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Singletons open charming new children's boutique

BY PAULA BENSON
The Vermont Journal

LUDLOW, Vt. – It was only last summer when Dan and Alison “Ali” Singleton became the new proprietors of Singleton’s General Store in Proctorsville. The couple, parents to three boys – two 6-year-old twins and one 3-year-old – took over the family business just in time to watch the store fill with floodwaters from the Black River during the Great Vermont Flood of 2023.

With Dan and Ali at the helm, Singleton’s not only survived the devastation, but held up an entire community for more than a year after the larger Shaw’s grocery store in Ludlow was shuttered for months while their corporate owners worked out the logistics of reopening. Singleton’s stocked more of the staples people needed, while expanding their niche inventory of outerwear, sporting goods, local products, and classic kids toys and games.

Now, almost 18 months later, Dan and Ali have embarked on a brand-new venture – a passion project of sorts for Ali – a children’s boutique on Main Street in Ludlow called Mountain Munchkins.

With an adorable logo designed by Wavy Grape Graphic Design Studio, Mountain Munchkins moved into the office on Main recently vacated by Huntley Financials. After some paint, wallpaper, and lighting updates, the space has been transformed into a bright, cheerful, and inviting display of cute, fun, and stylish kids’ clothes, toys, books, stuffed animals, bath products, accessories, and more.



Mountain Munchkins on Main

PHOTO BY PAULA BENSON

Ali said her husband is very much involved in the new business, but is encouraging her to take the lead on managing the children’s store, telling her, “I think you’ll be really good at this.” Being a mom of three young boys, and having the experience of buying children’s items for Singleton’s, Ali was ready and excited to dive into the new business. “I’m young,” Ali remarked. “I can take this on too.”

One reason Ali felt strongly about taking on this new challenge is that she wanted to encourage and be a part of the expanding retail experience on Ludlow’s Main Street. Joining Teaselwood Design and 3 Graces, unique shops on the ground floor of 116 Vermont 103, Mountain Munchkins will be in excellent company.

Saturday, Dec. 14, was opening day for the boutique, and a steady stream of shoppers flowed through the door between 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Some comments overheard: “This shop is an absolute must-visit.”

“I am telling all my friends

to come in.”
“What a great addition to Main Street.”

The shopping and dining milieu in Ludlow has been somewhat turbulent in recent months for a variety of reasons, last year’s flood of course being a major reason. But currently, locals are hopeful the town and its retail draw seem headed for a comeback, just in time for the 2024-2025 winter season.

Flood Brook School PBIS Awards

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – A Flood Brook student banged his fist on the desk and gouged a book with a pencil. He was frustrated with a math assignment and struggling to effectively manage his emotions, and becoming dysregulated. No one called him out or in any way escalated the situation. That’s because a system was already in place to respond to the circumstances and keep the students in the classroom learning, not shame or punish the dysregulated student.

“The idea is to recognize the dysregulation before it overwhelms the student,” explains Flood Brook behaviorist Johanna Davis. “Providing the student with a sensory break and an adult to facilitate regulation awareness and skill building, as well as reflection in order to reset and be ready to return to class.”

For its work on building this regulation and skill-building intervention, Flood Brook has been recognized by the state of Vermont for its Positive Behavioral Inter-

ventions and Supports Program (PBIS). Flood Brook was one of 50 schools – from a total of 238 statewide – to earn this honor for the 2023-2024 school year.

“Our school recognized the need to provide explicit instruction to students on regulation strategies that work for them individually in order to increase their ability to self-regulate and gain self-awareness to monitor their own emotional state,” says Flood Brook Principal Johanna Liskowsky-Doak. “It was

important that our staff worked as a team with everyone on the same page, with clearly defined goals and structures for the program, which is run out of a space called the Center.”

To help lead this effort, Flood Brook created the behavioral interventionist position and the Center as sensory space for students to regulate. Students can take a self-directed break, or teachers can send students for a teacher-directed break.

See **SCHOOL** on Page 2

Benson’s food drive supports Windsor County Youth Services

LUDLOW, Vt. – Benson’s Chevrolet is proud to announce the success of their annual food drive, which donated over \$500 of food for the Windsor County Youth Services (WCYS). The food drive ran from Nov. 1 to Nov. 30, and customers were encouraged to donate non-perishable food items at the dealership.

Windsor County Youth Services is a nonprofit organization that provides a variety of services to youth and families in Windsor County, Vt. These services include safe housing for homeless young people, school programs, summer camps, mentoring, and counseling. The food collected from the Benson’s Chevrolet food drive will be used to support these programs, and provide nutritious meals to the youth served by the organization.

“We are so grateful to



Ellen from WCYS (center) with Benson’s sales representatives Tony Moriglioni (left) and Michael Coutermarsh.

PHOTO PROVIDED

Benson’s Chevrolet for their support of our food drive,” said Ellen from WCYS. “The food donated will make a big difference in the lives of the youth we serve.”

Benson’s Chevrolet is committed to giving back to the community, and is proud to support Windsor County Youth Services. The dealership encourages other businesses and individuals to get involved in supporting this important

organization.
Benson’s Chevrolet is a family-owned and -operated dealership that has been serving the Ludlow community for over 93 years. The dealership offers a wide variety of new and used Chevrolet vehicles, as well as a full-service automotive repair shop. Benson’s Chevrolet is committed to providing its customers with the highest level of service and satisfaction.

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DEADLINES

The deadline is **Thursday, Dec. 19** for the Dec. 25 publication. The deadline is **Tuesday, Dec. 24** for the Jan. 01 publication.

CALENDAR EVENTS: calendar@vermontjournal.com
DISPLAY AND CLASSIFIED ADS: ads@vermontjournal.com
PRESS RELEASES, PHOTOS: editor@vermontjournal.com

Fletcher Farm School becomes Create Together

LUDLOW, Vt. – Responding to the creative and educational needs of area residents, the Fletcher Farm School for the Arts & Crafts announces its transformation into Create Together. The nonprofit organization will offer year-round creative experiences in professionally equipped studios. The official open date is pending final permit approvals.

Create Together will serve as a creative hub for people of all ages and abilities across the Okemo Valley region. “The goal is to increase access to creative and arts education in rural Vermont by offering creative opportunities that fit our neighbors’ schedules, budgets, and diverse interests,” said Susan Damone Balch, executive director. She added, “I’m excited to engage with the community in a new way.”



Kathryn Svec, a current board member, grew up attending workshops at Fletcher Farm School. “As someone whose creative journey began here as a child, I understand firsthand the lasting impact of early access to arts education,” said Svec. “Now, as a board member and parent, I’m excited that my children will benefit from enriching creative experiences.”

Ludlow Selectboard member Justin Hyjek, another former student, sees the organization’s evolution as crucial to the town’s future. “The selectboard’s decision to allocate ARPA funds to Create Together reflects our confidence in their community-first approach,” Hyjek said. “Their

commitment to making creative education accessible to all residents aligns perfectly with our vision for a thriving, inclusive Ludlow. This isn’t just about art classes – it’s about building a stronger, more connected community where local families can learn and grow together.”

“Every aspect of Create Together, from our workshop schedules to pricing, has been designed with local families in mind,” added Pollyanna Sidell, board chair.

Create Together will continue to develop new initiatives based on community input and needs, including youth programming, family activities, and skills that can support local creative entrepreneurship. The organization remains committed to preserving its artistic legacy.

Thanks to the support of the community and the Fletcher Farm Foundation, the owners and caretakers of the Fletcher Farm campus, Create Together is ready to implement this new plan.

For more information about Create Together’s programming and community initiatives, visit www.createtogethervt.org.

Cavendish calendar

CAVENDISH, Vt. – The 2025 Cavendish Community Calendar is a great way to support your local community. Available now, the calendar features full-color photographs from local residents, and benefits the year-round work of the Cavendish Community and Conservation Association (CCCA). Calendars can be purchased at the Cav-

endish Fletcher Community Library or The Village Clipper in Proctorsville, or ordered online by emailing cavendishcommunityconservation@gmail.com.

“The calendar theme for 2025 is community strength and resilience,” said Robin Timko of the CCCA. “It seems very fitting as our region continues to recover from flood damage and related challenges. Funds

raised through calendar sales support our efforts to preserve, celebrate, and invest in the physical beauty and community spirit that surrounds us.”

If you missed out submitting photos for the 2025 calendar contest, you’re in luck. Submissions are now open for the 2026 calendar, with the theme “Our Natural World.” For details, visit www.cavendishccca.org.

Lake Wise assessment aid

REGION – We love living near water, and lakeshore living can offer us so many benefits: gorgeous views, access to all kinds of recreation, a connection with nature, and a sense of tranquility. The star attraction is a clean, healthy lake – there are so many ways that we can help protect, and even improve, the condition of the lake, and Vermont’s Lake Wise program can help.

This free visit by Lake Wise staff features about an hour-long chat while walking a property to make observations, take simple measurements, and ask pertinent questions of the landowner. Some of the information gathered includes distance from the lake to buildings and parking areas, an evaluation of vegetation, and the loca-

tion of a septic system or well, if present. Also very important to the assessment is learning the priorities of each landowner – lake view, recreational access, a natural setting, etc. Many factors are taken into account, and the Lake Wise staff or trained assessor may offer suggestions and recommendations for projects a landowner could do to help keep the lake healthy, shoreline edges more natural and erosion-proof, and still enjoy the many special benefits to living on the lake.

Why Lake Wise? Each item that can be checked off on the list of “best practices” earns a landowner points that are tallied at the end of an assessment – enough points will earn a property a free Lake Wise Award that includes a yard sign to display proudly. If enough properties around a given lake earn the award, the en-

tire lake wins a Gold Award. Only five lakes in Vermont have received this honor.

Thanks to a grant from the Mount Ascutney Regional Commission, the Black River Action Team (BRAT) was able to get the ball rolling on Lake Rescue. After the initial Lake Wise assessment in 2022, the DEC allowed BRAT to hire Annie White of Nectar Landscape Design LLC and Rockingham Recon Drone Service to produce extensive design drafts for each property. From these designs, BRAT will work with each landowner to settle on a list of projects that could be put in place to earn the Lake Wise Award.

For more information, contact BRAT at blackrivercleanup@gmail.com or 802-591-0101, or visit www.dec.vermont.gov/watershed/lakes-ponds/lakeshores-lake-wise/what-lake-wise.

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SCHOOL

From Page 1

Data is collected and tracked for many points of interest to help ensure students are making progress, and for feedback for teachers.

Once underway, the PBIS team met to establish a communications plan that included posters, scripts for teachers, suggested interventions to be used in certain conditions, and common messaging to students.

Data was gathered weekly to monitor performance on the defined skill areas, and the results showed continued improvement through the school year.

Throughout the 2023-2024 school year, the Flood Brook PBIS team surveyed staff to gather feedback on how the new system was working. The results showed growing approval throughout the year for consistent responses to challenging behaviors, pre-

dictable school routines, and their own trust in the administration.

“All the signs are pointing in the right direction,” says Davis. “Now we just need to continue our work together this year to maintain momentum, continue to create the best learning environment for Flood Brook students, and continue to teach students self-regulation strategies. We’re just getting started.”

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Methodist birdhouse

BY RON PATCH

802-374-0119
ronpatch27@gmail.com

Back in the 1980s, I ran an antiques shop in Springfield with my girlfriend Cyndi. The shop was located on the corner of Valley Street and Main Street, in the old brick building.

Cyndi ran the shop. I travelled the roads picking, going to auctions, or making house calls. I didn't spend much time in the shop. I always liked buying more than selling.

I happened to be in the shop one day when an older well-dressed woman came in. I didn't grow up in Springfield, so I didn't know Springfield's hierarchy. She liked my selection of antiques. After a few minutes, she introduced herself as Mary Hurd. We had a lot in common. Mary invited me to her place. She lived on Cherry Hill with her husband Edward, in the mansion once owned by Mr. Slack.

Mary had worked with Norman Rockwell when she was a young lady. She collected paintings, drawings, and sculpture from American artists and illustrators. Mary had many map cabinets, drawers full of unframed artworks, much of it available. I made many, many trips to her house to purchase art. I remember she had a Norman Rockwell painting.

The Methodist birdhouse

I was visiting Mary one summer day when I noticed a large birdhouse in her backyard. I wanted it. The photo with this article is that Methodist birdhouse. Mary told me Mr. Slack had it built years before. Slack was a major supporter of the Methodist church in Springfield.

I bought this at a time when the antiques business was booming. The market was so hot that you could overpay today, but within a few weeks the market caught up. At one time the Methodist church had a

Gabriel weathervane on top of the steeple. You can see the Gabriel vane on top of the birdhouse in the photo with this article. I sold the birdhouse to a folk-art dealer for \$3,800. It changed hands several times after this, each time for more money.

The tall clock

Ed and Mary had a Tiffany tall clock, or what some call a grandfather clock. I always sensed Mary may have ruled the roost. Mary had seen clocks in my shop, and knew I had some knowledge. Her Tiffany clock had stopped running, could I look at it.

Ed had a stepladder out for me. This clock was 10 feet tall. I removed the bonnet and passed it to Ed. Now I can see the movement. It didn't take long to find the problem and remedy it. Ed found this all very interesting.



The Methodist Church birdhouse. It stands over 4 feet tall.

PHOTO PROVIDED BY RON PATCH

running. I went up, and as before handed Ed the bonnet. This time there was a different problem. One of the levers had been bent. I knew I didn't do it. That's when Ed confessed he had done it by accident. I asked him why he messed with it. He said he was trying to save me a trip. Mary scolded him, saying, "Ed, don't you touch that clock again. No one touches that clock but Ron."

Instead of an old saying, I offer a short story. My father Arnold could be very hardheaded. In the 1980s, he

had his federal firearms license (FFL). Dad had a reputation for handling rare and valuable guns. He advertised in several trade papers regularly. Dad shipped guns all over the country to other FFL dealers.

One day, a man stopped at Dad's place with a rare Model 1899 Savage. Dad liked and did well with Savage rifles. Dad was really fussy about condition. The price was \$2,200. The seller would not budge. Dad passed on it.

Sometime later, Tom from West Lebanon stopped to see Dad. Dad told Tom about the 1899 and how clean it was. Tom listened and, knowing how accurate my father's description would be, said, "Arnold, buy the rifle and I'll give you a \$100 profit."

Dad, "I wouldn't sell such a rare gun for a \$100 profit."

Sometime later, Mary called to tell me it had quit

Rotary hears about Hartness Airport

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. - Bruce Johnson, chair of the Springfield Airport Commission, talked about the history of the Hartness State Airport at the recent meeting of the Springfield Rotary Club held at the Springfield Area Parent Child Center Training Center.

Hartness State Airport is a transportation hub that offers services such as flight training, aircraft maintenance, and fueling. It features a single paved, 5,498-foot-long runway suitable for small aircraft and private jets, the second-largest in Vermont.

The airport has a rich history. In 1919, James Hartness, an inventor, entrepreneur, and Vermont governor, donated land to create the first airfield in Vermont. The airport was originally called the Springfield Airport. In 1927, Charles Lindbergh landed his plane, the Spirit of St. Louis, at the airport after his first nonstop flight across the Atlantic Ocean. He spoke to a crowd of around 30,000 people. During World War II, the Civil Air Patrol used

the airport for training exercises and coastal patrols. In 1959, the airport was renamed Hartness State Airport. In the late 1950s and early 1960s, Hartness was one of the busiest airports in New England.

The airport is owned and operated by the State of Vermont. It is managed by the Vermont Agency of Transportation (VTrans), which oversees its maintenance and development. Hartness

State Airport remains an important resource for the Springfield region, contributing to the local economy and preserving its historical ties to aviation.

The airport commission is looking into an event to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Charles Lindbergh's visit.

To learn more about the Springfield Airport Commission, visit www.springfieldvt.gov/?SEC=A4B3399E-835C-4FBD-BE47-E4516164A0C6. To see a video about the airport, visit www.vtrans.vermont.gov/aviation/airports/hartness.

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health news

Narcan and fentanyl tests available at HCRS —

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. — Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS) is pleased to announce the availability of Narcan (naloxone), and fentanyl and xylazine test strips at its three regional offices. These life-saving items are available to all residents of Windsor or Windham counties at no charge, emphasizing the agency's commitment to the wellbeing and safety of those in need.

According to the Vermont Department of Health, there were 231 confirmed opioid-related overdose deaths in 2023. Notably, opioid-

related fatalities accounted for about 90% of all drug overdose deaths in the state last year. The data indicates that fentanyl was involved in 95% of these fatalities, underscoring the continuing dangers associated with opioid use. Additionally, the rising involvement of other substances, such as cocaine and xylazine, highlights the complexity of the current drug landscape.

Narcan is a life-saving medication that rapidly reverses opioid overdoses. Easy to administer to someone who has overdosed, Narcan provides a critical

tool to intervene and save the lives of people affected by substance use. Fentanyl and xylazine test strips are quick and simple to use, empowering people to make informed decisions, reducing the risk of accidental overdose.

Community members are encouraged to pick up Narcan and test strips during the agency's regular business hours, Monday-Friday, from 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m. HCRS' regional offices are located at 49 School Street in Hartford, 390 River Street in Springfield, and 51 Fairview Street in Brattleboro.

For those who prefer a more discreet option, you can call ahead for pickup arrangements.

George Karabakakis, HCRS CEO, states, "We believe in a nonjudgmental approach to substance use. Our primary focus is to support individuals and families in our community, ensuring they have access to the resources they need to stay safe."

For more information about HCRS' services, or to arrange for discreet pickup, please visit www.hcrs.org, or call 802-886-4500.

HCRS welcomes new staff in November —

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. — Health Care and Rehabilitation Services (HCRS), southeastern Vermont's community mental health agency, is pleased to announce the appointment of six new professionals from the month of November, whose talents will augment HCRS' services across Windham and Windsor counties.

HCRS welcomes the following new employees: Michael Terry, residential specialist in Springfield; Luis Oles, case manager I in Brattleboro; Amy Pandolfi, clinician I in Springfield; Melissa Dickerson, office generalist in Hartford; Murphy Smith, IFBS program coordinator in Springfield; and Coley Hapeman, school-based area manager in Springfield.



New HCRS staff members hired in November.

PHOTO PROVIDED

These new hires will support the nonprofit agency's team of more than 550 staff providing comprehensive mental health, substance

use, and developmental disability programs, which serve more than 4,000 people annually across southeastern Vermont.

Home heating assistance for cancer patients —

REGION — The Cancer Patient Support Foundation (CPSF) is pleased to announce that a new special fund has been created to support Vermont cancer patients who are seeking

home heating assistance. Through funds donated by Bourne's Energy, CPSF was able to form the Bourne's Energy Home Heating Fund, which will provide financial assistance to Vermont cancer patients

and their families for their home heating needs. Patients do not need to be a customer of Bourne's Energy to receive support from this special fund.

"Almost all Vermonters know someone who has felt the effects of cancer," noted Jim Kurrle, general manager at Bourne's Energy. "Having a warm home all winter long is not something that should cross the minds of cancer patients and their families. Our goal with this fund is to reduce the financial burden at a time when they need it most, so they can focus on the things that matter most. We're proud to partner with CPSF to ensure Vermonters get the assistance they need year-round."

"CPSF is grateful for this partnership with Bourne's Energy," states executive director Sarah Wallace-Brodeur, "especially as we are heading into the winter months, when the home heating needs increase for our patients. Partnering with a business in the community who is there to support our patients during one of the most challenging times in their lives means so much to us and the patients we serve."

For media inquiries, contact Sarah Wallace-Brodeur, executive director, at swallace-brodeur@cpsfvf.org or 802-488-5495; and April Merrill, marketing director, Bourne's Energy, at april.merrill@bournes.net.

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CHURCH SERVICES

obituaries

Edith L. Cole, 1955-2024

CHESTER, Vt. – Edith Louise “Edie Lou” Cole, born on April 18, 1955, in Springfield, Vt., peacefully passed away on Dec. 10, 2024, at the age of 69.

Edie was a loving daughter, devoted wife, cherished mother, and grandmother. Edie’s legacy is one of love and kindness. She was predeceased by her parents Carrie May Johnson and Richard Lee Warren of Chester, Vt. Edie is survived by her beloved husband Calvin Cole; her sister Janet Currier; her three children Heath Cole and his wife Libby, with their children William and Sofia; Loren Cole and his wife Michelle, with their sons Carter and Hudson; and Shawna Pailley and her husband Scott, with their son Jacob.

Edie graduated from Green Mountain Union High School in 1973. She dedicated her career as business manager for several supervisory school districts, including Windham Southeast Supervisory Union, Ludlow-Mount Holly Union



Edith Cole, 1955-2024. PHOTO PROVIDED

Unified School District, and Mountain Views Supervisory Union, retiring from Bellows Falls Union High School District.

Known for her infectious spirit, Edie had an extraordinary ability to light up any room. Her warm smile and heartfelt conversations made her a beloved friend to many. Edie Lou will be deeply missed by all who knew her.

A private family service will be held to honor her memory.

Davis Memorial Chapel is assisting with the arrangements.

Judith Edwards, 2024

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Judith Edwards, who lived in Springfield, Vt., until 2021, died recently at her residence in Brattleboro.

Since moving to Springfield in 2000, Judy has been active in many organizations in the town. She was a school board member and then director, was elected to the board of civil authority, and ran the series “All About People” on SAPA TV. During that period, she also performed as a singer with the Ascutney Trio, and continued her large psychotherapy practice, with offices in downtown Springfield for many years.

Judy grew up in Glendale and La Canada, Calif. After a year at the University of California at Berkeley, she headed east to pursue a career in opera and theater. She studied voice privately, and graduated from The Neighborhood Playhouse School of Theater in New York. She met and married music critic Conrad Osborne while performing in Lake George, N.Y., and while raising their three children she directed a children’s theater school and group called Imagination, where very young children, including her own, improvised plays that Judy then scripted and directed.

Judy returned to school at City College, where she earned a bachelor’s degree in English (magna cum laude) and a master’s degree in creative writing, before moving in 1972 to Cambridge, Vt. Judy and her children began a whole new lifestyle on a farm while Judy also taught at Johnson State College and ran the Imagination Players, a troupe of professional actors performing plays and musicals that Judy wrote, supported by the Vermont Council on the Arts. She reviewed plays and musical performances for Vermont newspapers and Musical America Magazine, and wrote several features for Vermont Life. She then moved on to a position teaching theater at Florida International Uni-



Judith Edwards, 2024. PHOTO PROVIDED

versity in Miami, where she also wrote and performed her first one-woman show, “The Women of Ibsen and Strindberg.” This was followed by another stint in the New York area, teaching at The New York School of Musical Theater, Hofstra University, and the Emma Willard School in Troy, N.Y., along with wide touring for additional one-woman shows.

At age 50, with all children grown up and grandchildren on the horizon, Judy decided to go back to school for her “retirement career.” She earned an MSW from the Hunter School of Social Work in Manhattan, and began a thriving therapy practice in New York, before moving back to Vermont in 2000 and opening a practice in Springfield. She also continued her work as a teacher in Vermont, with seven courses at Usher/Dartmouth on literature and history, presenting material that she also published in middle school books on her two great historical passions – The Lewis and Clark Trail and the Civilian Conservation Corps.

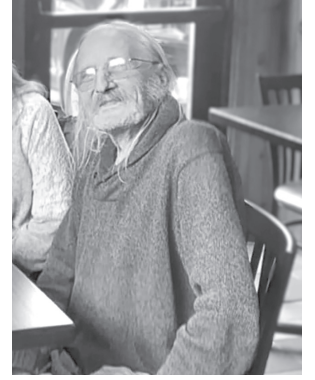
Judy is survived by her children Christopher Osborne (Marcia), Lauren Osborne (Robert Lieberman), and Melissa Osborne; and by grandchildren Carolyn and Clifford Osborne, Benjamin, Martha, and Aaron Lieberman, William Varble, and Thomas Gressier. No funeral service will be held, but a local memorial service will be held in the spring, date and time to be announced.

Robert H. Larson Jr., 1954-2024

LUDLOW, Vt. – Robert Harry Larson Jr., formerly of Ludlow, Vt., passed away suddenly at Brookwood Estates in Springfield, Vt., on Tuesday, Dec. 10, 2024. Robert was born April 10, 1954, to Patricia and Robert Larson, of Red Bank, N.J.

Bob spent his life working as a self-employed electrician and property maintenance caretaker, and was a longtime foster parent to many children over the years. He enjoyed helping others when he could, and took pride in his work as a caretaker.

He is survived by his two sisters Lori Moore (Ron) and Linda Wilson (Gary); and a brother Keith Larson (Joan); along with three sons Shawn Larson (Amy), of Acworth N.H., Jamie Lar-



Robert Larson Jr., 1954-2024. PHOTO PROVIDED

son (Alexis), of Ludlow, Vt., and Jackson Larson, also of Ludlow, Vt.; and three grandchildren.

There will be no services at this time, and a graveside memorial service will be scheduled in the spring at a later date.

Davis Memorial Chapel is assisting with the arrangements.

Bruce A. Orchitt, 1952-2024

CHESTER, Vt. – Bruce Alexander Orchitt, 72, passed away on Dec. 9, 2024, in his Chester home, where he was lovingly cared for by family. Cancer treatment over the past two years took its toll, but Bruce chose to live fully and work up until his body simply couldn’t anymore.

He was born on July 19, 1952, the fifth child of Gertrude Pohjonen and father John “Jack” Orchitt, who died in a construction accident when Bruce was only 2. Gertrude then married Charles Lamson, who Bruce knew and loved as Dad. He attended the Peaseville one-room schoolhouse, and then Chester High School. His youth was spent working alongside Charlie, dusk to dawn, on the East Hill dairy farm he called home. From the age of 10, Bruce was second-in-command to his dad Charlie, helping with chores, milking cows, haying, driving, and fixing tractors.

In 1970, just out of high school, Bruce enlisted in the Air Force, where he developed his knack for all things mechanical. On March 23, 1975, he married Karen Ann Wright, who stood by his side for nearly 50 years. He continued as a heavy equipment operator throughout his life, logging, excavating, and field and roadside mowing. He was gifted mechanically, and able to fix most anything, only occasionally relying on a few expert friends when he was in a predicament. When treatment left him too weak, he resorted to giving repair instruction over the phone – he deemed himself the “armchair mechanic.” His lifelong passion was

deer hunting and the outdoors. Bruce had an uncanny ability to track in the woods. Many preseason hours were spent discussing and strategizing for the upcoming season. You didn’t get married, have a kid, or die during hunting season. That would be sacrilege. Late in life, Bruce rediscovered snowmobiling, and spent hours enjoying VAST trails with brothers Danny and Joey, who made amends for the many times Bruce fixed their sleds as kids, only to have them take off and break them again.

Bruce was able to talk with anyone, finding common interests and quickly building lasting friendships. He learned from his mom how to burn up a phone line, so if you were a friend, the calls were lasting, too.

He is survived by his wife Karen; their children Jessica (Chad Free), Jeremy (Dawn), and Jason (Kayla); his grandchildren Tristen Free, Lucas, Kaarina, Charlotte Orchitt, and Aria Orchitt; his surviving siblings Margaret (Alden), Daniel (Erin), and Joseph (Nina); along with nieces, nephews, and dear friends.

He is preceded in death by his parents; Mummy; siblings Bobby, Rachel, Bernie, and Johnny; his niece Angela; and his granddaughter Freya.

He will be remembered as cherished husband, loving dad, beloved brother, and his greatest role ever: proud papa to the grandchildren he loved.

A memorial celebration will be held on Saturday, Dec. 21, at Andover Community Church, 928 Weston-Andover Road, Andover, Vt.

LUDLOW, VT.

Tyson Community Church, Corner of Rt. 100 and Dublin Rd.

Come celebrate Christmas on Dec 22, at 5 p.m. Hear the Christmas story and sing your favorite Christmas carols with Pastor Terry Bascom and musician Erik Johansson. Hot chocolate, cookies, and fellowship afterwards.

United Church of Ludlow, 48 Pleasant Street

Join the United Church of Ludlow for a Christmas Eve service of candles and carols on Tuesday, Dec. 24, at 6 p.m. The United Church of Ludlow strives to live God’s message of inclusive love through Jesus Christ in our community, nation, and world. All are welcome here.

SPRINGFIELD, VT.

St. Mark’s Episcopal Church, 33 Fairgrounds Rd.

Please join us for Christmas service on Dec. 24, at 4 p.m.

WEATHERSFIELD, VT.

Weathersfield Church, 79 Center Church Rd.

Join the annual Christmas Eve candlelight service and carol sing-alongs on Tuesday, Dec. 24, at 4 p.m., at the Weathersfield Church and Meeting House in Weathersfield Center. All are welcome. The event is free, and will feature readings along with Christmas carols and additional songs sung by the Clear Springs Choir. For more information, call 802-263-9394.

WESTMINSTER, VT.

First Congregational Church of Westminster, 3470 US Route 5

Join us for a Christmas Eve service on Dec. 24, at 5:30 p.m. This Service starts as candlelight. We will sing favorite Christmas hymns, and there will be a children’s message. The Rev. Richard O’Donnell will lead the service. We welcome all people to join us.

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calendar

LEGAL NOTICES

DEC. 19 –
LUDLOW, Vt. – Fletcher Memorial Library will hold a Winter Ornaments Crafternoon for kids in grades K-6 on Thursday, Dec. 19, from 3:30-4:30 p.m. There is no better time to create sparkly and fabulous decorations for your home or to give as gifts. Come to the library to make a one-of-a-kind ornament.

SUNDAYS –
PLYMOUTH, Vt. – The Plymouth Historical Society will be open for winter hours on the first and third Sundays for the months of January-April. Hours will be 2 to 4 p.m., in the former Plymouth Elementary School, on Route 100 in

Plymouth, Vt. Watch for the "Open" flag.

MONDAYS –
WALPOLE, N.H. – Meeting of Alcoholics Anonymous on Mondays at 6:30 p.m. in St. John's Parish Hall, Walpole.

WESTON, Vt. – Bingo is Monday nights at 7 p.m. at the Weston Rod & Gun Club, 982 Route 100, 1.5 miles north of Weston Village. All are welcome.

PROCTORSVILLE, Vt. – On Mondays at 6:15 p.m., join Mikayla for a yoga class. Email mikayla@mikaylamantra.net to register. Visit www.dgbodyworks.com for more information. Private classes are available.

LUDLOW, Vt. – Zumba classes, Mondays at 9:30 a.m. at the Spring House at Jackson Gore. All fitness levels welcome. Call 802-228-1419 for more information.

LUDLOW, Vt. – Aquatic Aerobics, Mondays at 10:35 a.m. at the Spring House at Jackson Gore. Call 802-228-1419 for more information.

TUESDAYS –
BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Come check out TOPS – Take Off Pounds Sensibly. We are a nonjudgmental, affordable, and supportive weight loss group. The first visit is free. All are welcome; youth must be at least 9 to attend and have parental

permission. Meetings are every Tuesday at 25 Cherry Hill in Bellows Falls. Weigh-ins start at 5 p.m.

LUDLOW, Vt. – Fletcher Memorial Library will hold an infant and toddler playground every Tuesday, from 10:30 a.m. – 12 p.m., every Tuesday, from December-March. Playgroup is the perfect place for infants and toddlers to explore, learn, and grow together. Give your child the opportunity to make new friends and develop important social skills in a group while you connect with other parents and caregivers, share experiences, and build a supportive community.

W. TOWNSHEND, Vt. – Burger night is held every Tuesday, from 5-7 p.m., at the West Townshend Country Store, 6573 Vermont Route 30, West Townshend, Vt. There will be live music provided by a different local artist each week. For more information, visit www.westtownshend.org, call 802-874-4800, email info@westtownshend.org, or message the store on Facebook.

WEDNESDAYS –
CHESTER, Vt. – Knitting with Friends at Six Loose Ladies on the Chester Common, Wednesdays, from 10 a.m. to noon.

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Knitting Together, every Wednesday, 1-3 p.m., at Village Square Booksellers, knitting hats and mittens for our school kids. We provide yarn, some direction, and an enjoyable visit. Acrylic yarn donations are always welcome. For more information, contact Caroline at 802-463-4653.

LUDLOW, Vt. – Fletcher Memorial Library will hold winter story time every Wednesday, from 10:30-11 a.m., from December-March. Best suited for ages 5 and under. Story Time is a wonderful weekly routine to establish with your young child. Each week focuses on early literacy activities, stories, songs, and ends with a craft or science exploration. It is a great opportunity for your child to socialize and meet new friends, and for adult caregivers to connect.

LUDLOW, Vt. – Yoga with strength, balance, and meditation on Wednesdays, at 10 a.m., at Black River Senior Center. Call Lori at 603-401-8123 to register.

THURSDAYS –
TYSON, Vt. – The Tyson Ladies Aid Library Association meets the first Thursday of each month, typically at the Tyson Library. Lunch is served at 11:30 a.m. and meetings start at noon. New potential members are always welcome. Please call Janine Norman at 802-228-8764 for more information or to verify meeting location.

CHESTER, Vt. – Knit Knite at Six Loose Ladies on the Chester Common Thursdays, from 5-8 p.m., and via Zoom, from 7-8 p.m.

N. SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Support group for parents of pregnancy and infant loss on the first Thursday of the month, from 6-7 p.m., at Springfield Area Parent Child Center, 6 Main Street in North Springfield. For details or to register, email dominiquer@sapcc-vt.org or call 802-886-5242 ext. 258.

WALPOLE, N.H. – Alcoholics Anonymous women's meeting, a 12-step recovery program

for women who have a desire to stop drinking, is happening every Thursday at 6 p.m. at the St. John's Episcopal Church at the corner of Westminster and Elm streets in Walpole, N.H. For more information, call Viva at 802-732-8330.

LUDLOW, Vt. – Certified instructor Helena Wu will teach tai chi classes every Thursday, from 9-10 a.m., at the Black River Valley Senior Center, 10 High Street in Ludlow. Classes are free, and are limited to 10 participants. Registration is required. For more information, contact the Senior Center at 802-228-7421, or Helena Wu at 802-289-7369.

FRIDAYS –
CHESTER, Vt. – Alcoholics Anonymous meetings held every Friday at 6:30 p.m. at St. Joseph's Church, located at 96 South Main Street in Chester. If you have a problem with alcohol, this is an understanding place to come to.

SAXTONS RIVER, Vt. – Main Street Arts, 35 Main Street, will hold the "Originals & Traditionals" Open Mic Night on the fourth Friday of every month, from 7-9 p.m., hosted by musician Putnam Smith. Sign-ups begin at 6:30 p.m. All material should be original or "traditional" (i.e., in the public domain). Each performer can perform two songs or up to 10 minutes, whichever comes first. If you have any questions, please contact Smith at putnamsmith@gmail.com.

SATURDAYS –
LUDLOW, Vt. – Zumba classes, Saturdays at 9 a.m. at the Spring House at Jackson Gore. All fitness levels welcome. Call 802-228-1419 for more information.

STATE OF VERMONT

SUPERIOR COURT **PROBATE DIVISION**

Windsor Unit **Docket No.: 24-PR-04039**

In re ESTATE of: Leslie A. Bard

NOTICE TO CREDITORS

To the Creditors of: Leslie A. Bard Decedent

late of Ludlow Decedent's Town of Residence

I have been appointed to administer this estate. All creditors having claims against the decedent or the estate must present their claims in writing within four (4) months of the first publication of this notice. **The claim must be presented to me at the address listed below with a copy sent to the Court. The claim may be barred forever if it is not presented within the four (4) month period.**

Dated: 12/12/24 Signature of Fiduciary

<small>Executor/Administrator</small>		<small>Mailing Address</small>
Michell Bard		c/o Parker & Ankuda P.C., P.O. Box 519
<small>Phone Number</small>	<small>Email</small>	<small>City, State, Zip</small>
802-396-5685		Springfield VT 05156
345-5421		

Name of Publication: Vermont Journal - The Shopper

Publication Date: December 18, 2024

Name of Probate Court: Vermont Superior Court, Windsor County, Probate Division

Address of Probate Court: 12 The Green
Woodstock VT 05091

Weekly SUDOKU

9	2	3								
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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

1 Nuisance

5 Emmy winner Alan

9 Blond shade

12 Actor Epps

13 — -do-well

14 Female rabbit

15 Biscuit type

17 Poetic tribute

18 Big bargains

19 Himalayan land

21 Baseball's Cobb

22 Meager

24 Boxing arbiters

27 Hasten

28 Flintstones' pet

31 Capote nickname

32 Very long time

33 Itinerary word

34 Long tale

36 Boring routine

37 Superman's alias

38 Alphabetized list

40 Yours truly

41 Lauder of cosmetics

43 Tyke

47 Marseilles monarch

48 Relating to the intellect

51 Calendar abbr.

52 Sandwich treat

53 Exploits

54 Away from WSW

55 Canine cry

56 Section

DOWN

1 Seed holders

2 Send forth

3 Stuffing herb

4 Goodies

5 Picnic interlopers

6 Maui memento

7 "Lion" star Patel

8 Stadium

9 Like some parents

10 Fizzy drink

11 Cad

16 Devious

20 Conclusion

22 Crazy Horse, for one

23 Penny

24 ACLU concerns

25 Time line period

26 Escapee

27 Roll call reply

29 French diarist Anais

30 Feedbag tidbit

35 Hydrocarbon suffix

37 Didn't lag

39 Shill

40 French pronoun

41 Sea eagle

42 Any time now

43 L-Q bridge

44 Tower city

45 Always

46 Try out

49 Raw rock

50 Solidify

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56						57			58	

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opinion

Dear Editor,
The most recent animal cruelty atrocities, which were documented by a federal inspector at the Vermont Packinghouse in North Springfield, Vt., should result in criminal charges of cruelty to animals against the slaughter plant and the “third-party” truck driver, especially considering the plant’s previous bad acts against animals (VTDigger: “Investigation probes truck driver’s alleged inhumane treatment of pigs at North Springfield slaughterhouse” – Dec. 9, 2024).

Many people will recall the 2009 case of cruelty to newborn calves at the Bushway Packing slaughterhouse in Grand Isle, Vt. Undercover video showed workers at Bushway kicking, shocking, and even throwing these in-

fant animals off the transport truck when they were too weak to walk. Further cruelties, including animals being skinned while still conscious, caused significant embarrassment for Vermont’s agricultural industry and true public outrage. Bushway was permanently shuttered by orders of the state and federal governments, and its owner and another worker were criminally charged and convicted of animal cruelty.

While there is no video – no doubt a relief to both the plant’s owner and the state agricultural department – showing the cruelties endured by the animals at the Vermont Packinghouse, there is evidence by way of an official written report from an eyewitness, who is also a federal inspector.

Dear Editor,
So many people lack empathy towards wild animals who are simply trying to survive. We all know what it’s like when we miss a meal: our bellies rumble, and we might even get lightheaded. Many of us are lucky enough to be able to reach into the fridge and quickly satisfy that hunger. Imagine being a wild animal who can only feed itself and its young by foraging, scavenging, or hunting with its mouth or claws – no guns, no cross-bows, no traps, no full belly to fuel your hunt.

Let’s pretend we’re a coyote for just a minute. You want to hunt for mice or groundhogs in a field, but farmers shoot you. You may want to scavenge on a deer carcass, but you’ll be accused by hunters of killing the deer. You’ll even settle for fallen apples on the ground, but a landowner will accuse you of being rabid because you were seen during the day. Pet food left outside is super yummy, and when

you show up in someone’s backyard at night, you’ll be accused of stalking people’s dogs. Hunting in the woods for squirrels and chipmunks is great, but if a hunter sees you, he’ll kill you just for the fun of it and under the flawed assumption that he’s “managing” the coyote population.

And, yes, coyotes do kill deer, but not nearly as many as they’re accused of. And each time they hunt deer, they are putting their lives at risk. A coyote can easily suffer from a broken back or legs from just one strong kick by a deer. Life is not easy.

Coyotes don’t seek to be cruel, however, man certainly does. Coyotes are lured to baited leghold traps and left to suffer for a day or longer before being killed by the trapper. They are shot over bait piles, even in the middle of night and during times of year when they’re nursing their pups. They are chased for miles by packs of hounds before being killed. Their lifeless bodies are nailed

There is no murkiness about who should seek justice for the animals who were documented being treated so cruelly at the Vermont Packinghouse in North Springfield. It clearly falls on the shoulders of the police department. The Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food & Markets (VAAF) has no enforcement power in this case, but, as Scott Waterman of the VAAF pointed out, the agency “supports good investigations and subsequent criminal prosecution whenever the facts warrant it.” The Vermont Humane Federation hopes that the evidence gathered by the federal inspector with the USDA is honored, and that charges are filed.

Sincerely,
Jackie Stanley
President, Vermont Humane Federation

to trees or strung across fences – obvious displays of white-hot contempt by hunters. No other wild animal is treated so horribly, all under the watch of Vermont Fish & Wildlife.

This holiday season, let’s find it in ourselves to show compassion for some of the most unfairly maligned and misunderstood animals – coyotes.

Sincerely,
Jane Fitzwilliam
Putney, Vt.
Vermont Coyote Coexistence Coalition Lead

Dear community friends,

“Supporting the community” has been our guiding light and motto from the beginning, and especially throughout the past year.

For flood victims, Black River Good Neighbor Services (BRGNS) has been instrumental in assisting those folks to work their way back to “normal,” and we continue to do so to this day. Disaster and destruction from fires, accidents, and loss of income and food are all challenges that come in many forms, and when folks look for help, they come through our doors.

For those who can’t make ends meet, feeding folks remains the mainstay of what we do, and that takes many forms as well. As a network member of the Vermont Food Bank, our food shelf stays well stocked for individuals and families, who look to us to keep necessary meals on their tables.

For those who may be isolated or need a meal, we provide three free monthly community meals with an ever-increasing atten-

dance. It’s an atmosphere of warm and welcoming homemade food together with socialization for many for whom this event is their only “meal out.” A heartwarming program that truly does support the community.

For families dealing with Alzheimer’s or other forms of dementia, we provide a free monthly memory cafe. Led by trained leaders for caregivers and their loved ones, the cafe offers socialization, education, activities, and much-needed support. A safe, compassionate, and supportive program.

For volunteers who willingly and lovingly provide

critical assistance on behalf of Black River Good Neighbor Services, including our community meals, memory cafe, rummage sales, food shelf, thrift store, board membership, Meals on Wheels deliveries, and furniture and trash pickups. Volunteers keep us going.

And, so very important, for the community that values and trusts our work, enabling us to continue supporting those who need help. For that we are truly grateful.

Sincerely,
Krey Kellington
Black River Good Neighbor Services Executive Director

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— Weekly SUDOKU —

Answer

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— King Crossword —

Answers

Solution time: 25 mins.

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Painting the Winter Landscape in Watercolor
with Rob O'Brien, 1/11/25 9:30-4 \$85

Chinese Calligraphy with Jonathan Root
1/25/25 \$38. (Material Fee: \$5)

Calligraphy with Love with Jorika Stockwell
2/8/25 \$40.

Open Wall: Glistening Wonders
(01/15/25 - TFN - 13)

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(11/05/25 - 52)

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(11/19/25 - 52)

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real estate

How to make an offer on a house

REGION – Buying a home in today’s market will likely require you to make an offer on more than one home. In fact, 42% of buyers who make an offer on a home do so multiple times before succeeding in buying one, according to the Zillow Group Consumer Housing Trends Report 2021.

Competing against other buyers can be an emotional experience, especially if you’re doing it for the first time. If this is your first time buying – or if it’s been a while since you bought a house – here’s an overview of how the process will typically unfold.

Steps to putting an offer on a house

First, find the right home and determine if the home fits your budget. Do you have enough for the down payment? Can you afford the estimated monthly payment on the home? Most

mortgage lenders will include property taxes and homeowners insurance in your monthly payment, so be sure to take them into account. If you’re in a planned community or condominium, add in any homeowner association dues.

Then compare the home price to other recent sales of similar homes nearby. Have your real estate agent run “comps,” or comparisons, which will show you what similar homes in the area are selling for and/or have sold for in the recent past. The comps will give you a feel for whether the seller is asking a reasonable price for the home.

Determine your offer price, contingencies, and timeline. In a competitive market where multiple offers are submitted, these things can be the deciding factors in whether your offer is accepted. If you’re buying

in a seller’s market, be sure to ask your agent for insights on what could make your offer more attractive to the sellers whose home you want to buy.

If you need room to negotiate, make your offer lower than the maximum price you’re willing or able to pay. In a seller’s market, where homes are selling quickly and over list price, that may mean shopping for listings below what you can afford.

The next step is to draft and submit your offer. Your offer should be in the form of a purchase and sale agreement. Your agent will draft this for you, and you’ll sign or esign before it’s submitted.

The purchase and sale agreement becomes legally binding if the seller accepts your offer. At that point, you’re buying a house, and the purchase and sale contract will become a key part of the paperwork that guides the sale.

Upon reviewing your offer,

the seller might accept your offer as-is, decline the offer altogether, or counter the offer to start the negotiating process. If the seller accepts your offer, they will sign the purchase and sale contract. If they decline your offer, negotiations end. If they counter by offering terms, you can either accept some or all of their counteroffer, or counter back.

Once both parties agree to the deal – including price, inspection, negotiated repairs, closing date, etc. – the contract is updated accordingly, the home is officially “under contract,” and the listing will typically show the sale as “pending.” Assuming all goes well with contingencies and financing, and depending on your closing date, you’ll be a homeowner in about 30-45 days.

Once you are under contract, it will be difficult to back out of the deal other than through a contingency clause in the contract. Such contingencies include things

like inspections, clear ownership records, and the ability to secure financing, all of which have to align with a timeline for getting them done.

If, for example, you included a contingency for a home inspection that will take place within two weeks, and your inspector discovers that the roof has a leak, you can back out of the contract, or ask the seller to repair the roof or reduce the price so you can have it fixed.

Consider whether to waive or include contingencies. The majority of buyers (80%) include contingencies in their offer, according to Zillow’s trends report. Contingencies allow you to cancel the sale while protecting your earnest money deposit if you’re unwilling or unable to proceed with the closing process. However, in a competitive market, some buyers risk waiving contingencies to help their offer stand out.

Some buyers include a home sale contingency, where their offer is contingent on selling the home they currently own. Those buyers typically need to use the equity from a home they’re selling to purchase a new home, but this can

make their offer less appealing.

Put down more earnest money, also called “good faith money,” because it’s money you pay upfront to show the seller that you’re serious about buying their home. The earnest money is applied toward your total down payment and closing costs when the sale is completed. Earnest money can telegraph your commitment to the purchase, and assure the sellers that you won’t back out without a reason. Real estate experts say you can expect to put down 1% to 3% of the purchase price, but the amount can vary.

So-called “love letters,” intended to tug on a seller’s heartstrings, can put buyers and agents at risk of fair housing violations. These letters can include personal demographic information about the buyer, unlawfully swaying a seller’s decision, which can violate the federal Fair Housing Act and other state and local laws against housing discrimination. Avoid writing a letter, and focus on making your offer the best it can be.

Information provided by Zillow Group.



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community news

SAPCC recruiting board members

N. SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Area Parent Child Center (SAPCC) is actively recruiting volunteer board members who support our mission to build bridges of support for children, families, and caregivers in our service area.

SAPCC is one of 15 non-profit, community-based organizations that make up the Vermont Parent Child Center Network (VPCCN). Centers provide support and education to families with young children to address local needs in the communities they serve.

The dedicated leaders and professional staff at SAPCC deliver a wide variety of programs and services to help children get off to a healthy start and promote their well-being, while building on each family's strengths.

Current programs include HEART, which provides mental health and other support throughout pregnancy and beyond, and DULCE, which offers resources and support to families with newborns at Mt. Ascutney Pediatrics in Windsor.

The Children's Integrated Services team provides in-home or on-site visits for families with children who have medical conditions or developmental delays, along with family or parenting support, mental health, and preventative nursing services.

Parenting classes, support groups, resources, and information for parents and caregivers are also provided. Welcome Baby Bags full of gifts and resources, and a free diaper and formula bank are available.

The onsite Playworks Child Center is a five-star-rated early childhood education program for children from 6 weeks to 6 years of age. Childcare Support Services include referral and financial assistance for childcare, summer camp, and before/after school care for children ages 0 to 12 years old. Playgroups are held regularly in various locations for young children and their siblings. Free books are sent to homes each month through the Dolly Parton Imagination Library program.

Tienna's Closet is a free community clothing closet for children and adults. The Workforce Development Program offers professional development opportunities for the community at the onsite training center in North Springfield.

Volunteer board service is one of the many ways community members can support this important work.

Board member responsibilities include providing

big picture oversight and stewardship of SAPCC, supporting and collaborating with the administrative and managerial teams, and continually assessing ways to improve, grow, and evolve the organization.

SAPCC is seeking new board members with a variety of skills and expertise, including fundraising and development, legal, finance, human resources, and non-profit management and administration. First-time board member candidates and those with prior non-profit board experience are welcome. Orientation and training will be provided.

Board members serve on one of three standing committees – internal affairs, external affairs, or governance – which typically meet monthly to address their specific areas of responsibility. The full board also meets monthly. Most meetings are virtual.

Board members are required to reside within the SAPCC service area, which includes the following towns and villages in Windsor and Windham counties: Andover, Ascutney, Baltimore, Bellows Falls, Brownsville, Cavendish, Chester, Grafton, Londonderry, Ludlow, North Springfield, Perkinsville, Plymouth, Proctorsville, Reading, Rockingham, Saxtons River, Springfield, Weathersfield, West Windsor, Westminster, Weston, Windham, and Windsor.

Individuals who reside in the SAPCC service area, and who share the organization's commitment to supporting children and families through the services SAPCC provides, are encouraged to apply for a seat on the board.

For more information about board service, and to request an application, email BOD@sapcc-vt.org.

To learn more about SAPCC, visit www.sapcc-vt.org.

Kate Lorenz Community Fund 2024 awards

REGION – The Kate Lorenz Memorial Community Fund announces awards and gifts for 2024. This year, as in the past, the fund has donated \$5,000 in gifts to organizations that represent Lorenz's interests and passions.

The Kate Lorenz Memorial Community Fund supports the causes and ideas Lorenz held dear: children and early literacy, women's rights, the visual and perform-

ing arts, social justice, environmental education, and more.

Organizations which received gifts/awards in 2024 are: Stepping Stones Preschool, Proctorsville, Vt.; 350 VT for Climate Change, Burlington, Vt.; The Expeditionary School at Black River, Ludlow, Vt.; The Leyeyo Memorial Library, Townshend, Vt.; Valley Free Radio for Music, Florence, Mass.; The Amherst Survival Center, Amherst, Mass.; Parlor Room

Collective, Northampton, Mass.; The Spring Street Preschool, Amherst, Mass.; and the Institute for the Musical Arts, Goshen, Mass.

Donations to the Kate Lorenz Community Fund can be made at www.kate-lorenzmusic.com via PayPal, or by mailing a check to The Kate Lorenz Memorial Community Fund, P.O. Box 418, Chester, VT 05143. For more information or questions about the fund, please reach out to katelorenzmemories@gmail.com.

Lorenz's family and friends, and the annual Sparkletown Tribute Concerts will continue to grow the Kate Lorenz Memorial Community Fund to keep Lorenz's spirit, caring, generosity, and kindness alive in the world. We will continue using these funds to support organizations that represent her interests and passions. There will be a new round of gifts and awards to organizations in 2025.

Meet your legislators at Rockingham Library

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – On Saturday, Dec. 21, at 10:30 a.m., come to the second-floor meeting room of the Rockingham Free Public Library in Bellows Falls, to meet with your Windham-3 (Brookline, Rockingham, and Westminster) House Reps. Michelle Bos-Lun and Leslie Goldman, along with Sens. Wendy Harrison and Nader Hashim.

This session will provide an opportunity for community members to ask questions about issues that will be addressed in the legislative session. Legislators will give updates about ex-

pected legislative priorities and pending bills, and take your concerns to Montpelier. This is the first of six consecutive monthly meetings the legislators are planning, with the likelihood that senators representing this area will also be present.

Come for a conversation about current issues, and bring your questions.

Contact Rep. Leslie Goldman with your questions at lgoldman@leg.state.vt.us or 802-380-4285. This event is free and open to the public.

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outdoor news

OMS Ski and Snowboard Swap a success

LUDLOW, Vt. – This year's Ski and Snowboard Swap raised \$34,500 for Okemo Mountain School (OMS). The proceeds from the swap will go towards operating costs to keep tuition as affordable as possible for all students. The event was extremely well attended this year, and cus-

tomers were excited with their purchases, finding outstanding deals on all sorts of new and used winter outdoor gear.

Mariel Meringolo, head of school, would like to gratefully acknowledge all of the volunteers who donated their time, as well as all the mountain personnel

who went above and beyond their normal duties to provide support to the event. Without all the volunteers and the help of the mountain, the swap could never have been such a success. Everyone's efforts are greatly appreciated by the entire school community.

And since it is never too soon to look to the future, mark your calendars for the 2025 OMS Ski and Snowboard Swap. Equipment dropoff will be Nov. 15, 16, and 19. The swap will be open for business on Nov. 21, 22, and 23.

Okemo Mountain School, celebrating 33 years

in operation this winter, is a nonprofit educational institution dedicated to the academic and athletic development of serious snow sports athletes. Student-athletes are given the opportunity to train in alpine ski racing, snowboarding, or freestyle skiing, while pursuing a rigorous course

of academic study. Okemo Mountain School relies heavily on fundraisers like the swap to provide financial aid, scholarships, and to keep tuition affordable.

For further information, please contact Kate Foster at kfoster@okemomountain-school.org or 802-975-0126.

Snowmobile travelers to exercise caution

REGION – The U.S. Forest Service is looking forward to a successful snowmobile season, and wants to

encourage all riders to put safety first out on the trails in the coming months.

Green Mountain National

Forest (GMNF) officials are advising snowmobilers to exercise caution when operating on the national forest,

and all lands in Vermont this winter. GMNF officials remind snowmobile enthusiasts to heed all gates and signs, and to stay off roads and trails that are closed. Forest Service employees and several snowmobile clubs throughout Vermont have been working to clear trees and other debris from trails. However, trail users should continue to use extra caution early in the season, as some trees may be weak due to snow accumulation, and downed tree hazards are likely.

Weather permitting, snowmobile use is allowed on designated trails within the GMNF for four months beginning on Monday, Dec.

16, and ending on Tuesday, April 15, 2025.

The GMNF and VAST cooperate to maintain more than 345 miles of National Forest System trails that are part of the larger statewide snowmobile network. VAST is one of several snowmobile associations in the United States that has a cooperative partnership agreement with the U.S. Forest Service. The maximum speed is 35 miles per hour on state and federal land.

The U.S. Forest Service is also warning the public of the dangers associated with riding, hiking, and skiing on frozen water bodies. Trail users are encouraged to be mindful of fallen

trees and other hazards they may encounter. Operators must maintain control of their snowmobile while riding, keep to the right at all times, wear helmets, and stay on designated trails only. 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. Trail users are encouraged to visit the VAST trail update for specifics on trail conditions and closures at www.vtvast.org/trails.html.

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holiday happenings

Starry, Starry Night in Chester

CHESTER, Vt. – Visit Chester, Vt., on Dec. 21, from 4-7 p.m., for Starry, Starry Night.

Follow the luminaries throughout town to over 20 participating businesses offering refreshments and special events.

Enjoy food and wine tastings. Browse, shop, and take part in special events, as well as offerings from artists and makers, from gifts and locally made products, to handcrafted jewelry, fine art, and décor.

Participating businesses

include Barrett and Valley Real Estate; Collected, LTD; Community Art Garden; DaVallia Art and Interiors; Down to the Roots; Dyak-Craft/Linda Diak Quilts; Endless Creations Pottery Studio; Equipoise Occupational Therapy; Fischer Arts; Hugging Bear 4 Ever; The Inn Between and Which Way Tavern; Kit Kats Embroidery, Gifts, and Souvenirs; Matilda and Three Bears; Meditrina Wine Shop; Mercantile on Main Bakery Café; Rose Arbour Tea Room and Art Studio;

Sage Jewelry and Gifts; Sharon's on the Common and Chester Candy Company; Songbird Wellness; Smitty's Chester Market; Stone Hearth Inn and Eatery; Sugar Bob's Finest Kind; and Wisdom River Designs.

In addition, The Okemo Valley Holiday Express Train will be running from the Chester Depot.

Find details, links, and a map to all participating businesses at www.fischer-arts.com/starry-starry-night-chester.

Free holiday movies at Paramount Theatre

RUTLAND, Vt. – Announcing four free holiday movies at The Paramount Theatre, located at 30 Center Street in Rutland, Vt. Enjoy the breathtaking 4K resolution on our brand-new laser-powered projector, complemented by incredible surround sound.

No tickets needed – just come and experience the charm of The Paramount Theatre. This family-friendly event is made possible by Rutland Regional Medical Center.

The movies that will play this holiday season are: “How the Grinch Stole Christmas,” on Dec. 20, at 7

p.m.; “The Polar Express,” on Dec. 21, at 2 p.m.; “A Christmas Story,” on Dec. 21, at 7 p.m.; and “It’s a Wonderful Life,” on Dec. 22, at 2 p.m.

For a complete movie listing and more information, visit www.paramountvt.org/events-calendar/category/big-screen-2.

SAPA TV seventh annual Public Domain Christmas

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – SAPA TV, the Springfield area’s public access TV station, will once again run 24 hours of Christmas movies and short subjects, from 7 p.m. Christmas Eve to 7 p.m. Christmas Day.

Viewers in Springfield, Weathersfield, Chester, and in Charlestown, N.H., are welcomed to spend the day with 1964’s “Santa Claus Conquers the Martians,” the 1959 Mexican production

“Santa Claus,” and a host of classic cartoons, all of which have entered the public domain.

The marathon will run on SAPA’s Public Channel (Comcast 1077, VTel 160), while local Christmas programming will air at the same time on SAPA’s

Government/Educational Channel (Comcast 1087, VTel 161). Wednesday religious programs will air at their usual times, but on the Gov/Ed Channel.

Viewers outside SAPA’s service area can watch online with SAPA’s live stream at www.sapatv.org.

Seraphic Fire Christmas concert in Grafton

GRAFTON, Vt. – Grammy-nominated vocal ensemble Seraphic Fire returns to Grafton on Saturday, Dec. 21, at 7:30 p.m., to perform a Christmas concert at the Graf-

ton Brick Meeting House, 2 Main Street. A capella voices in an intimate setting mark the Christmas season, as conductor Anthony Trecek-King leads this Billboard-topping Christmas

program featuring seasonal tunes like “Away in a Manger” and “O Come All Ye Faithful.” Tickets can be purchased at www.seraphicfire.org/grafton.



Seraphic Fire will perform on Dec. 21.

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