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# Ludlow’s 3 Graces expands into Manchester

BY PAULA BENSON  
*The Vermont Journal*

LUDLOW, Vt. – Just over five years ago, in October 2020, a charming women’s boutique called 3 Graces quietly opened at 122 Main Street in Ludlow, Vt. Though the world was just six months into the Covid pandemic, 3 Graces received a welcoming reception from residents, who were excited for the new store even as they shopped while wearing masks and keeping 6 feet apart.

At the time, Vermont Journal reporter Sharon Huntley spoke with the store’s owner Cassandra “Cassie” Grace Laurent, and wrote that Laurent had created “a wonderful place where mothers and daughters can each find the perfect piece, be it clothing, jewelry, shoes, or accessories.”

That style, energy, and purpose is still what the

Ludlow shop is bringing today, much to the enjoyment of Okemo Valley locals and visitors, many of whom have become fans and loyal, repeat customers.

“Sometimes, we get three generations of women coming in,” said Laura Bellantoni, Laurent’s mother and occasional shop steward. One might say Bellantoni was the inspiration for Laurent’s passion for fashion, and now that relationship has come full circle.

Bellantoni owned her own retail shop where Laurent would play as a child, often with a security tag in her pocket so as not to wander off undetected. “Cassie was always a creative kid, and always wanted to open her own boutique,” Bellantoni recalled.

While earning her business degree at the University of Vermont (UVM), Laurent had intended to accept an

internship during her final year, but the program was cancelled due to the pandemic. Laurent admitted, however, that she had been texting her mother pictures of vacant retail spaces, so when Bellantoni was tipped off to a Main Street storefront opening up in Ludlow, the two women talked about Laurent’s career options and opportunities, and quickly, Laurent became the proprietor of 3 Graces.

After signing the contract, the transition felt exciting but tricky for Laurent. “All my plans got cancelled for me,” Laurent relayed, smiling. “In the meantime,” she said, “I had five online classes, I was a full-time waitress on Cape Cod, and I was coming up here two days a week to paint the walls of the store.”

Lovingly, the women chose the shop’s name to honor Laurent’s grandmother Grace, Bellantoni’s niece

Grace, and Laurent’s middle name, Grace. The name 3 Graces is also a reference to the Greek goddesses of charm, beauty, and creativity. Laurent designed the store’s elegant logo herself.

Laurent expressed her gratitude for her loyal staff in Ludlow. Lily Vullo was one of the first hired, while she was still in high school. Stephanie Firstbrook is another dedicated shop steward, there from the beginning.

Since opening a second 3 Graces store in Provincetown, Mass., Laurent has been shuttling back and forth from Ludlow to Cape Cod, while also becoming a new mother to son Greyson, age 2. Now, preparing to welcome a second child in February, Laurent is embarking

on a new venture along with the 3 Graces team. Saturday, Dec. 6, will see the grand opening of a third 3 Graces boutique, at 4943 Main Street in Manchester, Vt.

Each of the locations differ slightly, catering to the needs of their clientele. On the Cape, there is a larger selection of swimwear, for instance, and in Ludlow, more vacation and ski-themed items. For Manchester, Laurent plans to bring a fresh, fun approach geared toward a younger demographic, keeping in mind the students at Burr and Burton Academy.

3 Graces carries high-quality brands such as Free People, Liverpool, and Joe’s Jeans. They always carry some playful pieces around the holidays, with no ugly

Christmas sweaters in sight. The shop will continue to host community events, like the recent Sip ‘n Shop held at the Ludlow store last Saturday.

The opening of the Manchester store happens to coincide with the 15th annual Holiday Lighted Tractor Parade, which features tractors and floats adorned with festive lights and decor traversing the downtown.

The new store hours will be 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. “most days,” and will be introducing an exclusive new feature: a charm bar, where customers can build their own personal charm necklaces. The Manchester location is within the village, and sits adjacent to an art gallery called 3 Pears, which, according to Laurent, feels just perfect.

# United Church of Ludlow raises \$3,000 to combat hunger

LUDLOW, Vt. – The United Church of Ludlow’s Stuffed Shells to Stuff Hungry Bellies dinner raised more than \$3,000 to fight hunger both in the world and in our own backyard, thanks to the generosity of a number of regional organizations.

The church at 48 Pleasant Street hosted the dinner on Saturday, Nov. 22, in cooperation with the Ludlow Rotary Club, the Okemo Valley Women’s Club, and Black River Good Neighbor Services. Participants feasted on stuffed shells, salad, bread, and dessert, with in-person dining and takeout options.

“We are grateful to the many volunteers and donors who helped make this dinner to fight world hunger possible, and to the people who dined and generously supported the effort to help the many hungry

people in the world,” said pastor Michelle Fountain. “It is heartbreaking to know that while there is so much food in the world, there are still people starving. We hope that this small effort will inspire others as we share our faith through action.”

Proceeds were split between the United Church of Ludlow and the Ludlow Rotary Club. The church donated its share to two organizations that support world food needs: World Central Kitchen and Action Against Hunger. The Rotary will distribute the other half locally, to help with food insecurity.

Pastor Fountain said the church was grateful for the many donors who made the event a success, including Big Pops Sandwich Shop, Black River Good Neighbor Services, Black River Produce, The Castle, DJ’s Res-

taurant, Engel & Völkers, Four Square Hospitality (Off the Rails), Goodman’s American Pie, The Hatchery, The Killarney Irish Pub, The Loft, River Valley Technical Center, Stemwinders, Shaw’s Supermarket, and Vermont Family Farms.

The Ludlow Rotary Club provided volunteers, and the Okemo Valley Women’s Club provided desserts. Extra food was donated to the Mountainside House in Ludlow; and the Open Door Mission, a thrift store, soup kitchen, veteran shelter, and homeless shelter in Rutland.

Donations to combat hunger in our community and the world are still being accepted online at [www.bit.ly/unit-edchurch-donate](http://www.bit.ly/unit-edchurch-donate). Please enter “Stuffed Shells” in the special offering line.

# Chester continues Class 4 road discussion

BY NICK GIBERTI  
*The Vermont Journal*

CHESTER, Vt. – The Chester Selectboard continued their ongoing discussion of Class 4 roads at their Wednesday, Nov. 19, meeting, beginning by reviewing the process for discontinuance and reclassification of roads.

The process is encompassed, according to Board Chair Lee Gustafson, by an 11-page document, which outlines in detail all of the requirements for discontinuing a Class 4 road. Town manager Julie Hance explained to the board that the motivation for this overview was to make clear that road discontinuance and reclassification are not quick or easy matters, in response to some of the conversations at the previous meeting about requests for Class 4 roads to be discontinued. “If you’re going to have requests for discontinuance and

reclassification, I want the board to understand this is a very, very lengthy process,” Hance said. “It’s a legal process that has a lot of steps.”

Board member Peter Hudkins additionally noted that, should a Class 4 road continue beyond the borders of Chester and into another town, that town must be notified, and must also hold a public hearing before the road can be discontinued.

The board then continued on to discuss the town’s pending Class 4 road policy, which had generated significant controversy at the previous meeting. Hudkins recused himself, as he had also done at the previous meeting.

Gustafson summed up the sentiments which the board had heard in its previous discussions, saying, “I think part of what we’ve heard is that the Class 4 roads are a valuable asset to the town, and how do we use them appropriately and keep them so that we as a town can enjoy town property, but also not

come into instances where we’re annoying people or causing difficulties because these roads are being used inappropriately?”

Much of the conversation centered on the distinction between Class 4 roads which dead-end in private driveways, and those which connect back with other, Class 3 or higher roads. At the time of the selectboard meeting, the draft policy included provisions which would require permits from the town for all maintenance. After some discussion about carveouts for specific roads, Hance suggested that the board only require permits for “alteration,” as opposed to “maintenance,” and to define those terms specifically in a future draft. Examples given of maintenance included grading, plowing, and filling in potholes, whereas alteration would encompass activities such as widening the road or removing trees along its edges.

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[editor@vermontjournal.com](mailto:editor@vermontjournal.com)



# COVER helps local family with home repairs

READING, Vt. – COVER Home Repair, a nonprofit based in White River Junction that provides urgent home repairs for income-qualifying homeowners at no charge, is in the business of changing lives. This time, COVER volunteer crews are helping a young family with three children, including a remarkable daughter with profound disabilities. This is the story of the complexities of housing in the Upper Valley, and of multiple community organizations coming together to help a young family in Reading, and in effect, helping give the broader community a small boost.

Harlei Pierce, 32, and Melvin Pierce, 33, live in Reading with their three children Jupiter, 13; Astraea, 6; and Astrophel, 3. As the main breadwinner, Melvin is a journeyman plumbing and heating technician who is working on getting his master's license. Harlei is from Woodstock, where her family has been since the late 1800s. Their son Jupiter will be the sixth generation to go to Woodstock schools.

When Harlei was eight

months pregnant with Jupiter (her oldest) they lost their home in Woodstock due to Tropical Storm Irene. The Pierce family moved to Windsor for a time, before moving back to Woodstock, where they ultimately wanted to live. Melvin was working full time, and Harlei was working part time and also going to school to become a hospice nurse.

When their daughter, Astraea, was a few months old, it became apparent she wasn't hitting milestones and was exhibiting delays. Suddenly, the family was overwhelmed with physical therapy, occupational therapy, speech, neurology, and genetic appointments and tests. Harlei had to stop working and going to school to keep up with all the appointments. Some weeks Astraea had up to 10 appointments per week.

By the time Harlei was pregnant with Astrophel, the family learned that Astraea had a genetic disorder of the STXBP1 gene, which is a profound disability that affects the way the synapses in the brain tell her body what

to do. She is unable to talk, walk, or sit up by herself.

This is when the Pierces first connected with COVER Home Repair. COVER and a team of volunteers built a ramp to make it possible for Astraea to safely be brought in and out of her home.

After several years, they finally purchased a home in Reading, in the fall of 2024. They would be able to remain in the Woodstock school system, and their home had a flat yard and a bathroom and bedroom on the first floor for Astraea. Their 1900s home needed work, but they had finally found a home that was – miraculously – accessible and affordable, and where the kids could stay in the same school system.

With assistance from the COVER Store in White River Junction, they purchased replacement doors and home goods at affordable prices, including a beautiful

chandelier. In Reading, they received assistance from The Hub, which is a nonprofit that provides a safety net to residents of Barnard, Bridgewater, Killington, Plymouth, Pomfret, Reading, and Woodstock.

Bill Neukomm, a member of the Reading Energy Committee, performed a site visit to the home, to help weatherize it. Of his involvement, Neukomm says, "My involvement was incidental...The energy committee is very happy to have helped a new family in town."

Days after the Neukomm came out to assess the Pierces' home, Astraea was using the bathroom and started crying inconsolably. The left side of Astraea's body had completely seized up, and doctors discovered she had a rare childhood brain cancer. The energy committee's work paused, and the Pierces' life became a blur of medical appointments to remove as much

of the tumor as possible and then radiation.

Once things settled down with Astraea's health, the energy committee was able to come back to weatherize the home.

Although Astraea uses a powered chair to move around, she needed a ramp to get easily and safely in or out of her house. Harlei contacted COVER for assistance with building two accessibility ramps, and to modify their bathroom to include a roll-in shower.

This summer, COVER and its volunteers installed an accessible shower in the bathroom and built a ramp in the front entrance of the home. They also repaired rotted decking and installed a ramp by Astraea's bedroom as a second means of safe egress.

Melvin helped with the plumbing work, and Harlei made lunch for the volunteers when she could, in between appointments at the

hospital with her daughter.

This is a story about a bathroom, ramps, and other repairs, yes, but it's also the story of a group of neighbors coming together to help a new family in town. In addition to helping make the young family's daily realities easier, support from The Hub, the Reading Energy Committee, and COVER will help a family with children stay in a town that is rapidly aging.

For more information, contact Helen Hong, executive director, at [helen@coverhomerepair.org](mailto:helen@coverhomerepair.org) or 603-443-2243.

To learn more about applying, volunteering, or supporting COVER's work, visit [www.coverhomerepair.org](http://www.coverhomerepair.org).

To follow Astraea's journey, visit [www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067667534023&mibextid=ZbWKwL](https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100067667534023&mibextid=ZbWKwL).

To help support the Pierce family, visit [www.gofund.me/d906a0df8](http://www.gofund.me/d906a0df8).

## ROAD

From Page 1

There was also discussion surrounding whether or not the town can legally restrict motorized vehicle traffic on Class 4 roads,

something which had been suggested at the previous meeting, and was included in the draft policy. There was confusion among the board members as to whether state statute would allow for such a restriction,

and whether or not the policy had been reviewed by the town's attorney. Hance clarified that the attorney for the Town of Chester, Jim Carroll, had not reviewed the draft Class 4 road policy, but that the outline for the document, including the provision about limiting certain kinds of traffic, had been received from the Vermont League of Cities and Towns (VLCT), which has its own lawyers review any such outlines. Hance said that the town typically does not feel it necessary to have its own attorney review VLCT-provided documents, but that she would double check with VLCT about that particular provision.

The board also emphasized that each Class 4 road would be taken on its own merits, and that the policy would not create a blanket, one-size-fits-all approach to every Class 4 road, and its future use and development.

As before, several citizens voiced their opinions both in favor of, and in opposition to, aspects of the policy. Chester resident Gary King spoke in favor of the policy, saying that he has helped in building out several trails in Chester, and that the town's trails and Class 4 roads are "an incredible resource" for outdoor exploration opportunities. Conversely, Mike Adams, who operates a farm in Chester, told the board he has seen traffic on a Class 4 road which bisects his parcel, and had recently had a vehicle drive over his land and "ruin a good track on a new seeded piece." Class 4 road abutter Damon Tyler stated that he has also seen increased traffic on the road he lives on, apparently as a result of the board's recent discussions.

The Chester Selectboard will hold their next meeting on Wednesday, Dec. 3, at 6:30 p.m., in the Chester Town Hall.

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# Springfield Christmas Village Campaign —

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# holiday puzzle page

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## Springfield Area Parent Child Center seeks 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 wellbeing, 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 Mount 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 on-site Playworks Child Center is a five-star-rated early childhood education program for children from 6 weeks to 6 years of age. Child care support services include referral and financial assistance for child care, summer camp, and before- and 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, open for walk-in hours on Tuesday, from 12-3:30 p.m., and the first and third Wednesday, from 3-6 p.m. Also open by appointment at other hours. Donations are accepted during office hours, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

The Workforce Development Program offers professional development opportunities for the community at the on-site 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 for three-year terms that begin in June 2026. First-time board member candidates and those with prior nonprofit board experience are welcome. Orientation and training are provided.

There are openings for general board members. In addition, new members could be onboarded sooner if they exhibit expertise in the following areas: financial management, accounting/IRS Form 990, strategic planning, legislative expertise, legal compliance, fundraising and development, human resources, marketing, and advocacy.

Board members serve on one of two standing committees – internal affairs or governance – which typically meet monthly to address

their specific areas of responsibility. The full board also meets monthly. Meetings are hybrid, attended either in-person or virtually.

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, Athens, 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. Visit [www.tinyurl.com/SAPCCboard](http://www.tinyurl.com/SAPCCboard) to apply.

For more information about board service, email [BOD@sapcc-vt.org](mailto:BOD@sapcc-vt.org).

To learn more about SAPCC, visit [www.sapcc-vt.org](http://www.sapcc-vt.org).



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# CHURCH SERVICES

## ATHENS, VT.

### Community Christian Church of Athens, 126 Brookline Road

Sunday services are at 9:30 a.m. and 6 p.m., and prayer meetings are held Wednesdays, at 7 p.m. If you have questions, call 802-869-2513. The 9:30 a.m. Sunday service is also streamed on Facebook Live at the Church's Facebook page.

## BELLOWS FALLS, VT.

### United Church of Bellows Falls, UCC, 8 School St.

Worship service starts at 10 a.m. every Sunday. All are welcome to attend. Following the service, there will be a time of refreshments. Many other services are offered throughout the week. If you have any questions or want to learn more, call 802-463-4323, visit the church, or find them on Facebook.

## CHARLESTOWN, N.H.

### North Charlestown United Methodist Church, 471 River Rd.

Worship is Sundays at 9 a.m., with pastor Carolyn Greenwood. Holy communion is celebrated the first Sunday of every month. Call 603-477-6985, or visit [www.facebook.com/UMCOFNorthCharlestown](http://www.facebook.com/UMCOFNorthCharlestown) for more information.

## CHESTER, VT.

### St. Luke's Episcopal Church, 313 Main St.

Services are on Wednesdays, from 5:30-6 p.m.; and on Sundays, from 10-11:30 a.m., both in person and by Zoom, followed by coffee hour. All are welcome. Handicapped accessible. For a link to the Zoom service or more information about services and events, please visit [www.stlukesepiscopalvt.org](http://www.stlukesepiscopalvt.org).

### Andover Community Church, 928 Weston-Andover Rd.

Sunday school at 9:30 a.m. and worship service 10:45 a.m. For more information, go to [www.andovercommunitychurch.org](http://www.andovercommunitychurch.org).

## LONDONDERRY, VT.

### Second Congregational Church of Londonderry, 2051 N. Main St.

Worship service is at 9:30 a.m. in person or online. Fill out a form at [www.2ndcongregationalchurchvt.org](http://www.2ndcongregationalchurchvt.org) to be sent a link to the live stream.

## LUDLOW, VT.

### Annunciation Catholic Church, Corner of Depot and High St.

Masses are celebrated on Saturday at 4:30 p.m. and on Sunday at 9 a.m. For further information, see our website at [churchoftheannunciation.org](http://churchoftheannunciation.org), or call us at 802-228-3451.

## SPRINGFIELD, VT.

### First Congregational Church, UCC, 77 Main St.

Sunday services are at 10 a.m. in person. Singing is encouraged! For more information, call 802-885-5728, email [fccucc@vermontel.net](mailto:fccucc@vermontel.net), or go to [www.firstchurchspringfield.org](http://www.firstchurchspringfield.org).

### North Springfield Baptist Church, 581 Giddings Street, North Springfield.

All are welcome and invited to join us for worship on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. For more information, please email the church office at [office@nsbcvt.org](mailto:office@nsbcvt.org), or call 802-886-8107. We are handicapped accessible.

### Precision Valley Baptist Church, 69 Rt. 106

Join our worship service every Sunday at 10 a.m. Women's Study group meets on Tuesdays at 6 p.m., and Mens Study Group meets on Wednesdays at 6 p.m. All are welcome! For more information, check out Facebook @ PrecisionValleyBaptist Church.

## WALPOLE, N.H.

### Walpole Unitarian Church, corner of Union and Main St.

Sunday Service begins at 10 a.m. Services are also available via Zoom. For links and updates, go to [www.walpoleunitarianchurch.org](http://www.walpoleunitarianchurch.org).

## B. Laura Caravatt, 2025

LUDLOW, Vt. – B. Laura Caravatt, 102, of Ludlow, Vt., died Nov. 24, 2025, at her daughter the Rev. Cyndie Holden's home in East Wallingford, Vt.

A complete obituary will be printed in a future edition of the Rutland Herald.

Tossing Funeral Home is assisting the family with arrangements.

## Mary H. Smith, 1922-2025

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Mary Helen (Bobrowski) Smith passed on peacefully on Nov. 21, 2025, at The Gill Odd Fellows Home in Ludlow, Vt., at the age of 103.

Mary was born in Bellows Falls, Vt., on Feb. 1, 1922, to Walenty and Eva (Nizik) Bobrowski. She married Stanley (Staniszewski) Smith on Jan. 19, 1946.

Mary is survived by her children Mary (Tetric Sr.) Emerson and Edward (Laurel) Smith; her grandchildren Kate (Vince) Canini, Kerry (late Gary) Rainstrom, Tedric (Kristy) Emerson Jr., Courtney (Justin) Reed, Dwight (Heather) Smith, and Cory (Melissa) Smith; her great-grandchildren Kayla Bibee, Nick (Molly) Rowland, Evan (Samantha) Mattison, Jennifer and Jonathan Cray, Olivia and Isabella Smith, and Garrett and Addison Emerson; her great-great-grandchildren Liam, Remi, Ellie, Harper, Chase, Nora, Lisa, Lincoln, and Parker; and numerous nieces and nephews.

Mary is predeceased by her parents; her husband; her brothers Joseph (Julia), Leo (Betty), Steven (Nalora), and Anthony Bobrowski; her sister Laura (Will) Lawlor; her daughter Patricia (David) Cray; and grandchildren Kimberly Emerson and Jason Cray.

Mary proudly attended Bellows Falls High School, Class of 1940, always telling us, "The best years of your life are in school, and you don't even know it!" Her Bellows Falls-area employment was at Zeno's Bakery, The Tannery, and New England Telephone and Telegraph, "Ma Bell," as telephone operator and supervisor, choosing an early retirement to care for her husband.

She was a lifelong member of the Sacred Heart Church, as her parents, along with other immigrant families, helped to build it after they arrived from Poland. Mary was involved as a member of the choir and the Ladies Altar Society. At the closing of Sacred Heart Church, she



Mary Smith, 1922-2025. PHOTO PROVIDED

was graciously welcomed and enjoyed many years at the St. Charles Church, where she received the Servant Heart Award recognition earlier this year for her many years as a good and faithful servant of the Catholic Church.

Embracing her second-generation Polish heritage, she was a member of the Polish American Club. She spent many hours at the Bellows Falls Senior Center, with the more than 90 club luncheons, and bone-density exercises even into her 90s, filling in when the instructor was absent.

Mary fully enjoyed the family holidays, trips to Florida, her monthly telephone operator's luncheons, her Hawaiian vacation (kissed by Do Ho), and would enjoy a trip to a casino. In her more homebound years, she greatly anticipated receiving her daily Meals on Wheels delivery, and chatting with the volunteers – especially Janet Dube – visits from her family, and endless games of solitaire on her vintage computer. In her last year, she received exceptional care by the Trusted Choice Eldercare team, and later at The Gill Odd Fellows Home in Ludlow, Vt., where she involved herself in their activities and events.

She was absolutely, positively blessed with good family and good friends, and she left it "all in the hands of the man up above." Period. That's for sure!

Calling hours were held at the Fenton and Hennessey Funeral Home. A Mass of Christian burial was held at the St. Charles Church on Saturday, Nov. 29, at 12 p.m., with interment at the Sacred Heart Cemetery following the Mass.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to the Greater Falls Senior Center in Bellows Falls, Vt.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Fenton and Hennessey Funeral Home, 55 Westminster Street in Bellows Falls, Vt.

## Shirley Rumrill, 1945-2025

CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – Shirley Farnsworth Rumrill passed away peacefully at home in Charlestown, N.H., on Nov. 1, 2025. She was surrounded by (in body and spirit), her family.

She is survived by her husband Phillip Rumrill Sr., son Phillip Jr. and daughter-in-law Amy Rumrill, daughter Leanne Finnell, daughter Carina Rumrill, her beloved 14 grandchildren and seven great-grandchildren, brother and sister-in-law Roger and Elaine Farnsworth, brother Rick Farnsworth and sister-in-law Candy Durkee, and sisters-in-law Cheryl Martin and Irene Rice. She leaves behind many dear friends, extended family members, and neighbors – especially Scott Clark, whose kindness and devotion toward Shirley knew no bounds. She is predeceased by her mother Lyle Parker Farnsworth, father Robert Farnsworth, sister Myra Frances Farnsworth, and brother Robert "Bobby" Farnsworth.

Shirley was born in Saint Johnsbury, Vt., on Sept. 1, 1945, and raised in Westminster, Vt. She graduated from Bellows Falls Union High School in 1963, and Sheldon Beauty Academy in Burlington, Vt., in 1964. Shirley and her husband Phil served as house parents at Kurn Hattin Homes in Westminster, Vt., for five years. After finishing her 25-year career as a hair stylist, she worked in nursing and home health until retirement.

Shirley approached everything in life with a creative touch and multiple talents. She loved painting, sewing, quilting, and crocheting. She adored flowers, and was extremely proud of her bountiful gardens. She will be remembered for her resilience, fairness, inde-



Shirley Rumrill, 1945-2025. PHOTO PROVIDED

pendence, kind heart, and incomparable beauty.

The family will organize a Celebration of Life in the spring, to enable long-distance family the time to plan to be present.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made to Sullivan County Transportation, [www.keeppnhmoving.com/provider/sullivan-county-transportation](http://www.keeppnhmoving.com/provider/sullivan-county-transportation), who arranged countless rides for her dialysis treatment due to the kindness of volunteers. We also request that if you do feel moved to offer flowers, to please offer them to your own mother, wife, girlfriend, neighbor, or friend who might appreciate them, in memory of dear Shirley.

Arrangements have been entrusted to the care of the Fenton and Hennessey Funeral Home, 55 Westminster Street in Bellows Falls, Vt.

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NEW TIRES TOO!!

### OBITUARIES:

A basic 200-word obituary is \$75, and \$0.50 per word thereafter. A black and white photo is an additional \$10. Email to [editor@vermontjournal.com](mailto:editor@vermontjournal.com) by Monday at 12 p.m.

### CHURCH SERVICES:

We run Church Services on an alternating schedule. Subject to space. All services are posted online at [www.VermontJournal.com](http://www.VermontJournal.com).

## CHAVES EXCAVATING

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# calendar

## LEGAL NOTICES

**DEC. 6 –**  
LUDLOW, Vt. – Southeastern Vermont Community Action (SEVCA), the community action agency serving Windham and Windsor counties, will host an open house on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10:30 a.m. – 12:30 p.m., at 61 Andover Street. Join board and staff members to learn about the services, programs, and assistance available. Refreshments will be served. For more information, contact Judy Trow at jtrow@sevca.org or 802-722-4575.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, will hold their Winter Wonderland Craft Fair on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m. This event is open to the public. We will have many different crafters, a cookie walk, and concessions.

**DEC. 9 –**  
SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Liz from Senior Solutions will be at the Springfield Senior Center on Tuesday, Dec. 9, from 9-11 a.m. For more information, contact executive director Lori Johnson at 802-885-3933 or lorijohnsonssc@gmail.com.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Claremont Senior Center, 5

Acer Heights, will hold its next membership meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 1 p.m. This will give you a chance to hear what is happening with the senior center, as well as a chance to win a free lunch. New members are always welcome to come enjoy our facility. You can sign up for a one-month trial membership, so you can enjoy our programs and activities before you join us.

**DEC. 11 –**  
BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Liberty Food Fest will celebrate the end of the growing season with a dinner at The Hungry Diner, on Thursday, Dec. 11, at 7 p.m. Join Cait and Chris Caserta, owners of The Hungry Diner and Walpole Valley Farms, as they host Joel Salatin for an unforgettable night of local food and general merriment. For more information, visit www.libertyfoodfest.com/schedule.

**DEC. 12-13 –**  
BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Libert Food Fest will take place on Friday, Dec. 12, and Saturday, Dec. 13, at the Bellows Falls Opera House, featuring guest speakers and a small holiday market. For more information and a complete schedule of events, visit

www.libertyfoodfest.com/schedule.

**DEC. 12 –**  
SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Card games at the Springfield Senior Center, 139 Main Street, will be on Friday, Dec. 12, at 1 p.m. For more information, contact executive director Lori Johnson at 802-885-3933 or lorijohnsonssc@gmail.com.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – The next session of Claremont Senior Center fundraiser bingo will be on Friday, Dec. 12, at the senior center, 5 Acer Heights. Doors open at 4:30 p.m., games start at 6 p.m. Open to the public, must be 18 years of age to play. Concessions are available through intermission. Bring family and friends for an evening of fun. The senior center wants to thank all who have come out and support this event. If you are interested in helping with future events, please call Cheryl at 603-543-5998.

**DEC. 13 –**  
BRIDGEWATER CORNERS, Vt. – Bingo at the Bridgewater Grange, 129 Route 100A, will be held Saturday, Dec. 13. Doors open at 5 p.m., and the game begins at 6:15 p.m. Concessions will be available.

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Ludlow Side Hill Cronchers snowmobile club will hold

a free snowmobile safety course on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 8:30 a.m. – 3:30 p.m., at the Black River Valley Senior Center, 10 High Street. Vermont law requires that anyone born after July 1, 1983, who is 12 years old or older, complete a snowmobile safety course to legally drive a snowmobile on a VAST trail. Register online at www.ludlowsidehillcronchers.com/events. This class is limited to 25 participants. For more information, email ludlowshc@gmail.com, or call Tina at 802-228-2110. Free lunch will be provided by the Side Hill Cronchers.

**SUNDAYS –**  
BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Bellows Falls Loyal Order of Moose will be hosting a community breakfast on the first and third Sunday of every month, downstairs at the Bellows Falls Moose Lodge, 59 Westminster Street in Bellows Falls, from 8-10 a.m. All you can eat for a minimal cost.

PERKINSVILLE, Vt. – The Perkinsville Community Church, 35 Church Street in Perkinsville, Vt., will be hosting live music every first Sunday, from 4-5:30 p.m. This is a free event, but donations will be accepted each month to go towards local charities. Please keep an eye out for upcoming shows, they will be posted each month on our Facebook

page at www.facebook.com/PerkinsvilleChurch. Any questions, or to be added to our mailing list, please send an email to churchperkinsville@gmail.com.

**MONDAYS –**  
SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Cozy Stitches pop-in sewing class is held on Mondays, from 10 a.m. – 12 p.m., at the Springfield Town Library, 43 Main Street. Start your week with a cozy morning of sewing, chatting, and sharing ideas. Bring your own hand-sewing, knitting, crocheting, or mending projects, and enjoy the company of others who love to create.

CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, holds line dancing every Monday night, at 7 p.m., with Dorianne Lescord. Free for members, small entry fee for nonmembers. For more information, call 603-543-5998.

**TUESDAYS –**  
LUDLOW, Vt. – Strengthen your core, improve posture, and enhance your overall mobility with a Pilates/yoga fusion class at the Black River Valley Senior Center, 10 High Street, every Tuesday, from 8-9 a.m. All levels welcome. Contact Lori Wright to register at 603-401-8123, or email loriwright163@gmail.com.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Sew What is held Tuesday afternoons, from 2-4 p.m., at the Springfield Town Library, 43 Main Street. Spend your Tuesday afternoon working on sewing projects in a relaxed and welcoming space. Bring your own supplies and enjoy time to sew, learn, and have fun with others. Sewing machines are provided, or you can bring your own if you prefer. Both groups are free to attend and open to all skill levels. For more

information, visit www.springfieldtownlibrary.org, or call the library at 802-885-3108.

**WEDNESDAYS –**  
CLAREMONT, N.H. – The Claremont Senior Center, 5 Acer Heights, holds bingo every Wednesday afternoon. You must be at least 55 years old, and purchase your cards by 12:45 p.m. Games begin at 1 p.m. Concessions are available until the game begins. We average around 30-40 seniors who love to attend, visit with their friends, and try to win a little extra money.

**THURSDAYS –**  
CHESTER, Vt. – Bone Builders Class in Chester every Thursday, from 10-11 a.m. Classes will be held in the First Universalist Parish of Chester community room. Classes are free and open to all. Drop-in class, no registration needed. For details, contact Barbara at bwquilter1778@gmail.com.

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Black River Memory Cafe is held on the second Thursday of each month, at the United Church of Ludlow, 48 Pleasant Street, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. The memory cafe is free to attend, snacks included, and offers a safe and comfortable space where caregivers and their loved ones living with dementia or Alzheimer's can socialize, listen to music, play games, and enjoy other appropriate activities. This is a program of Black River Good Neighbor Services. For more information, contact Vicki at 802-376-3388, or Krey at 802-228-3663.

**FRIDAYS –**  
BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – On Fridays from 11 a.m. – 12 p.m., John Bohannon will teach tai chi and qi gong at the Rockingham Library in Bellows Falls, Vt. No special equipment or clothing is required.

### Green Mountain Preschool

We are opening enrollment spaces for two more 3 or 4-year-olds to join us for the remainder of the 2025/2026 school year!

Call 802-875-7758 or email hannah.nadeau@trsuo.org for more information

573 Main Street, Proctorsville

### Invite to Bid

The Ludlow Mount Holly Unified Union School District is now accepting bids for replacing the roof at the Mount Holly School. For bid requirements, please contact Cheryl Hammond, Business Manager at (802) 875-6433 or cheryl.hammond@trsuo.org or Todd Parah at (802) 875-4246 or todd.parah@trsuo.org. Bids need to be submitted no later than 3PM on December 10th.

### TOWN OF CHARLESTOWN NH We're Hiring! Join Our Team Today!

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For more information Visit Charlestown-nh.gov, click on Volunteer & Employment.

Application available on the website or come in to the Town Office at 233 Main St. Charlestown NH

### PERU PLANNING COMMISSION AND ZBA HEARING

Pam and Eric Roberts has submitted an application for a partial demolition and reconstruction of a single family home at 344 Main St. AND Peru Congregational Church has submitted an application for a variance from front setback for safer steps at the church at 292 Main St. The Town Peru Planning Commission and the Zoning Board of Adjustment will hold hearings on these applications at 5:30 on 12/15/2025 at the Peru Town Offices.

Those interested in seeing the applications or submitting written comments, should contact the town's Zoning Administrator at: Town of Peru P.O Box 127, Peru Vt. 05152, or emailing to Zoning@peruvt.org

Pursuant to 24 V.S.A. §§ 4464(a)(1)(C) and 4471(a), participation in this local proceeding is a prerequisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

### MUNICIPAL MANAGER Town of Rockingham & Village of Bellows Falls

The Town of Rockingham and the Village of Bellows Falls seek a Municipal Manager to oversee day-to-day operations and support policy set by the Selectboard and Village Trustees. Ideal candidates will have strong experience in statutory and regulatory compliance and municipal administration. The position oversees public works, public safety, utilities, and community services; ensures accurate budgeting and financial reporting; manages personnel and collective bargaining matters, including negotiations; represents the municipality with residents, businesses, and partner agencies; and supports economic development and community engagement initiatives.

Salary and benefits are negotiable, commensurate with experience.

The Town of Rockingham is an EEOE. Send letter of interest and résumé to: Heather Hitchcock, Personnel Resource Manager, Town of Rockingham, PO Box 370, Bellows Falls, VT 05101. Or by email: resourcemanager@rockbf.org.

### TOWN OF MOUNT HOLLY, VERMONT NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING

The Mount Holly Planning Commission will hold a Public Hearing at 5.30 PM on Tuesday December 16th, at the Mount Holly Town Office and via Zoom to consider an Application for a Minor Subdivision, #2025-03

**Property Owner:** Gregory Kelley

**Property Location:** Bowlsville Road North

**Application for:** Minor Subdivision of an approximately 55 Acre lot into 2 lots (28 +/- acres, 28 +/- acres)

Participation in this hearing is a pre-requisite to the right to take any subsequent appeal.

If you wish to make a public comment but do not have the ability to comment remotely during the meeting, please email your comment(s) in advance of the hearing to Mount Holly Planning Commission at planningcomm@mounthollyvt.org or mail to Mount Holly Planning Commission at P.O. Box 248 Mount Holly, VT 05758.

**Join Zoom Meeting:** https://us06web.zoom.us/j/8444812993?pwd=zoA0yxIgUQO1K7LNi0wNCVPFHegUrp.1 Meeting ID: 844 4812 9939 Passcode: 122863



HOLIDAY CALENDAR

classifieds

**DEC. 5 –**  
BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – The First Baptist Church of Bellows Falls, 9 Church Street, will have a First Friday fundraiser ham dinner on Dec. 5, from 5-6:30 p.m. This will be to benefit the Bellows Falls Police Department Project Elf Christmas program. The menu includes ham, potato, sweet potato, vegetable, green salad, beverage, and dessert. There is a small suggested donation.

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – Neighborhood Connections is hosting a Christmas event on Friday, Dec. 5, at our offices in the Mountain Marketplace, 5700 Route 100, Londonderry, Vt. There will be a tractor parade and tree lighting at 5:30 p.m., followed by Santa’s open house at 6 p.m., with hot chocolate and goodies for all. There will be games and craft tables for elves of all ages. Come over, dress warm, and be prepared to have a great time welcoming in the holidays.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Springfield Garden Club will be hosting a Christmas holidays pop-up market at the First Congregational Church, 77 Main Street, on Friday, Dec. 5, from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. We will be selling our handmade wreaths, centerpieces, and

other holiday decorations.

**DEC. 6 –**  
BELMONT, Vt. – The Mount Holly Community Historical Museum’s Festival of Lights fundraiser will be held Saturday, Dec. 6, at the Odd Fellows Hall in Belmont. There will be an auction preview beginning at 5 p.m., with the live auction beginning at 5:30 p.m. Hors d’oeuvres and refreshments will be served. The auction will feature new and vintage items, decorated wreaths, and a wine and cheese raffle.

BRIDGEWATER CORNERS, Vt. – The Bridgewater Grange, 129 Route 100A, will hold a holiday potluck on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 6-8 p.m., featuring music by J. Mike Kelley. Bring your favorite dish to share.

LUDLOW, Vt. – The Black River Academy Museum Festival of Lights will be open on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 4-7 p.m.

LONDONDERRY, Vt. – The annual Christmas bazaar at the Second Congregational Church of Londonderry, 2051 North Main Street (Vermont Route 11), will once again be held on the first Saturday of December, Dec. 6, from 9 a.m. – 3 p.m., in the Church Friendship Room. There will be handmade wreaths to

purchase, a delicious lunch served, a cookie walk, crafts and gift items to purchase, and much, much fun to be had. Come join us for a wonderful day to get into the Christmas spirit. For more information, please call the church office at 802-824-6453.

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The American Legion Post 18, 191 River Street, is holding its annual winter craft fair on Dec. 6, from 9 a.m. – 4 p.m. This festive event will be held to showcase local vendors and artisans, offering a wonderful opportunity for community members to shop, support, and celebrate the holiday season. For more information about the winter craft fair, please visit [www.facebook.com/61556507016038](http://www.facebook.com/61556507016038), or contact us via email at [Jh39135@outlook.com](mailto:Jh39135@outlook.com). Let’s come together to support our veterans and strengthen our community. We look forward to seeing you there.

**DEC. 7 –**  
N. CHARLESTOWN, N.H. – The North Charlestown United Methodist Church is holding a Christmas concert on Sunday, Dec. 7, at 2 p.m., featuring baby grand piano, guitar, and bagpipes, with a soloist and The Charlestown Congregational Church

choir. There will be a by-request Christmas singalong to finish the event. There will be a collection for the Charlestown Area Christmas Fund and seasonal refreshments after the concert.

**DEC. 13 –**  
BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – Soupsgiving will be held on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 5-7 p.m., at the Bellows Falls Family Center, 59 Westminster Street, during the Bellows Falls Parade of Lights. Bring a soup to share if you are able, a bowl and spoon, your appetite, and your friendship. This is a gathering for people to enjoy good company and good soup. You may want to bring a container in case there are leftovers. Donations welcome to benefit our local food bank.

PLYMOUTH, Vt. – Children 18 and under and their caregivers are invited to join Plymouth Emergency Services for the third annual Season of Giving Holiday Party on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 4:30-6:30 p.m., at the Plymouth Town Office, 68 Town Office Road. There will be activities, raffles, refreshments, and a gift for each child.

AUCTION

PERKINSVILLE, Vt. – Contents of storage unit #76, rented by Tevon Gray, at Perkinsville Self Storage will be auctioned off on Dec. 10, 2025, at 10 a.m., at 4215 Route 106, Perkinsville, VT 05151.

BUYING/SELLING

BUYING-SELLING Coins, Paper \$\$, Vintage Sports Postcards, Comics. See our displays at antique centers in Chester and Quechee. Open 7 Days. 802-379-2353. House calls available.

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FIREWOOD

CAVENDISH, Vt. – Firewood for sale, free delivery within 15 mile radius of Cavendish. Starting at \$325 per cord. Contact 802-376-8638.

FOR RENT

N. SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Retired gentleman with vision loss looking to share mobile home at the end of private lane. Private room/private bathroom available. Dogs welcome. Would love help with cooking, occasional errands. \$200/month. 802-863-5625 or [HomeShareVermont.org](http://HomeShareVermont.org) for

application. Interview, references, background checks required. EHO.

FOR SALE

BELLOWS FALLS, Vt. – 1938 Chevy 4-door car and trailer. And 1984 Z-28 Camaro. 802-463-4342.

HELP WANTED

LUDLOW, Vt. – Looking for a seasonal, part-time job through winter? Come join our cleaning team. Flexible days/hours, no weekends or holidays. Call 802-342-3767.

LUDLOW, Vt. – Okemo Valley TV/WLUD is searching for its next Executive Director to lead the organization into its next chapter. We are a small but vibrant community-based multi-media organization, headquartered in Ludlow. With the recent addition of community radio we are evolving to serve and engage with the community in different ways. To learn more about the position and how to apply, please visit the station’s website at [okemovalley.tv](http://okemovalley.tv).

OTHER

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Need a ride in Springfield and surrounding areas. Food for special occasions. Soup, stews, or dinner delivery. Even some light cleanup. Call Jim Theetge at 802-738-7790.

SNOW PLOWING

LUDLOW, Vt. – Snowplowing and sanding, Ludlow area, residential only. Reasonable rates. Contact SK Logging at 802-384-0313.

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**Workshops-** Info & register: <https://galleryvault.org/workshops/>  
**Raku Pottery** with Andrew Berends, Dec. 6 & 13

**Joyful Moments** – New Open Wall Show  
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(02/11/26 - 13)

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(05/06/26 - 26)

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(12/05/25 - 13)

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(01/28/26 - 52)

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(02/18/26 - 13)

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(04/08/26 - 26)

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(12/17/25 - 13)



outdoor

PROS TO KNOW

# Farm & Wilderness dam removal grant

PLYMOUTH, Vt. – Farm & Wilderness Foundation was awarded up to \$180,000 in funds by Watersheds United Vermont (WUV), under a Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant (Dam Removal DIBG). Removal projects are to achieve improvements to Vermont’s water quality, and to provide cobenefits including flood resilience, aquatic organism passage, and aquatic and riparian habitat improvements. The WUV award is part of CWIP grant from the Vermont Agency of Natural Resources.

Farm & Wilderness Foundation is a 501(c)(3) that specializes in operating summer camps, and its subsidiary, Farm & Wilderness Conservation, manages more than 5,000 acres of land, most of which is in Plymouth and Mount Holly. The awarded funds were used in the planning, permitting, removal, and site restoration of Rockefeller Dam in Plymouth, Vt.

The result of this completed project includes the installation of 3.5 acres of

floodplain, about 550 linear feet of instream habitat restoration, ¼ stream miles reconnected for stream equilibrium and aquatic organism passage, and the stabilization of about 11,800 cubic yards of sediments.

Questions about the project can be directed to Jay Kullman, executive director, at [jay@farmandwilderness.org](mailto:jay@farmandwilderness.org); or Elisabeth Rondione, conservation coordinator, at [elisabeth@farmandwilderness.org](mailto:elisabeth@farmandwilderness.org).

# Valley Street Dam successfully removed

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – The Mount Ascutney Regional Commission (MARC) and Connecticut River Conservancy (CRC), in partnership with the Town of Springfield, have removed an old dam on Valley Street in Springfield, Vt.

The removal of the 14-foot-high by 33-foot-wide concrete structure will improve flood safety, water quality, and fish passage on a tributary of the Black River locally known as Mile Brook. CRC and MARC began working with the Town

of Springfield and State of Vermont on this project in 2018, and after eight years of grant writing, engineering design, and permitting, the removal of the old dam was completed in September 2025.

The town originally built the dam in 1938, to create a swimming area, but closed the pool in 1953 due to “contamination and unhygienic conditions.” For the past 72 years the dam was slowly degrading and trapping sediment upstream, resulting in significant water quality impacts.

Funding for design, per-

mitting, and construction was provided by the State of Vermont Ecosystem Restoration Program (ERP), a Dam Removal Design and Implementation Block Grant (DRDIBG) administered by Watersheds United Vermont (WUV) and the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service National Fish Passage Program. Local contractors hired for this project include Ripple Natural Resources LLC, of Randolph; Paula Sagerman, a historic preservation consultant based in Brattleboro; and Crown Point Excavation LLC, of Springfield, Vt.



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Valuing a house

real estate

**REGION** – There are three values for any home on the market: what the seller thinks it's worth, what the buyer thinks it's worth, and what a professional appraiser will think it's worth. The key to a successful purchase is to get those three numbers to align.

You never want to assume that the asking price of a home is also its fair market value. Home values are somewhat subjective and always changing.

Buyers should always do their research, taking time to determine the market value of a home before making an offer. Otherwise, you risk overpaying.

Market value is what a fully informed, willing buyer would pay for a home. It's an amount informed by prices other buyers have recently paid for nearby, similar homes – called comparable homes, or “comps.”

Comps usually consider five key criteria when calculating a home's value, as follows.

**Timeline** – In a typical market, comps include homes sold in the past three to six months.

**Location** – Comps should be pulled from the same neighborhood, and in close proximity to the home in question.

**Home size** – Comps should have the same number of bedrooms and bathrooms, same number of stories, and a similar square footage. The lot size and presence of a garage or basement should be similar, too.

**Features** – Comparable homes should have similar amenities and level of finishes and updates.

**Age** – The homes being compared should be roughly the same age. Newer homes have newer designs, layouts, systems, and appliances, which can increase value.

In order to determine a home's value using comps, three to five comps are collected and grouped together. Then, a report is generated determining a market value, based on the sale prices and details of these homes. You could get two types of reports, based on who is doing the calculations. These are a comparative market analysis, or an appraisal.

A comparative market analysis (CMA) is a report typically generated by a real estate agent, used to come up with an accurate list price/estimate of a home's sale price.

An appraisal is a report generated by a licensed appraiser, and it's typically used for financing approval.

Keep in mind that the market value you receive from your agent or an appraiser can differ depending on a few factors. These include:

**Market speed** – If your local real estate market is moving slowly, you might have to depend on comps that are older or less relevant, which could affect the results.

**Comp selection** – When multiple relevant comps are available, different agents or appraisers might choose to use different comps, which can affect the outcome slightly.

**Valuation of features** – The agent or appraiser will add or subtract value based on the features of a specific home, and different agents or appraisers may assign slightly different values to home features.

The value of some home features comes down to individual buyer preferences. If a swimming pool is factored into the price of a home, but you plan to just fill it in and relandscape, it doesn't make sense to pay extra for it. If you love new carpeting, it may be worth paying a little more for a house with new, high-end, wall-to-wall carpet. But if you're going to tear it out to install hardwoods, it's not. If your idea of home cooking is popping something in the microwave, you probably don't want to pay a premium for a gourmet kitchen when a nice, reasonably sized one would suit you just fine.

Many features of a home can be changed by the owner, like finishes, and even home size. However, you cannot change where the home is located. That's why location is such an important factor in a home's value. Outside of standard market appreciation, a home's land will only increase in value if the area around it improves.

For buyers, the biggest risk in valuing a home incorrectly is overpaying. Other consequences include losing financing after appraisal, or not getting your offer accepted at all.

Even if you and the seller agree on a price, the appraiser's valuation will determine the amount your lender will loan for the property. When you agree to pay too much, it can be hard to get financing. If the appraisal comes in too low, it's possible you will have to come up with a larger down payment, or you risk the deal falling apart.

There's also some risk in valuing a home too low. If you miscalculate, the seller may not accept your low offer, and you may have to move on to another home.

Generally speaking, if you're purchasing a newer or well-maintained home, the home is likely worth more than the land today. But in 50 years, without upkeep, the land would probably be worth more. The physical structure, appliances, and materials usually depreciate over time, assuming everything in the home is left original.

The value of land, however, is much more volatile and difficult to predict. A home within close proximity to desirable shops, restaurants, city centers, or attractions will generally have a higher value compared to a home farther from these perks. But those amenities and their desirability can change over time.

If you're buying a home with a view or near a long-standing city center, then odds are good that its value will appreciate, but land value is never guaranteed.

Article provided by Zillow Group.

David Chaves

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# holiday happenings

## Claremont MakerSpace Holiday Maker Market —

CLAREMONT, N.H. – Celebrate the season and support local makers at the annual Claremont MakerSpace Holiday Maker Market, on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 10 a.m. – 2 p.m., at 46 Main Street in Claremont. This festive craft fair showcases the creativity and talent of our members, featuring a wide variety of handmade goods perfect for holiday gift-giving. Browse unique, one-of-a-kind items such as woodcrafts, jewelry, home decor, art, and more, all made with care and craftsmanship.

Enjoy a cheerful holiday atmosphere, connect with our creative community, and find something special for everyone on your list. Admission is free. Come shop local and make this holiday season handmade.

## Christmas in Weston —

WESTON, Vt. – It’s beginning to look a lot like Christmas in Weston. On Saturday, Dec. 6, from 11 a.m. to dusk, you’re cordially invited to join the entire town in our annual official welcome to the season. Activities include visits with Santa and Mrs. Claus at the Weston Village Christmas Shop, cookie decorating at The Farrar-Mansur Museum, and cookie sales on the Green. Goat petting, caroling, and horse-drawn wagons are located at the Vermont Country Store. At The Little School, there will be holiday crafts, face painting, and a reading of “Firefighters to the Rescue” by author and illustrator R.W. Alley, plus an art lesson for the little ones. Mel Allen will be in town signing his “Here in New England” book. Music offerings will include our local Kinnhaven students, Nordic Harmoni with their

Santa Lucia, and both “A Christmas Carol” and “A Weston Winter Cabaret” by the Weston Theater Company. Most activities are free; donations will benefit the Weston Volunteer Fire Department (WVFD). Come and visit the WVFD tent on the Green and buy your raffle tickets for more than \$3,000 in prizes. Santa will arrive on the fire engine to light off the fireworks display at dark. For a full schedule of activities, visit [www.westonvt.net](http://www.westonvt.net).

## Springfield American Legion winter toy drive —

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – As the holiday season approaches, at the Springfield American Legion Post 18, we are committed to serving our community and honoring our veterans. We are hosting our winter toy and food drive to ensure that families in Springfield have a joyful holiday. From now until Dec. 6, we welcome donations of toys, nonperishable food items, and monetary contributions. These will go directly to the Springfield Santa Claus Club gift giving, Christmas meal boxes, and our Angel Tree for Veterans, helping those in need and spreading holiday cheer. All donations may be dropped off at the VFW Post 771, 191 River Street, Springfield, Vt. Your generosity makes a meaningful difference in the lives of our neighbors and veterans. Thank you for your compassion and community spirit.

## The Dance Factory presents “The Nutcracker”

SPRINGFIELD, Vt. – Join Clara on her magical journey to the Kingdom of the Sweets in the Dance Factory’s 34th annual “The Nutcracker,” on Saturday, Dec. 13, at 7 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 14, at 2 p.m., at Springfield High School in Springfield, Vt. A delight for audiences of all ages, “The Nutcracker” is set to



Dance Factory performers in “Nutcracker” costume. PHOTO BY DENISE E. PHOTOGRAPHY

Tchaikovsky’s romantic score, and features a lighted, growing Christmas tree, whirling snowstorm, and gorgeous custom costumes. The Dance Factory’s “Nutcracker” showcases a cast of student and adult dancers from Windsor and Winham counties and beyond. Featured soloists include McKenzie Bachinski, of Springfield, as the Nutcracker Prince; Michaela Golden, of Claremont, as Clara; and Amelia Allen, of Springfield, as the Snow Queen; with Suzanne Stern as the Sugar Plum Fairy. Choreography is provided by “Nutcracker” director Ashley Hensel-Browning and Dance Factory founder Susan Hagan, who staged the studio’s first “Nutcrack-

er” in 1992. This family-friendly production – Vermont’s longest running version of the beloved holiday tradition – has given generations of regional dancers the invaluable opportunity to work their way up to lead roles that most studios outsource to professionals. Proceeds totaling in excess of \$25,000 have gone to support area arts programs, including the Springfield High School drama club. Tickets for “The Nutcracker” can be purchased at Tina’s Hallmark and Woodbury Florist in Springfield, and Sage Jewelry and Gifts in Chester, or online at [www.dancefactorynutcracker25.eventbrite.com](http://www.dancefactorynutcracker25.eventbrite.com). Limited tickets will be available at the door. Performances will also be recorded and broadcast by community partners SAPA TV, and archived on SAPA’s on-demand website, to ensure accessibility for all. The Dance Factory is celebrating 41 years of bringing quality, artistic, and inclusive dance and movement training to the greater Springfield community. For more information, please visit [www.dancefactoryvt.com](http://www.dancefactoryvt.com).

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SATURDAY, DECEMBER 6

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Dress your pet in their holiday best and stroll downtown! Photo Station in The Square, from 2-4pm, for the Pet Costume Instagram & Facebook Contest.

Block Print Holiday Cards Workshop

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 7

Sunday Sweater Shenanigans

Wear your funniest or coziest holiday sweater while shopping and dining in downtown Bellows Falls. Photo Station from 2-4pm for Favorite Sweater(s) IG & Facebook Contest.

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# holiday happenings

## Christmas bazaar

**WESTMINSTER, Vt.** – The First Congregational Church of Westminster, 3470 U.S. Route 5 in Westminster, Vt., would like to invite you to celebrate Christmas with us. There will be a variety of events to get and keep you in the Christmas spirit, starting with our annual Christmas bazaar.

The Women's Fellowship will hold its annual Christmas bazaar on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 9 a.m. – 2 p.m., at the church. The Christmas Shop will be open, and will include crafts, candles, gifts, handmade items, attic treasures, and homemade baked goods. Buy a ticket for our choice raffle with amazing, locally donated gift options.

At 11 a.m., Santa will visit. Children of all ages are invited to do a craft project and take a photo with Santa. Also, the Christmas Cafe will be open for lunch, with soup, chili, sandwiches, and beverages. Come and get your shopping done, or just spend time with friends in the cafe.

Next, on Sunday, Dec. 7, from 4-5 p.m., join us for a musical evening when the Westmoreland Town Band

plays their Christmas Extravaganza. This Christmas concert held in Westminster, upstairs at the Congregational Church, is for the whole community. The band is known throughout New England for its excellence, and will kick off their Christmas season in Westminster. A selection of Christmas music will be performed. After the concert, refreshments will be served, and there will be a chance to meet the band and visit with friends and neighbors.

## VSO holiday concert

**GRAFTON, Vt.** – The Vermont Symphony Orchestra (VSO) invites audiences across the state to celebrate the holiday season with its beloved annual Brass Quintet and Counterpoint Chorus holiday concert tour, visiting the Grafton Community Church, 55 Main Street in Grafton, on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 5-7 p.m. Admission is free with advanced registration required at [www.vso.org/vso-event/brass-quintet-counterpoint-chorus-grafton](http://www.vso.org/vso-event/brass-quintet-counterpoint-chorus-grafton); seating is limited.

Conducted by Nathaniel G. Lew, this cherished VSO tradition brings together festive brass and choral music in a joyful program featuring traditional carols, contemporary works, and a world premiere by a Vermont high school composer. This year's performances

include timeless carols such as "Silent Night," "Deck the Halls," and "The First Nowell," and a focus on compositions by Vermont composer Erik Nielsen alongside works of Moses Hogan for chorus, and Tylman Susato and Anne McGinty for brass.

"The Brass Quintet and Counterpoint Chorus tour remains one of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra's beloved and enduring holiday traditions," said Elise Brunelle, executive director of the VSO. "Each year, this program unites Vermonters across communities and generations, inviting them to share in the warmth, beauty, and joy that live music brings during the holiday season."

In collaboration with Music-COMP, the VSO proudly showcases new works by

emerging Vermont composers, to highlight the creativity and talent of young musicians across the state. This year's program features a world premiere by Sam Acus, a Mount Mansfield Union High School student, multi-instrumentalist, and Music-COMP composer. A lifelong musician headed to Berklee College of Music next year to study jazz mandolin, Acus explores the topic of climate change and collective hope in his composition.

For more information and to reserve tickets, visit [www.vso.org](http://www.vso.org).

## Springfield Downtown Holiday Program

**SPRINGFIELD, Vt.** – The Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce and Springfield on the Move invite you to participate in the Springfield Downtown Holiday Program, on Friday, Dec. 5.

Beginning at 4 p.m., Springfield on the Move will sponsor the Downtown Sticker Map, starting at 56 Main Street in the Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce

office.

Then, festivities ramp up at the co-op/M&T Bank parking lot.

Starting at 5:30 p.m., the Springfield Community Band will play.

At 6 p.m., Santa will make his grand entrance. Santa will light the Community Holliday Tree, and then sit with children young and young-at-heart, listening to their secret wishes.

Other activities include

cookies and hot chocolate at the Springfield Congregational Church, and kids' tree decorating at the Springfield Library.

The Springfield Regional Chamber of Commerce would like to thank our community partners HB Energy, for everything they do; the Springfield police and fire departments, for escorting Santa; and John Landry and WCFR for broadcasting live from the event.

## Gypsy Reel holiday concert in Springfield

**SPRINGFIELD, Vt.** – On Wednesday, Dec. 10, Gypsy Reel and a special guest are coming to Springfield. Camille Parker on mandolin, Claudine Langille on banjo, Graham Parker on fiddle, and special guest Jon Clinch on guitar are back for a holiday concert to brighten up your season with "A Christmas Festival of Song and Story," their centuries-spanning range of festive music. You'll enjoy modern Christmas favorites,

beloved carols, traditional Celtic instrumentals, and a few unexpected surprises, too. In between, Clinch will share a favorite passage or two from Charles Dickens' "A Christmas Carol," and his own award-winning com-

panion novel "Marley."

Please join us Wednesday, Dec. 10, at 7 p.m., at the First Congregational Church, 77 Main Street in Springfield, for a midweek concert. The concert is supported by a free-will offering.



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# events & community

## “The Light Pirate” book discussion

**BELLOWS FALLS, Vt.** – Join the Rockingham Free Public Library for a book discussion with Vermont Humanities Council facilitator Eric Bye, about this year’s Vermont Reads selection, “The Light Pirate” by Lily Brooks-Dalton. The book discussion will take place on Thursday, Dec. 4, at 6 p.m., at the Rockingham Free Public Library in Bellows Falls, Vt., 65 Westminster Street.

According to the Vermont Humanities Council website, “Named after a catastrophic storm, Wanda is born into a world that’s rapidly changing. Rising sea levels and devastating weather patterns transform her coastal Florida town. As she moves from childhood to adulthood, Wanda adapts to this remade landscape, finding adventure, love, and purpose in a place largely abandoned by civilization. Told in four parts – power, water, light, and time – ‘The Light Pirate’ by Lily Brooks-Dalton is a meditation on the beauty and violence of an untamable wilderness. It considers the dissolution of the human-made world, and helps us see how human connection, adaptability,

and a little bit of magic might guide us to a new future.”

This Library event is free and open to the public, and made possible by support from Vermont Humanities.

For more information about this and other programs, call 802-463-4270, visit [www.rockinghamlibrary.org](http://www.rockinghamlibrary.org), or stop by the library at 65 Westminster Street, Bellows Falls, Vt.

## Jane Austen holiday at the Rockingham Library

**BELLOWS FALLS, Vt.** – Celebrate a Jane Austen holiday at the Rockingham Free Public Library, on Saturday, Dec. 6, from 11 a.m. – 1 p.m. This will be a Regency-inspired celebration of fun and elegance.

In honor of the 250th anniversary of Austen’s birth, the Friends of the Rockingham Free Public Library invite all to a delightful celebra-

tion filled with Regency-era (1811-1820) activities. The Ukulelians will join in for some spirited tunes. There will also be a demonstration of period dance steps, a featured favorite in the plots of Austen’s six celebrated novels, including “Pride and Prejudice.” There will also be demonstrations of crafts, and delicious tea party foods of the era. Gingerbread cookie decorating will start at 11:30 a.m., in the youth department. Winning tickets for our holiday raffle items will be drawn at the end of festivities.

All are invited, and encouraged to dress in their Regency-era best.

For more information, call 802-463-4270, visit [www.rockinghamlibrary.org](http://www.rockinghamlibrary.org), or stop by the library at 65 Westminster Street, Bellows Falls, Vt.

## “Capturing the Night Sky” with SoVerA

**SAXTONS RIVER, Vt.** – Please join Southern Vermont Astronomy Group (SoVerA) on Tuesday, Dec. 9, at 7 p.m., either in person at Vermont Academy’s Horowitz Hall in Saxtons River, Vt., or on Zoom at [www.zoom.us/j/94691230307#success](http://www.zoom.us/j/94691230307#success), for SoVerA’s public monthly meeting.

We are excited to host Dorian Sanders, who will be presenting his astrophotography.

Sanders, a professional

photographer, instructor, and national tour guide, uses digital equipment to capture photos of distant night sky objects and combines them with our familiar terrestrial scenes. His photography journey began at age 13, when he received his first digital camera, and from that moment on, he was hooked. He’s spent years honing his skills, constantly upgrading gear, and practicing in the field to turn his passion into a lifelong pursuit. He is, in his words,

“a landscape astrophotographer who’s all about chasing the beauty of the night sky.”

Visit [www.sovera.org](http://www.sovera.org) for more information about SoVerA.

## Christmas Farmers Market

**SPRINGFIELD, Vt.** – The Springfield Farmers Market invites you to join us at our 15th annual Christmas Market, on Saturday, Dec. 13, from 10 a.m. – 1 p.m., at the United Methodist Church, on The Square in downtown Springfield, Vt.

We offer natural beef, pork, sausage, and kielbasa, artisan breads, free-range eggs, holiday pies and baked goods, custom-designed batik clothing and accessories, handcrafted holiday notecards and stationary gifts, beeswax candles, a large array of fabric arts and kitchen ac-

cessories, delicately-crafted gifts from locally-sourced woods, jams, jellies, pickles, relishes, and a full range of local maple products.

You’ll find all the necessities for holiday gifting and entertaining, so don’t forget to stop in. For more information, contact [sfog@vermontel.net](mailto:sfog@vermontel.net).

## Historical Society is Shaw’s Give Back beneficiary

**BELLOWS FALLS, Vt.** – During the month of December, the Bellows Falls Historical Society will be the beneficiary of the Shaw’s Give Back Where it Counts program, at the Ames Plaza Shaw’s grocery store in Walpole, N.H.

This is a reusable bag program created to support the local community, and to expand environmental awareness. For each reusable bag sold, \$1 will be donated to the Bellows Falls Historical Society Museum, located at 46 Canal Street in Bellows Falls. The display where bags can be purchased is near the checkout counters at Shaw’s, or ask an employee in the store if you can’t find it.

So, if you are out grocery shopping this month of December, please consider purchasing one or two of the reusable bags. For more information about the historical society, visit [www.bellowsfallshistoricalsociety.org](http://www.bellowsfallshistoricalsociety.org). We would sure appreciate your support this holiday season.



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**Unleash Adventure at FROSTY FUN & FIT CAMP**  
December 29 to January 2 | 8:00AM-4:00PM  
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