusian vessel?
- Lair
- Appomattox surrenderer
- Frequently
- Serengeti beast
- Chinese dynasty
- Choir member
- Sharpen
- Raise
- Above
- Lotto win
- Incredible
- Mandible
- Call — day
- Make a comeback
- Warble
- Bloodhound's clue
- Quarterback Tony
- Dispatched
- Mimic
- Foundation
- Didn't pay yet

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CHURCH SERVICES

obituaries

Kevin Shrader, 1957-2020

WESTMINSTER, Vt. – Kevin Shrader, 63, of Westminster, Vt., passed away Monday, Dec. 7, 2020, as a result of a workplace accident. He was the loving husband of wife Beth M. (Schuster) Shrader and the owner of All Seasons Tree Service, having been in the tree care industry for four decades in both New Jersey and Vermont.

Born in 1957 in Morristown, N.J., he was the fourth child of Fred and Dorothy Shrader of East Hanover, N.J. He is survived by sister-in-law Janette Schuster of Walpole, N.H.; siblings Sandford Shrader and wife Maureen of East Hanover, N.J., Nancy Ochs of Blairstown, N.J., and David Shrader and wife Sharon of Amherst, Va.; and five nieces and nephews. Kevin grew up and attended the local schools in East Hanover, N.J., and moved to Westminster in 2003.

Kevin's passions were his family and his Alaskan malamute sled dogs. He was happiest when camping, fishing, and boating with his wife of 25 years and dog Avalanche. He was a hardworking, loyal, and generous friend and a 10-year



Kevin Shrader, 1957-2020. PHOTO PROVIDED

member of the Westminster Fire Department who never refused to help a community member in need.

A tree planting and celebration of his life will take place in the spring. Kevin was on the advisory board of the New England Chapter of the International Society of Arboriculture; and in lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made to their high school scholarship fund. Send checks to New England Chapter of the ISA, P.O. Box 435, Norwell, MA 02061, Attn: NEC-ISA High School Scholarship Fund.

Patricia Beach Sullivan, 1928-2020

UNITY, N.H. – Patricia Beach Sullivan, 92, formerly of Blodgett Landing in Newbury, N.H., died Thursday, Dec. 10, 2020, in Unity, N.H. Pat was born in Kent, Ohio Nov. 19, 1928, to Everett Orr and Florence Viola (Utley) Beach. She spent her early childhood years in Ravenna, Ohio with her young family. Tragically, in 1936, when Pat was 7 years old, her father passed away after an automobile accident. Her mother was remarried to Lawrence Gordon "Larry" LaFrancis Aug. 10, 1937 in Columbia City, Ind. Soon thereafter, the family moved to Glens Falls, N.Y. and later to Larry's home state of Vermont, making their home in Springfield.



Patricia Beach Sullivan, 1928-2020. PHOTO PROVIDED

wonderful parent and grandparent. She had a uniquely detailed memory and loved to share stories from throughout her life, with a special focus on fun and amusing things her children and grandchildren had done over the years.

Survivors include three children Patricia Schomann (Heinz) of Weathersfield, Vt., Kathleen "Kitty" Wilson of East Montpelier, Vt., and John W. Sullivan Jr. (Andrea) of Albuquerque, N.M.; two sisters Mary Pelletier of Springfield, Vt. and Cheryl Gasset of Newport, N.H.; six grandchildren Scott, Rob, Abby, Ryan, Taylor, and Ethan; eight great-grandchildren Cody, Corey, Cameron, Megan, Miles, James, Iris, and Logan; one niece and two nephews and many other relatives and lifelong friends.

She was preceded in death by her parents, her beloved husband John W. Sullivan Sr., and one brother John Eldridge Beach.

In lieu of gifts, the family suggests a making a donation to a library of your choice in honor of Pat's love of reading throughout her life and especially to pass the time comfortably during the past few years when her age prevented her from enjoying many of her former activities. The family would like to extend a warm thank you to the staff at Sullivan County Healthcare for their assistance keeping Pat happy and comfortable for the past five years.

Arrangements are in the care of Knight Funeral Home, Windsor, Vt. Condolences for the family may be left at www.knightfuneralhomes.com.

Cheryl J. Ellison, 1951-2020

LUDLOW, Vt. – Cheryl J. Ellison, 69, passed away Tuesday morning, Dec. 8, 2020 at her home with her loving husband by her side. She was born March 24, 1951 in Rutland, Vt., the daughter of William and Stella (Udart) Cook.

Cheryl worked as a nurse for 40 years, working at the Gill Home in Ludlow, Vt., Hanson Court, and Springfield Health & Rehab Center, both in Springfield, Vt. She also worked with Visiting Nurse Association and Professional Nursing and one-on-one care for a child in Brattleboro, Vt. Cheryl loved her job, loved her patients, and was a dedicated and caring nurse.

On Oct. 10, 1992, Cheryl married Randy Ellison in Tyson, Vt., and they shared 28 wonderful years together.

She enjoyed the outdoors, liked hunting, enjoyed boating, and loved spending time on Lake Rescue. She enjoyed reading and knitting; she knitted mittens for babies and was always willing to lend a helping hand. She loved animals, especially her mini dachshund Dalton.

She is survived by her husband Randy, daughter Andrea



Cheryl J. Ellison, 1951-2020. PHOTO PROVIDED

Cook, two brothers Michael Cook and Christopher Cook, two sisters Pat Bowman and Suzanne Fox, one grandson, and several nieces, nephews, and cousins.

She was predeceased by her parents and one brother Timothy Cook.

A celebration of life service will be held at a later date.

Memorial contributions may be made to Black River Good Neighbors, 105 Main St, Ludlow, VT 05149, or to the Gill Odd Fellows Home, 8 Gill Terrace.

Davis Memorial Chapel is assisting with arrangements.

Jane E. Cyr, 1951-2020

CHESTER, Vt. – Jane Edith (Dodge) Cyr, 69, passed away early morning Dec. 1, 2020 at Dartmouth-Hitchcock Medical Center in Lebanon, N.H., after an unexpected illness.

Jane was the daughter of Dean and Thelma (Lane) Dodge, born Oct. 10, 1951 in Barre, Vt. She was a graduate of Chester High School in Chester, Vt.

Jane is survived by her three sons Keith (Melinda) Cyr, Trevor (Morgan) Cyr, Travis Cyr, and Bevin Lore; four grandchildren Ayja, Camryn, Aloura, and Jace; a great-granddaughter Harper; her brother Butch (Carol) Dodge and her sister Charlotte Luinetti; as well as many nieces, nephews, and cousins. She was loved by so many more.

She was predeceased by her mother and father and sister Janet Record.

Jane retired from the Putney School as a travel coordinator. After retirement, she continued to work for Record Concrete as a bookkeeper. Prior to this, Jane worked a variety of jobs as a hardworking single mother.

Above all else, Jane's pride and



Jane E. Cyr, 1951-2020. PHOTO PROVIDED

joy was her family. The most important thing to her was her sons, their families, and her grandchildren. Jane loved to shop, loved finding the best deals, and sharing her findings with her family and friends. Jane enjoyed the warm weather, sunbathing for hours, and spending time at the beaches with her girlfriends.

A celebration of life gathering will be held at a later date.

Davis Memorial Chapel in Springfield is assisting with arrangements.

Kenneth F. Smith, 1945-2020

WALPOLE, N.H. – Kenneth Frederick Smith, 75, of Walpole, N.H., passed away unexpectedly the morning of Dec. 9, 2020. He was born Aug. 2, 1945 in Bellows Falls, Vt., the son of Harold Ernest Smith and Ester Marion Wolfe.

Ken worked as a roofer for The Melanson Company for over 20 years before ending the remainder of his career as a roofer at Longs Roofing. He was a lifelong resident of Walpole, where he built a log cabin to raise his family in. One of his biggest accomplishments in life was being a father.

Ken was an avid hunter, and it was apparent just by looking at the many years of trophy racks displayed on his front porch. He enjoyed fishing, driving back roads, and his array of guns.

Ken was a kind, gentle man with a love for his kids, grandchildren, and friends. If you ever stopped in for a visit, you could guarantee he would persuade you into a game of Pales-tine. He looked forward to the many friends and family members that gathered around the table over the years for a good game of cards.

Ken is survived by his siblings Beverly and Kenneth Gunner-son, Douglas and Lynda Smith,



Kenneth F. Smith, 1945-2020. PHOTO PROVIDED

Alan and Linda Smith, Billy and Anna Smith, and Karen Provencher; children Aaron and Tina Bridge, Timothy Smith, Heidi and Barry Metcalf; grandchildren Emily and Cary Burnham, Rebecca Crawford, Brandon Shaffer, Kristie Shaffer, Nathan Shaffer, Jason Shaffer; great-grandchildren Mason, Jacob, Jasmine, and Jordan; and several nieces and nephews.

He is predeceased by his parents, sister Judith Snide, brother Dennis Smith, brother-in-law Pete Provencher, and granddaughter Deserae Allen.

A Celebration of Life service will be held at a later date.

CHRISTMAS SERVICES

ASCUTNEY

Brownsville Community United Methodist Church, 66 Brownsville-Hartland Rd.

On Thursday, Dec. 24, there will be a Christmas Eve service outside the Brownsville Community Church at 7 p.m. The service will include special music from guest Ben Fuller and more. The service will also be live-streamed on the church's Facebook page at www.facebook.com/brownsvillecommunitychurch.

BELLOWS FALLS, VT.

Immanuel Episcopal Church, 20 Church St.

Please join us for our Advent season Sundays at 10 a.m. via Zoom. Sign up and receive the links through Facebook @ ImmanuelEpiscopalChurch. For more information, go to www.immanuelepiscopal.org.

SPRINGFIELD

Unitarian Universalist Church, 21 Fairground Rd.

On Thursday, Dec. 24 at 4 p.m., join us for "Stories and Carols" Christmas Eve Service with Rev. Mellen Kennedy, Rev. Will Hunter, Julane Deener, and the virtual choir. Come ready to sing all your favorite carols. Please bring a candle for a candle lighting ceremony. Stay for a virtual social hour. We're delighted that members of the Weathersfield Center Congregation will be joining us. Please join us via Zoom at <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/6130779853>.

CHURCH SERVICES: We are running Social Distancing Church Services on an alternating schedule. Subject to space. All services are posted online at www.VermontJournal.com.

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Lifeline is a government assistance program. It is non-transferable. Only eligible consumers may enroll in the program. There is a limit of one discount per household. If you have others questions, or would like TDS to mail you an application, please contact TDS at **1-888-CALL-TDS** or visit <https://tdstelecom.com/lifeline.html>.





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Registration open for Komen Virtual Snowshoe events

REGION - Linda Maness, Susan G. Komen Development Manager for Vermont and New Hampshire, has announced that registration is now open for the 2021 Komen Virtual Snowshoe events. Registration is free and while fundraising is not required, it is strongly encouraged. For the safety of Komen constituents, many of whom are immune-compromised, and due to in-person events continuing to face restrictions due to Covid-19, all snowshoe participants will be asked to #Snowshoe-WhereYouAre for the 2021 Komen Vermont Virtual Snowshoe Sunday, Jan. 17 and for the 2021

Komen New Hampshire Virtual Snowshoe Saturday, Feb. 6. Those interested in forming a team or registering as an individual, or in donating, may visit www.komennewengland.org/snowshoe. Participants are invited to snowshoe in their backyards, in local and state parks, anywhere that has enough snow this winter - the Vermont and New Hampshire Snowshoe websites include a New England snowshoe location suggestion list - and to virtually share their personal stories, support one another, and raise money to save lives.

Jessi Dussault of Alstead, N.H., said of the 2020 Komen Vermont Snowshoe, "This was my first Komen event, and hasn't been my last! I love a good fundraiser, especially one in the outdoors, but this event was very special since I came to it as a recent breast cancer survivor. Well-organized, with great communication, the shinning moment, of course, was the event itself. I couldn't believe the love, support, and joy that came from every person there. I felt like I was among family. Komen is family. Yours, mine, and all the people who have, or will be touched by breast cancer. Even though we will not come together in-person, come feel the love, virtually!" Dion Snowshoes, of Bennington, Vt., returns as the Official Snowshoe Partner of both Ko-



Jessi Dussault of Alstead, N.H., a 2020 snowshoer, is looking forward to taking part in a 2021 Komen Virtual Snowshoe event. PHOTO PROVIDED

The Grafton Inn is the Vermont Snowshoe Official Lodging Partner and Hampton Inn and Suites of Tilton, N.H., has partnered with the New Hampshire Virtual Snowshoe. Lodging information is available on the individual event websites. Proceeds from both New England snowshoeing fundraisers will support the Komen Helpline that provides free, professional support services to anyone with breast cancer questions or concerns,

and the Komen Treatment Assistance Program, that was created to help those in financial need during breast cancer treatment. Both the Helpline and TAP are accessible by calling 1-877-GO-KOMEN (1-877-465-6636) or by email at helpline@komen.org. Calls are answered by a trained, caring staff member, specialist, or oncology social worker in English and Spanish, Monday through Friday from 9 a.m. - 10 p.m. Additionally, proceeds will also support Komen's national breast cancer research program. For more information, please contact Linda Maness at 802-548-4691 or by email at LManess@komen.org.

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outdoors," says Michael Snyder, commissioner of the Department of Forests, Parks, and Recreation. "Enjoying the outdoors is good for your body, mind, and spirit. And gifting a Vermont State Parks experience connects people to the natural world, promotes health and wellness, and provides the lasting gift of shared time with family and friends." Gift certificates are electronic documents that are issued by email and can be forwarded to the person you are gifting it to. With nothing to mail or package, this is a fast and completely touch-free gift. Gift cards are attractive credit card-sized cards, and these are mailed to the giver's home to be gifted as they wish.

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Snowmobile travelers to exercise caution

RUTLAND, Vt. - Green Mountain National Forest officials are advising snowmobilers to exercise caution when snowmobiling. GMNF officials remind snowmobile enthusiasts to heed to all gates and signs and to stay off roads and trails that are closed. Forest Service employees and several snowmobile clubs have been working to clear trees and other debris from trails. However, trail users should use extra caution as downed tree hazards are likely. Snowmobilers are also asked to adhere to Covid-19 precautions.

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Weather permitting, snowmobile use is allowed on designated trails beginning Wednesday, Dec. 16, 2020, and ending on Thursday, April 15, 2021. The GMNF and VAST cooperate to maintain more than 470 miles of National Forest System trails that are part of the larger statewide snowmobile network. "All of these trails allow mixed uses, so people are [also] snowshoeing, hiking, and cross-country skiing... Snowmobilers should travel responsibly and yield to other users," said John Sinclair, forest supervisor for the Green Mountain and Finger Lakes National Forests. All snowmobiles must be legally registered, have liability insurance, and operators must purchase a VAST Trails Maintenance Assessment decal. Officials also encourage winter trail users to pack a flashlight, cell phone, food, and extra warm clothing in case of an emergency.

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SNOW PLOWING

LUDLOW, Vt. - Snowplowing and sanding, Ludlow area, residential only. Reasonable rates. Contact SK Logging at 802-384-0313. (01/12)

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9	1	8	7	3	5	6	4	2
6	2	5	1	8	9	4	7	3
1	7	9	2	4	3	8	6	5
4	8	3	5	7	6	1	2	9
2	9	6	3	5	4	7	1	8
8	5	1	6	9	7	2	3	4
7	3	4	8	2	1	9	5	6

King Crossword

Answers
Solution time: 25 mins.

B	A	G	S	E	R	E	T	H	U	D
L	U	R	E	M	I	X	R	I	F	E
A	R	I	A	B	B	C	E	B	O	N
B	A	T	T	L	E	L	O	V	E	
T	E	R	R	A	F	I	R	M	A	
W	H	O	L	E	H	I	T	N	I	L
H	I	V	E	J	I	M	A	I	N	T
E	K	E	J	A	N	I	M	A	G	O
T	E	R	R	A	C	O	T	T	A	
H	A	W	K	R	A	Z	O	R	S	
A	B	E	L	P	O	I	I	D	O	L
P	E	A	L	O	W	L	N	O	M	E
E	D	D	I	T	E	L	G	R	O	W

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PUBLIC NOTICE

Town of Springfield Selectboard
96 Main Street
Springfield, Vermont
(Updated Public Notice - December 14, 2020)

This is a Public Notice that the Town of Springfield intends to sell property located at 396 Massey Road, Springfield, Vermont to the highest bidder. Property will be sold "as is". The property consists of 6.5 acres with an older mobile home and 36 x 20 barn (Parcel 010/1/45). The Town reserves the right to reject any and all offers.

Interested parties must send a sealed bid into Interim Town Manager, Frank Heald, no later than Friday, January 15, 2020 by 4:00 PM. Mail To:

Mr. Frank Heald, Interim Town Manager
SEALED BID
Springfield Town Office
96 Main Street
Springfield, VT 05156

Pursuant to Title 24: Chapter 33: Subchapter 9; § 1061. Conveyance of real estate, the Town must give Public Notice at least 30 days before the proposed conveyance. Unless a petition is filed with the Town Clerk signed by at least five percent, (5%), of the registered voters objecting to the sale, the Selectboard may authorize the conveyance.

Town of Springfield
Selectboard
December 14, 2020

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS CONSTRUCTION INSPECTION SERVICES

The Town of Chester is seeking proposals for Construction Inspection Services for the Popple Dungeon Road culvert replacement located in Chester, Vermont. The Municipality is seeking a Consultant with expertise in engineering and permitting

The Town of Chester is the recipient of the Transportation Alternatives Grant funded through the Vermont Agency of Transportation and will be using these funds to pay for this project. Therefore, the project will be developed according to the guidelines established by the VTrans Municipal Assistance Bureau and will be required to be in compliance with the Federal and State standards and policies.

For a copy of the Request for Proposal please contact Julie Hance at the Chester Town Office, 556 Elm Street, Chester, VT, 05143, (802) 875-2173, or julie.hance@chestervt.gov. Office hours are by appointment Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m.

All proposals should be submitted as an electronic submission via e-mail with the technical and cost proposals submitted as two separate files, clearly marked as such, including the project name. Please inform the Contact Person prior to submission to avoid proposal being relegated to their spam or junk email files.

All proposals are due on or before 3:00 p.m. on Monday, December 28, 2020.

INVITATION TO BID Chester TAP TA17(9)

Sealed bids from pre-qualified contractors shall be accepted until 11:00 AM, prevailing time on Friday January 15th, 2021 at the Chester Town Office (556 Elm Street, Chester, VT, 05143) for construction of the project hereinafter described. Bid opening will occur immediately after the bid submittal deadline. The time of receiving and opening bids may be postponed due to emergencies or unforeseen conditions.

Sealed BIDS shall be marked in the lower left-hand corner: Bid Documents: Chester TAP TA17(9)

Each BID must be accompanied by a certified check payable to the Town of Chester for five percent (5%) of the total amount of the BID. A BID bond may be used in lieu of a certified check.

PREQUALIFICATION OF CONTRACTORS: All bidders on this project shall be on the Agency of Transportation's prequalified list under the category listed below or shall have submitted a complete prequalification application to the Agency of Transportation, Contract Administration, a minimum of 10 working days prior to the bid opening. For information contact Jon Winter at (802) 622-1267.

All bidders shall be on the current VTRANS Contract Administration pre-qualified list "Contractors List of Bridge Construction Category".

Bids submitted by bidders that exceed their Maximum Dollar Capacity Rating (MDCR) as determined by the Vermont Agency of Transportation on an annual basis will be considered non-responsive.

LOCATION: Beginning at a point on Popple Dungeon Road (TH-10) in Chester, approximately 3.2 miles west of the intersection of Popple Dungeon Road and Grafton Street (State Route 35) in the town of Chester.

TYPE OF CONSTRUCTION: Work to be performed under this project includes: the removal and replacement of the existing culvert with a bridge on the existing alignment, with associated roadway and channel work.

CONTRACT COMPLETION DATE: The Contract shall be completed on or before October 15th, 2021.

OBTAINING PLANS: An electronic copy of the plans and bid documents may be obtained from VHB at no cost by contacting Jason Keener through email at jkeener@vhb.com or by phone at 802-497-6120.

PLANS, SPECIFICATIONS AND PROPOSAL MAY BE SEEN AT THE OFFICE OF:

Town of Chester, 556 Elm Street, Town of Chester, VT 05143.

STANDARD SPECIFICATIONS: This contract is governed by the Vermont Agency of Transportation ("VTrans") 2018 Standard Specifications for Construction.

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(06/01/21 - TFN - 26)

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(06/15/21 - 52)

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(08/17/21 - TFN - 52)

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(06/01/21 - 26)

community

AUTOMOTIVE/REAL ESTATE

Fraud Watch: Santa and Sister —

REGION – The end of Medicare Open Enrollment may have stopped the months-long barrage of legal, questionable, and illegal advertising only to clear the way for other similarly annoying campaigns. The need to maintain awareness and a healthy degree of skepticism remains. Here are two dangerous scams that attack your wallet and your identity:

The Santa Scam

The Santa Scam is often quite difficult to separate from what may be a legitimate business offer. Appearing as an email message or coming as a phone call, it urges the purchase of a letter from Santa. The advertisement offers a personal, “certified” letter from

Santa for children, grandchildren, etc. A credit card charge covers the purchase plus other expenses in return for the letter, a naughty and nice list of names with the recipient’s name prominently featured in the “nice” column, and possibly a small gift or a video from Santa with a Merry Christmas wish.

Whether a scam or not, the fall out from this purchase can be significant. First, if it’s fraud, you fell for the scam. Second, you provided verification of your existence, which may include email address, mailing address, credit card, and possibly a phone number. You gave away the identity and contact information of a child who may, in turn, be victimized. When you clicked on the link in the email, you most likely confirmed your city or town, type of computer, operating system, Internet provider, and browser – all in a single click!

While giving a letter from Santa may seem to be a great idea, it can be “nightmare” that keeps giving, even in situations when there is no scam.

Before placing your order, consider alternatives. Is there a local organization or high school that is raising money by sending letters from Santa? What about contacting a local business for a card and package from Santa? Most will welcome the additional business during the current pandemic. Finally, if you still want to use one of these services, conduct an independent online review through the Better Business Bureau or with your state consumer protection agency. Know what you are buying before clicking.

The Sister Scam

The second warning is the so-called “Sister Scam” or Secret Sister Gift Exchange. The scam reads like this: “I’m looking for six women who would be interested in a pre-holiday gift exchange. You only have to buy one \$10 gift and send it to your secret sister. You will then receive 6-36 gifts in return. Let me know if you’re interested, and I will send you the information for your secret sister. We all could use some happy mail!”

If this sounds like the good old pyramid scam, it is! The scam waves an opportunity for you to receive dozens of gifts in a short period of time. Assuming this process of recruiting gift-givers were to really

work, by the 10th repetition of the cycle of six it would require more than the total number of “sisters” in the United States.

The Better Business Bureau advises to ignore it. Don’t try to beat this system; you will lose. Report it. Social media including Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, and YouTube respond to notices of fraud.

Report an email or a website to your service provider as well as your state consumer protection agency or the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Never give personal information to anyone whose true identity is not known to you, and be suspicious of false claims stating that the scheme is legal. Some of these scams even claim to be endorsed by the government as a way to avoid contracting Covid-19. Pure and simple, they are crimes and you have the ability to fight them.

Elliott Greenblatt is a retired educator and coordinator of the AARP Vermont Fraud Watch Network. He hosts a CATV program, Mr. Scammer, distributed by GNAT-TV in Sunderland, Vt.

Coronavirus Relief Measures, retirement plans

REGION – In March 2020, Congress passed the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security Act, which included several provisions designed to help retirement savers cope with the financial fallout from the pandemic. Among these temporary measures were special rules for required minimum distributions, coronavirus-related distributions, and retirement plan loans. In late June, the IRS released Notices 2020-50 and 2020-51, which clarify many of the details for both retirement plan participants and sponsors. Following are some important details for plan sponsors to consider.

Required minimum distributions
One CARES Act provision allows the suspension of 2020 RMDs from defined contribution plans and IRAs. Plan participants who prefer to forgo RMDs from their accounts, or to withdraw a lower amount than required, may do so. The waiver also applies to account holders who turned 70.5 in 2019 and would have had to take their first RMD by April 1, 2020 – unless they actually took their first RMD in 2019 – as well as beneficiaries of inherited accounts and those whose required

beginning date is April 1, 2021.

For participants who may have taken an RMD before the CARES Act took effect, the IRS has clarified that all 2020 RMDs, even those received as early as Jan. 1, may be rolled back into a qualified account by Aug. 31, 2020. Moreover, such a rollover would not be subject to the one-rollover-per-year rule.

This ability to undo a 2020 RMD also applies to beneficiaries who would otherwise be ineligible to carry out a rollover. However, in their case, the money must be rolled back into the original account.

This provision does not apply to defined benefit plans.

Coronavirus-related withdrawals

Another measure in the CARES Act allows “qualified” retirement plan participants to take one or more plan distributions during the 2020 calendar year totaling no more than \$100,000 of their vested balance without having to pay the 10% early-withdrawal penalty. There is no mandatory tax withholding on these distributions, and qualified individuals can take distributions regardless of actual need.

Participants may choose to spread the income from these coronavirus-related distributions, or CRDs, ratably over a period of three years to help manage the

associated income tax liability. They may also recontribute any portion of the distribution that would otherwise qualify for a tax-free rollover to an eligible retirement plan over a three-year period, and the amounts repaid would be treated as a trustee-to-trustee transfer, avoiding tax consequences.

Participants will report a coronavirus-related distribution on their federal income tax returns and on Form 8915-E, Qualified 2020 Disaster Retirement Plan Distributions and Repayments. They can also use this form to report any recontributed amounts.

Coronavirus-related loans

The CARES Act also included two provisions that apply to plan loans. First, between March 27 and Sept. 22, 2020, “qualified” retirement plan participants were able to borrow up to 100% of their vested account balance or \$100,000, whichever is less. And second, any qualified participant with an outstanding loan who has payments due between March 27, 2020, and Dec. 31, 2020 may be able to delay those payments by one year.

Participants who delay their payments should understand that once the delay period ends, their loan payments will be recalculated to include interest that accrued over the time frame and reamortized over a period up to one year longer than the original term of the loan.

Who is considered “qualified”?

In the CARES Act, “qualified individuals” were originally defined as account holders who were diagnosed with the coronavirus, those whose spouses or dependents were diagnosed with the illness, and those who experienced certain adverse financial consequences as a result of the pandemic. IRS Notice 2020-50 expanded that definition to include a participant, spouse, or household member who has experienced pandemic-related financial setbacks as a result of:

- A quarantine, furlough, layoff, or reduced work hours
- An inability to work due to lack of child care
- Owning a business forced to close or reduce hours
- Reduced pay or self-employment income
- A rescinded job offer or delayed start date for a job

Adoption of the provisions

Plan sponsors are not required to adopt the CARES Act loan and withdrawal provisions. If they choose to do so, as with the RMD provision, sponsors have until the last day of the plan year beginning in 2022 to adopt amendments.

If a plan chooses not to adopt the CRD provision, sponsors should note that qualified participants may still choose to categorize certain other types of distributions – including distributions that in any other year would be considered RMDs – as CRDs on their tax returns, as long as the total amount does not exceed \$100,000.

To read more about each topic discussed in this article, visit www.vermontjournal.com. Article written by Huntley Financial Services. For more information, contact Mark Huntley at 888-922-1035.

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Located on a quiet side street this lovely home offers ample living space and is within walking distance to schools, downtown and much more. Step into the kitchen and enjoy the sunny view to the backyard garden space and sitting area. The dining room offers space for the largest of family dinners and one can retire to the living room or perhaps sit on the enclosed porch on those warm summer evenings. A family room, den and office space if one chooses to work from home. With 4 bedrooms and 2 baths there is room for the family and guests. The full basement has room for a workshop and the 3 car garage offers more working space. This charming older home owned by one family has never been on the market. The workmanship with built-ins, hardwood floors, lots of closets and attention to detail is sure to be appreciated by the buyer. **REDUCED TO \$139,900**

Configure this property to your liking. This property can easily be a three unit with Three one bedroom units or as two units with a one bedroom first floor a two bedroom townhouse. Located near the Chester Depot with the Williams River to the rear, this property is within walking distance to all the local amenities. Easy care with metal roof, vinyl siding, laminate and low pile carpet. Newer propane heating system services the entire property, electric is split out between the units, town water/sewer, shed for storage. **\$167,000**

Located near Route 11 West in Windham, This Saltbox Style home is situated on 2.34+/- acres with long road frontage and Williams River Branch to the rear one gets the sense of accessible privacy. The home has been well cared for inside and out, bright interior includes a heated mudroom/entry, spacious functional country kitchen, formal dining room, Large living room, first floor office/bedroom and a full bath. Upstairs offers two large bedrooms, full bath and a walk-in hall closet. Large useable full basement, attached garage with overhead storage. A nice level yard with beautiful stone fireplace/sitting area with close proximity to outdoor activities and points of interest. **\$299,900**

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SPRINGFIELD 802-885-8282
NEWFANE 802-365-4311

holiday happenings

Unique, ugly sweater contest at Springfield Town Library

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – From now through Dec. 28, 2020, submit a photo of you wearing your favorite unique or ugly sweater to the Springfield Town Library for a chance to win a prize.

To be entered, pictures must be emailed to stlib@vermontel.

net. In the subject line of your email, please write "SWEATER CONTEST 2020." Include your name and phone number in your email along with permission to post your photo.

Photos will be posted on our library Facebook page beginning Jan. 4, 2021. Voting ends Sunday, Jan. 10, 2021. The picture with the most likes wins. The winner will be announced on Facebook live Monday, Jan. 11, 2021.

Go to www.facebook.com/stlvermont.

Trail of Lights brings hope to Londonderry

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – Project Londonderry has launched "Trail of Lights" as part of Vermont Lights the Way campaign to help overcome pandemic fatigue. Gov. Phil Scott has encouraged Vermonters to decorate their homes, businesses, parks, and public spaces to show community support.

The Londonderry "Trail of Lights" will be a six-mile driving tour through the heart of Londonderry from Dec. 20 to Jan. 1. The tour is designed to showcase the town's holiday decorations and provide businesses an opportunity to promote special holiday offerings.



Check out the Trail of Lights in Londonderry. PHOTO PROVIDED

The "Trail of Lights" tour begins at the triangle at intersection of Routes 11 and 100, follows Main Street to Middletown Road, turns right onto Route 100, and ends at the Mountain Marketplace. Project Londonderry encourages everyone to light up your property, join the fun, and do the tour.

Project Londonderry and the Wantastiquet Rotary teamed up to raise funds to help the town cover the cost of decorations. The Beautification Commission filled the bridge boxes with greens and decorated trees with lights and ornaments. Funds were also provided to decorate the annual holiday display at the Londonderry Marketplace.

Toys for Tots drop-off at Benson's Chevrolet

LUDLOW, Vt. – Help us make a child's Christmas special this year. Benson's Chevrolet is once again a local drop-off location in the Ludlow area. Help us fill the tree and truck with books, toys, clothing, and more this holiday season.

There is no greater joy than a child receiving a Christmas gift

on Christmas Day. Drop off unwrapped items to us at Benson's Chevrolet Inc., 25 Pond St. in Ludlow, Vt.

We will be collecting toys for children in need in our area until Dec. 24, 2020. Donated items can be children's clothing, toys, books, bikes, games, and craft projects to name just a few. The

toys collected are gifted to those in need during the holidays. We sincerely appreciate your contribution. We are open Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Saturday, from 8 a.m. to 12 p.m.

If you have any questions, please contact Kim Lampert at 802-228-4000. We hope that you can help make a child smile this Christmas Day by donating a toy for a good cause.

Corinne Greenhalgh spotlight at Canal Street Art Gallery

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Canal Street Art Gallery presents Represented Artist Spotlight Corinne Greenhalgh now through Jan. 2.

Corinne Greenhalgh presents an installation of her oil painting, "Embroidered Text on Found Linen," and a new series of collage called, "Our Family: The Bliss Family Album."

Greenhalgh's "Embroidered Text on Found Linen" offers a more literal subject focusing on cultural commentary. The artist finds these hand-embroidered antique linens intent on saving them so as to honor the cultural heritage of the women who made these household items. Greenhalgh embroiders cultural quotes and lyrics on these left-behind linens to bring them forward into modernity.

Greenhalgh's new series entitled "Our Family: The Bliss Family Album" premieres in this spotlight. In this found object collage project, Greenhalgh uses the original 19th-century cabinet card portrait photos of

this abandoned family album, along with pop culture and modern imagery.

Tune in online with the artist Dec. 18 at 6 p.m. on Facebook @canalstreetartgallery. All virtual events are published to www.canalstreetartgallery.com for all to enjoy.

The "Art for All" seasonal group show is still viewing through Jan. 23. The artists will also be live Dec. 18 to speak about their artwork.

Owning original, local art can be affordable and contribute to a good cause. This holiday season, CSAG is donating 1% of its profits to an important fund for the maintenance of existing public art in the town of Rockingham.

Canal Street Art Gallery, 23 Canal St., is open Wednesday to Saturday, from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. For more information or to make a private appointment, go to www.canalstreetartgallery.com, call Mike or Emmett at 802-289-0104, or email artinfo@canalstreetartgallery.com.

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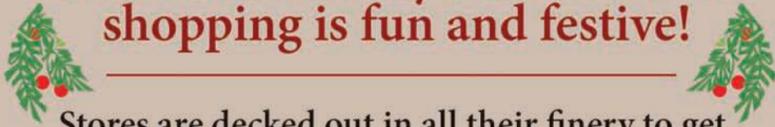
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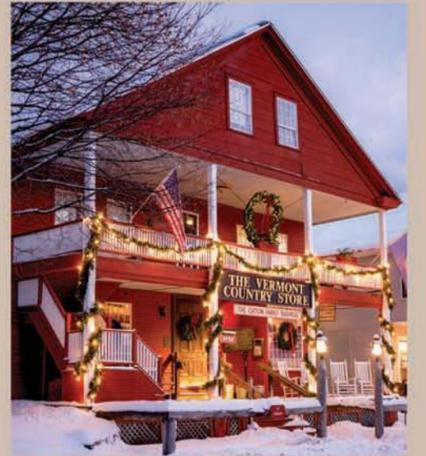
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/mo

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/mo

Stk.#ML336361
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\$2,000
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